

SERVICE DEALER

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MAR / APR 2017

COMPACT TRACTORS

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❖ STIHL developments

❖ Focus on Ibcos

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EDITOR'S MESSAGE

Welcome to the March/April 2017 edition of *Service Dealer*. It's been an eventful start to the year. January saw a couple of very well attended and eventful trade shows for the outdoor powered machinery trade.

BTME said its attendance was up 10% on the previous year with the show floors certainly feeling buzzy and upbeat. There were a couple of quite significant announcements for the sportsturf machinery sector made at the show including a new yet familiar face now distributing the Ventrac all-wheel-drive compact tractors.

At the ever-clashing LAMMA meanwhile, the organisers described the event as the most successful ever. They issued a statement describing a "cautiously optimistic" atmosphere pervading a chilly Peterborough. Away from the shows there was plenty of news emanating from Camberley with dealers first being told that alternative routes to market would be considered by STIHL for its domestic, cordless gardening products. This was followed up by reassurances that the dealer network is integral for both orange and green products going forward – which itself was followed by the news that VIKING is on its way out!

So never a dull moment and therefore plenty to read in this edition – including the first opinion piece by our new regular columnist, Ron Miller. I don't think I need to spend time introducing Ron to the dealer network, suffice to say welcome to the SD family Ron! And don't worry, even though our esteemed founder, Chris Biddle, is making more of an effort to fully embrace retirement, I'm sure we'll still persuade him to pop up from time to time!



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GARDEN TRADER SITE LAUNCHED

Introducing consumers to garden machinery dealerships

Responding to dealer feedback, the team that brings you *Service Dealer* is delighted to bring you *Garden Trader* – a brand new website that introduces consumers to garden machinery dealerships.

After receiving industry feedback from two *Service Dealer* conferences of a lack of cohesion between the average consumer and the independent dealerships, the idea of *Garden Trader* was born.

Garden Trader helps the

products. *Garden Trader* does the legwork for them.

Garden Trader and *Service Dealer* owner, Duncan Murray-Clarke said, “We’re so pleased to offer this service to garden machinery dealerships, based on the feedback we’ve received. The website will present the specialist trade to consumers who might not be familiar with the fact that such a service exists on their doorstep.

“We want to make the link in the

garden machinery. These dealerships will experience the website free of charge until the end of the year and then they will be invited to remain online by paying a very reasonable annual subscription. There is no cost to the consumer.

“We would really encourage the selected dealers to make the most of this opportunity,” said Duncan. “The few minutes it takes to log-in and register could make a real difference in their battle against the online retailers and the sheds. It’s a tool, totally independent from manufacturers which they haven’t had before, and no doubt will be invaluable in the years to come.

“The site is great news for consumers too. By being encouraged to visit their local garden machinery specialist, they will receive a much more rewarding retail experience, end up with the right tool for their needs, and be safe in the knowledge they have local service back-up on their doorstep.”

In terms of promotion, *Garden Trader* is running a paid for advertising campaign to drive traffic to the site which includes:

- **Google text ads**
- **Google display ads**
- **Remarketing**
- **Facebook etc.**

The site also benefits from sponsorship from major industry companies, with Briggs & Stratton, STIHL and Henton & Chattell the first to confirm their support.

consumer narrow down the choices of garden machinery available to them and then points them in the direction of their local dealership. It does not only suggest new products but also deals with repairs and maintenance too and will inform the user where their nearest service centre is, the sole idea being to drive more footfall to the dealers.

The average consumer has little knowledge about garden machinery and does not have the time to spend hours researching

public’s mind that when they type ‘lawnmower’ into Google, there is a professional network out there waiting to help them – and not just with sales, but with aftersale care and service also. It’s all about making the dealers collectively more visible.”

The website launched during February 2017, initially populated with almost 1,000 selected dealerships. These have been personally selected by *Garden Trader*’s Dealer Consultant Ron Miller, based on their dedication to



VIKING TO MERGE WITH STIHL

Everything green changes to STIHL orange from 2019

As from 2019, the STIHL Group will market the entire product line of garden tool manufacturer VIKING exclusively under the STIHL brand name.

The company says that the change will enable it to concentrate all of its sales and marketing activities on one brand.

STIHL Executive Board Chairman Dr Bertram Kandziora said in a statement: “We will take advantage of the existing unit sales and turnover potential of the present VIKING product line under the better known STIHL global brand – internationally.”

Unlike global player STIHL, VIKING currently concentrates on the European market.

This one brand strategy will see significant market growth for VIKING products, capitalising on the strong STIHL name.

Robin Lennie, Managing Director of STIHL GB, explained that: “With the merger, we bolster the areas of expertise of the STIHL brand and as a consequence, we expect significant growth, new markets and larger market shares. This means new customers and higher sales for us and our servicing dealers.

“Furthermore, developments in the cordless market have enormous potential and now we are able to offer our dealers and customers a universal cordless system across all products under a single brand. In this context, the much better known STIHL brand has greater customer appeal.”

UK dealers

Robin Lennie contacted all UK dealers following the announcement, saying, “A single brand will make sales easier for you – especially in the rapidly growing cordless sector where we expect to gain new customers and larger market shares. Development expertise will be consolidated, which will benefit the customer with innovative new products and features.

“Ever since it has been a member of the STIHL Group, the quality of VIKING products has continually improved. Today, STIHL and VIKING are both positioned as premium brands with product ranges that complement each other and the decision to integrate VIKING into the much better known STIHL brand is a logical strategic step. Furthermore and very important to you, I would like to offer you my personal reassurance that following the brand change from VIKING to STIHL, parts availability, guarantees and service will continue on the same basis as today.”

VIKING GmbH, based in Langkampfen, Austria, is already an important manufacturing plant for STIHL cordless products, employing 450 staff.

“With this change in brand name we are charting the way forward for further growth in the STIHL Group. The Langkampfen plant will also profit from this. Not only will all jobs be retained, but employment will actually be consolidated,” explained VIKING General Manager Dr Peter Pretzsch.

The Viking factory in Langkampfen, Austria



INDUSTRY

MIDLAND POWER DISTRIBUTION REBRANDS

To hsc Machinery, Spares & Consumables

Midland Power Distribution Ltd has changed its trading name to hsc Machinery, Spares & Consumables.

Gary McWilliam, Managing Director said, "The name change is the start of an extensive rebranding effort designed to mirror the success and transformation of our organisation.

"The name hsc Machinery Spares & Consumables instantly informs customers about the products available and conveys the combination of the market sectors we supply.

"In 2013 The Hire Supply Company (UK) Ltd brought Midland Power as it recognised a synergy between the two companies that would benefit both sets of customers.

"The rebrand puts an umbrella over the business and firms up the connection that hsc's policies, procedures, care and support

expand to the specialist machinery, spares and consumables business.

The range of quality grounds care equipment sold by The Hire Supply Company will be available to the Garden Machinery sector via hsc Machinery, for dealers selling or hiring contractor's quality machines."

Sales Manager John McGhee says, "hsc Machinery, Spares & Consumables brings forth an expanded commitment to all of our clients and relationships. There is no change to the experienced staff

based at Worcester and we will continue to provide a service and support ethos that is second to none. The rebranding should give our current and future customers within the garden machinery industry every confidence to purchase."

The phone numbers and address will remain the same.

A new B2B website www.hscmsc.co.uk went live from February and features 27,000 plus products including machines, spares and consumables.



APPOINTMENTS

GRIZZLY WELCOMES MARKETING EXECUTIVE

Shnayde Murphy joins

Grizzly Tools has announced the recruitment of Shnayde Murphy as its Marketing and Communications Executive.

Shnayde joins the team to co-ordinate its marketing strategy both on and offline, in addition to bolstering its service dealer network, where she will facilitate sales of Grizzly goods on a national scale.

Upping the ante in terms of digital content, Grizzly says it will soon offer a variety of how-to videos that aim to provide guided assembly of the company's products via its YouTube channel. With plenty of activity already in the pipeline, Grizzly Tools will be attending prominent trade shows around the UK over the next 12 months.

Shnayde can be contacted on 0845 683 2670.



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DEALERS

SHERRIFF EXTENDS DEERE TERRITORY

Bought the business of WM Dodds

John Deere dealer Thomas Sherriff & Co, based at new premises in Haddington, East Lothian, has bought the business of WM Dodds at Jedburgh and set up a new outlet in Hexham to take over the territory previously managed by Everitt & Marshall.

These developments have extended the dealership's business area in the Lothians, Borders and Northumberland, with six outlets in total serving customers from the River Forth in Scotland down to Durham in the North-East of England, reaching out West to the Cumbrian border. The other existing outlets are based at Alnwick, Coldstream and Stow.

The majority of the WM Dodds employees have transferred to Sherriff Jedburgh, where Jimmy Laing remains as Dealership Manager. He has also been appointed to the Sherriff board and has taken on the

role of After Sales Director.

Sherriff Hexham opened for business in November at Tyne Mills Industrial Estate, just off the A69 close to the town. The dealership team there is headed by Stewart Wheeler, who has 30-plus years of experience working in the area with John Deere products.

Meanwhile, the Sherriff premises at Tweedside Industrial Estate in Berwick upon Tweed were closed at the beginning of December 2016, but with a full commitment to retaining all of the staff from that outlet. The Berwick technicians became field-based, primarily controlled from the Coldstream office, where Eddie Stewart has taken on the role of Service Manager from Bill Wood, who now becomes the company Warranty Manager.

Finally, the new Sherriff head office site at Backburn in Haddington, which replaces the facility at West Barns in Dunbar, will allow both the dealership's agricultural and turf divisions to operate under the same roof for the first time. John Harrison becomes a home-based Mobile Technician and continues as the Dunbar customers' first point of contact for service.

"As part of our overall expansion and restructuring plans, the development at Sherriff Haddington has seen a significant investment of almost £2 million," said dealership Managing Director Colin Weatherhead. "This ensures that we can maintain the highest level of support to our customers in both the important business sectors of agricultural and professional turf equipment sales and service."



INDUSTRY

2016 TRACTOR SALES LOWEST FOR MORE THAN A DECADE

Decrease of 2.2% on previous year

The AEA has announced that registrations of agricultural tractors (over 50hp) reached 10,602 units in 2016, a decrease of 2.2% from the level of the previous year.

As a single month December showed a fall of 13.4% to 515 units.

The AEA said that although this is the lowest annual unit total for more than a decade the second half did see a substantial improvement following a first half that recorded a year-on-year drop of 9.8%.

The average size of unit continues to increase with a 0.8% rise last year to 158.3hp.



LISTER MACHINERY TO OPEN £1.6M FLAGSHIP DEPOT

Kubota Agriculture to expand into Kent

Lister Machinery is investing over £1.6m to open a new depot in Ashford, Kent, which will become a flagship dealership for Kubota UK's complete range of machinery.

The partnership will now mean that Kubota's agricultural range of products will be available to the professional farming industry in Kent for the first time. The depot will also showcase Kubota's range of groundcare and construction equipment, making it one of several dealers in the UK to offer the company's full line-up of machines.

Rob Edwards, Kubota Agriculture's Business Development Manager, commented: "As a business, Kubota has made a massive commitment and long-term investment to become a global brand in the agricultural sector. By joining forces with Lister Machinery, it allows us to expand

our agricultural offering into Kent and target this market on a local level, working alongside an extremely established partner.

"Kent is a really important county for the UK's farming industry. It's a diverse and productive mixed farming area which, with the addition of the specialist fruit, vineyard and forestry growers, makes it ideally suited to the Kubota Agriculture range. Being able to target this area with Lister Machinery is therefore an exciting opportunity to develop and grow our presence in the region."

The new 20,000 sq ft Ashford depot, which is due to be officially opened this spring, is being transformed from its current use into a flagship machinery dealership. It will feature all the latest machines from Kubota's agricultural range. In addition, the

manufacturer's groundcare and construction equipment range will also be on display.

Charlie King, Commercial Director at Lister Machinery, said: "There is a massive opportunity to expand our offering in Kent. We have a 21-year heritage with Kubota's groundcare and construction equipment machinery in this area and have developed an excellent reputation for providing a first-class service and aftersales support to these sectors.

"Our aim now is to replicate what we have done in the groundcare and construction markets and target the farming industry with our new agricultural products."

New dealer branding concept

The Ashford site will be the first dealership in the UK to feature Kubota's new concept in dealer branding. Recently launched by its European Agricultural Business Unit, this dealer branding programme is said by Kubota to be "designed to raise the bar in the machinery sector, creating a visual appearance of a dealership that pushes the boundaries and increases the end-user's experience of the Kubota brand".

Rob Edwards concluded: "This is all about setting the benchmark in the machinery sector and we look forward to hearing the feedback from our end-user customers once this site officially opens its doors."

Agricultural sales at Lister Machinery's Ashford branch will be managed by Carl Cripps, Agricultural Sales Manager, along with another three sales managers. It will also include four dedicated staff for parts, two administrators and 10 engineers in the workshop.



L-R: Phill Brooks (Kubota UK Agricultural Dealer Manager), Rob Edwards, (Kubota UK Agriculture Business Development Manager), Dave Roberts (Kubota UK Managing Director), Charlie King (Commercial Director Lister Machinery), Carl Cripps (Lister Machinery Agri Sales Manager) and Phill Hughes (Lister Machinery's Sales Director)

CASE IH APPOINTS NEW DEALERS

In Scotland and Northumberland

Case IH recently announced the appointment of three new dealers to represent the brand:

Balgownie Ltd, which represents Case IH in Aberdeenshire, has supplied goods and machinery to farmers and local businesses since 1907 and the current directors having been at the helm for 35 years. With customers throughout the North of Scotland the company operates two branches, with purpose-built dealership facilities on the Thainstone Business Park, Inverurie and the Markethill Industrial Estate in Turriff.

Managing Director Mike Singer stated: "We are delighted to be working with Case IH. In this area we have a strong base of farmers who understand the value of investing in new technology, so knowledgeable dealers with the right advice and products play an important role."

Mark Garrick Ltd, based at Brookfield, Birnie in Elgin, was founded in 2000 by agricultural engineer Mark Garrick, a native of Glenlivet, who moved to new premises two years ago and has plans for further expansion.

The company, which currently employs six staff, provides sales and service facilities in an area from Morayshire across to Inverness and the Black Isle.

Mark Garrick said: "Our business has been built up on excellent customer service. The decision to go forward

with Case IH enables us to increase our business portfolio and offer a wide range of products which will appeal to our diverse range of customers."

Everitt & Marshall Ltd was established in 1978 by Matty Everitt and Raymond Marshall, who worked for a local Case dealer before setting up their own business. The dealership, which has been based in purpose-built premises on the Haugh Lane Industrial Estate in Hexham since 1982, is still very much a family business. Now under Managing Director Adrian Everitt, son of the founder, and his sister Shona, an equal partner who works in the accounting department, the company will represent Case IH throughout the Tyne Valley.

Adrian Everitt said: "We see a great future for Case IH, which offers a wide range of premium products that equal or exceed anything else on the market in terms of technology, performance and value. Our customers have been very supportive of the change to Case IH, many share our enthusiasm for the brand and I have no doubt that we will encourage others to switch from other brands.

Charles Blessley, Marketing Manager, Case IH, added: "Case IH is delighted to welcome these new dealers to our network and we look forward to working with them, and their customers, to increase our presence in the North of England and Scotland."



(L-R) Adrian Everitt and Nick Bowman (Everitt & Marshall); Charles Blessley, Case IH; Adrian Graham (Everitt & Marshall); Ivan Nicol, Mark Garrick (Mark Garrick Ltd); Gordon Lynch & Mike Singer (Balgownie Ltd); Jon May, Case IH

DEALERS

DEERE'S LARGEST EVER UK EQUIPMENT DEAL

Nairn Brown Ltd supply Trump Turnberry

In the largest equipment deal that John Deere has ever signed in the UK and Ireland, a new and comprehensive golf course maintenance fleet has been supplied to Trump Turnberry in Ayrshire by dealer Nairn Brown Ltd of Busby, Glasgow, on a John Deere Financial four-year lease arrangement.

The package of 95 machines included walk-behind greens mowers, tees and surrounds mowers, E-Cut hybrid electric greens and fairway mowers, rough mowers, top of the range compact tractors and both diesel and electric Gator utility vehicles.

Additional machines and staff were also provided by John Deere and dealer Nairn Brown as tournament support for the 2015

Ricoh Women's British Open (pictured below).

Golf Courses and Estates Manager Allan Patterson, whose CV includes Gleneagles and 10 years on the Castle Course at St Andrews Links, oversees a team of more than 40 greenkeeping, gardening and estate staff at Trump Turnberry. All were involved in some way in the choice of the new machinery fleet, as Workshop Manager Jim Campbell explained. "The staff were asked to

fill in appraisal sheets, looking particularly at the things they were most comfortable with, which helped the selection and final decision making processes," he said.

"Price is always a key consideration, but back-up is more important still. It's no good simply having the best kit – if it does break down, the question is: how quickly can it be fixed? The relationship with the dealer is very important." ●



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STIHL MOVES TO REASSURE DEALERS

With the news that STIHL was looking to expand its routes to market for domestic, gardening cordless products through non-traditional servicing dealers, there was naturally some concern among the network. At a presentation of new products at the VIKING factory in Austria, Editor STEVE GIBBS heard from a company keen to reassure dealers where its loyalties lie

Flashback to the end of 2016. STIHL's extensive dealer network was informed that from this year the manufacturer would be looking to supply domestic gardening cordless products through other retailers in addition to traditional servicing dealers.

A letter from STIHL GB MD Robin Lennie went out to the approved dealer network before Christmas explaining that in order to remain competitive "...STIHL will need to work with retailers outside the existing specialist dealer network to be successful in the expanding cordless tool market".

The letter continued: "STIHL and VIKING approved dealers will always be our primary route to market but as demand for cordless products accelerates it is vital that we are positioned to reach all customer groups. Next year [2017] we will begin discussions with prospective retail partners in urban locations, such as garden centres and hardware stores.

"These retailers will be hand-picked to ensure they are

compatible with STIHL's service-oriented criteria and they will only be allowed to offer a limited product range specifically tailored to domestic customers: electric and battery powered products and related accessories. They will be required to offer PDI and product handover and most importantly, their contract will prevent them from selling petrol powered tools. Indeed we expect that some of our existing approved dealers will wish to open additional outlets which are focussed on cordless and electric tools and we look forward to planning these developments in the future."

The letter concluded by saying that the company had no official dates planned for these developments but that it wished to keep its dealer network informed.

Robin Lennie signed off by offering a personal assurance to the company's dealers that "...as our primary route to market, we will constantly maintain our focus on developing your business and your staff".

Bringing things up to date the

company is holding a series of STIHL and VIKING roadshows across the country this spring to introduce its dealers to the new and forthcoming Cordless System machines for 2017. It also held a presentation of new machines for press at the VIKING factory in Langkampfen, Austria at the end of January.

I'm sure even STIHL would agree that it's natural that there was some unease among the network following the announcement. However, during the presentations of the new machines such as the app-controlled iMow in Austria (see panel), there was no mention of alternative routes to market. Quite the opposite in fact; servicing dealers were spoken about constantly as vital to the company's distribution plans.

So when the opportunity arose for a question and answer session with VIKING Managing Director, Dr Peter Pretzsch and UK MD Robin Lennie, I asked if the company had intentions to expand the amount of machines sold through non-traditional service dealers.

Dr Pretzsch answered: "The concept of servicing dealers will be the same for the company in the future.

"If we have different ways of selling products, the parameters and criteria of the servicing dealer has to be fulfilled.

"In Germany, for example, we have big stores selling units but they have a workshop, they have qualified staff, they have to fulfil all the criteria of the servicing dealer – they act as a servicing dealer. If not, they won't get the product."

He then deferred to Robin Lennie who could answer more



specifically for the UK market.

Robin said: "The statement that was issued to everyone was a worldwide statement that the group is looking at other partners.

"I've answered a lot of questions from individual dealers on the statement – the answer being that worldwide STIHL is loyal to the servicing dealer – and loyalty is a very, very strong word in STIHL.

"It was implied that we're already looking at alternative retailers in a big way, with some dealers fearing that we would immediately announce that we are in with garden centres or DIY stores. But the situation varies around the whole world.

"So we will look at possible alternative routes to market due to the high-volume which we want to do at the cheaper end.

"However, we do actually believe that the servicing dealer could possibly handle all this, but we're not sure."

Robin went on to say that the company has no intention to supply direct and with the choosing of any alternative

Display of Viking mowers at the Austrian HQ



retailer it will proceed extremely cautiously and pick very carefully.

He had some strong words regarding the appointing of alternative retailers, saying: "...they will be told exactly how they have to operate. It will be very

clear to these business partners that they can't sell petrol. Every aspect of their contract will be very prescriptive and very clear."

Robin concluded saying: "The world is moving very fast, but STIHL is very traditional, very loyal."

APP-CONTROLLED IMOW

Mow on the go

A machine presented to the press in Austria as one solely available through servicing dealers was the VIKING iMow for medium to large lawns, the MI 632 PC.

Benefiting from a new app-control feature, the technology allows the user to control the mowing operation from wherever they are, via an app on Android, IOS or Windows phones and tablets.

As well as sending the unit out to mow, the app allows the user to easily send it back to its docking station, with no need to be there. A GPS module fitted in the mower means the app knows where the iMow is at all times. The mowing plan can also be changed from the app, amending the times the unit goes out cutting.

Helpful feedback is delivered via the app if the unit runs into any problems, such as needing the blade replaced or requiring a service.

Like all of the VIKING iMow models,

it features mulching blades and uses a high capacity Lithium-Ion battery.

Stressing the role that the dealer plays in the delivery of the product Senior Product Manager, Paul Hicks, said: "The Specialist Dealer will take care of the installation including making a layout plan of the area, laying perimeter wire around the garden, positioning the docking station and programming the iMow to mow as and when you the customer would like it to. They will then be on hand for personal advice and maintenance so the user feels comfortable with the iMow right from the very start." ●





TIM LANE

Tim Lane – TH WHITE, Divisional Director, Machinery Imports

The T H WHITE Group set up a new Machinery Imports division last year following the acquisition of the Ferris and Wright mower brands from IPU. Towards the latter part 2016 the company took on the Spider remote-controlled slope mowers that were previously handled by Ransomes Jacobsen and are now establishing a nationwide dealer network. Service Dealer editor STEVE GIBBS sat down with Divisional Director Tim Lane to find out what they are looking for.

Service Dealer: The Machinery Imports division is a new endeavour for T H WHITE?

Tim Lane: Yes, for some time as a company we have wanted to grow our groundcare business outside of solely being a dealer. We are a dealer first and foremost with half a dozen key franchises all based around the professional user, but alongside that we wanted to grow.

So the decision to broaden our horizons with distribution was the logical next step. It fits with our core capability of being an engineering company.

We had been in discussions with the owner of IPU, Robert Beebee who was indicating that his business mix was looking to change in the future and groundcare didn't sit long-term with where they saw their business.

So effectively, we bought IPU's groundcare business from them lock, stock and barrel. We relocated all the stock and spares to our new depot in Stockbridge, Hampshire.

That gave us an importing and distribution business and the right to sell Ferris and Wright.

Then toward the latter part of 2016, Spider indicated they were looking to change the way they did things in the UK - so that gave us a third niche franchise.

SD: Why did Spider choose to change from being distributed by Ransomes?

TL: Ransomes have done a cracking job with Spider for the past 11 years. They brought a new product to market and it's still an industry that's growing.

However, under new and aggressive growth plans for its manufactured products, Ransomes Jacobsen felt that it was the right time to support the move of Spider to a smaller and perhaps more flexible organisation, such as ourselves.

SD: Your relationship as a Ransomes dealer was your gateway into Spider?

TL: We've been selling Spider in our depots and at times have been one of their largest dealers. We were amongst the first to embrace the Spider. So, we had a good relationship with the Spider family through Ransomes.

We had success selling the machines, but it's a niche product. It's the sort of product where you must do quite a lot of diligence with the customer. You have to make sure it's the right machine for the right application and it needs a proper demonstration. Then, when it's sold, it needs to be properly installed because it's a serious bit of kit that can be working on slopes of up to 55degrees.

There's a lot to it, which is why we felt it needed to



Spider mowers can be safely used on banks

“OUR PLAN IS TO DOUBLE OUR SPIDER DEALER NETWORK WITHIN THE NEXT TWO YEARS”

be offered out to our dealer network on an exclusive basis. It's not like a strimmer where you'll have lots of people selling it.

SD: It sounds like you're looking for a very specific type of dealer to take this on?

TL: We're looking for dealers who recognise this as a niche, commercial product that is going to add real value to their business. Remote controlled mowers are becoming more and more of an opportunity for dealers to solve their customers' problems.

SD: Do you have several dealers you are considering to stock Spiders?

TL: We haven't agreed that yet. The other side of our distribution business with Ferris and Wright, currently has 23 authorised, exclusive dealers and we're looking to grow that over the next two years.

Spider however, is a different product with a different sales process. We'll probably end up with between 15-20 exclusive dealers. What we want are partners who are focussed on groundcare.

We are finding now that the market for this is more than just slope mowing. Where for example you have high-end private estates, these machines are no longer a gimmick.

There's also the whole safety angle. Anywhere there is a requirement to keep an operator away from danger points, such as highways, rivers, verges and the like, it really comes into its own as it provides a safe working environment. The operator can stay a good distance away from any potentially dangerous working areas.

So, there are lots of applications for these machines. Which is why we need dealers who are going to think outside of the box. Dealers who are prepared to go and look for these other markets.

We also want dealers, and indeed customers, who

are going to provide us with feedback on the mowers so we can work in partnership with Spider to develop and innovate products for the future.

SD: Is there an established dealer network out there already for Spider?

TL: One of the things Ransomes did exceptionally well was to bring the brand into the marketplace. Ransomes have a network of very strong dealers and they all had access to that product. There were a number of dealers, ourselves included, who took the product and ran with it. Quite a lot of those have now become our dealers.

SD: Where are you looking to establish dealers?

TL: We want to cover most of the UK and of Ireland. That's our distribution agreement with Spider. We have certain areas where there are opportunities at the moment and areas where we already have committed dealers.

We also have areas with very big dealers who are probably focussed on the very top-end commercial sector such as councils, golf courses, contractors etc, but who might be missing out on the smaller contractors. For example, the 'man with the van' who does larger private houses, perhaps parish contracts, town council contracts. That's a sales channel we are very much beginning to focus on.

These dealers of course are harder to find. Typically, they are a family-run business, very focussed, probably operating within a 30-mile radius. They do a brilliant job locally and this is who we very much wish to attract.

SD: Would it preclude you taking on one of these smaller dealerships if they were located near an established, larger dealer?

TL: In my experience, I oversee a comparatively large groundcare machinery dealership, and quite frankly we can't do everything. Sometimes, in the best interest of the brand, it's quite good to have some smaller dealer partners in your area that you can work with.

That can either be done through what we call a 'sub-dealing' arrangement, which is a commercial agreement between the main dealer and the sub-dealer. Or if that is not appropriate, we can appoint several smaller dealers in our own right, but making sure we're not upsetting the main dealer.

We are keen to establish a sensible business plan which works for everybody, including of course, the customer.

It's a process which we're currently undertaking with Ferris and Wright as well. We have ambitious plans for these machines. Our plan is to double our Spider dealer network within the next two years. That will inevitably mean a larger number of smaller dealers who will focus on those products for us. However, being a Ferris and Wright dealer won't automatically qualify anyone to stock the Spider mowers - all interested dealers will have to pitch for the business.

My team is currently travelling around the country, talking to dealers, making assessments and having discussions about their future plans and commitments.

SD: How will you be marketing the Spiders?

TL: In order of importance we will be establishing a dealer network, finalising development of a UK-specific website (as we realise what a powerful tool video is for illustrating its potential applications)



and then targeted customer marketing.

We will also be exhibiting at SALTEX this year, as well as supporting dealers at local county-show events.

But the key for selling these machines, is specific on-site demonstrations. As our brands don't conflict, we could for example go on a demo for Ferris and take along a bank-solution at the same time - and vice-versa. From the point of view of my national sales team, there are huge opportunities in this. It does mean that dealership sales teams need to be highly competent and skilled operators.

SD: What reassurances can you offer dealers thinking of taking on Spider?

TL: The T H WHITE Group is a well-established organisation. If you look at our expertise, particularly in engineering services and solving problems for customers as a dealer, it's a logical expansion for us to become a groundcare distributor. Indeed some of our other T H WHITE Business Units already fulfil a distribution role. The fact that we import, distribute and are the dealer for brands, makes commercial sense because we've always succeeded with those brands when they were imported by somebody else.

That's why strategically, we decided to form a new legal entity within the Group whose sole purpose was to concentrate on importing and distributing through a dealer network- which is our only route to market. We are not about selling direct and we never will be. We are very clear on that.

But in return we want focused, committed dealers. We are one of those ourselves hence we understand what that entails. We can nurture and grow the dealers we recruit from our own expertise as a dealership.

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Tim Lane, left, with Kate Draper T H WHITE's Group Marketing Manager and Alex Scott, managing director

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GOLD STANDARD

Ibcos's Gold dealer management system is long established. But now the company is rolling out a Web CRM tool for mobile devices. Editor STEVE GIBBS reports

For the past 37 years, Ibcos has helped agricultural, groundcare and construction dealers to manage their businesses with Gold, the dealership management computer system.

Managed by a team of 50 experienced staff, the company says its mission is to transform dealerships so that they meet the demands and challenges of their industry.

The latest development in the Gold system that the company is now rolling out, following an extensive trialling period with some key dealer customers, is the Web CRM system.

This mobile version of its Customer Relationship Management tool is designed to expand its offering to dealers. It delivers to them what the company says it has been asked for: the ability of all members of the dealership team to access all customer records, wherever they might be. As long as the dealership uses Gold, the Web CRM solution can now be accessed from a web browser on a tablet device, be the user in the

workshop, on the showroom floor, or out and about on the road.

Mobility solutions

Mike Shafeie is Ibcos's Initiative Manager, whose job it is to work closely with customers and internal teams to develop new products to benefit their customers. With a background in retail software solutions, business analysis and project management, Mike has been heavily involved in the development of the Web CRM system. So-called mobility solutions are currently very high on Ibcos's agenda.

Mike explains: "The Web CRM system is designed to embrace all that Gold offers the traditional desktop user, but in a mobile user-friendly format. All information is at the user's fingertips through a web browser.

"Full customer contact details including information such as previous purchases, purchases from other sources, when they were last contacted, what that



Ibcos's Mike Shafeie and Greg Hepworth show off the new Web CRM system



“WE NEED THIS TO WORK FOR YOUNG AND OLD, FOR PEOPLE WHO ARE NEW TO THE INDUSTRY AND FOR THOSE WHO’VE BEEN PART OF IT FOR A LONG TIME”

contact entailed, when they should be contacted next – all this info is accessible through the Web CRM system.

“This level of customer information is traditionally something that a salesperson out on the road hasn’t had instant access to. The Web CRM is linked live-time into Gold. If someone back in the office on the core Gold system adds a new piece of information to a customer’s record, the person on the road sees that instantly.”

Although the system is web-browser based and technically could be accessed via a smartphone, it is currently only optimised for tablet usage.

“Making sure that Web CRM is user-friendly on a tablet is very important to our customers,” says Mike. “It’s given us a chance to make sure it has a fresh look and feel. It’s the little things that matter – the fact that we use clear graphic icons for the different areas of the system and that when you select an option the display slides gracefully, makes the whole experience simple and a pleasure for users.”

It also utilises the screen-space of a tablet effectively. Information is readable and logically laid-out across the available space of a tablet’s screen.

“We spent a lot of time working on screen design and flow,” confirms Mike, “making sure that buttons are in their most logical place, so people won’t have to think too hard about what they need to press next. It becomes an intuitive user system. The use of icons saves screen space and makes it even easier for the customer to know where to go and when.”

Dealer feedback

Ibcos says this Web CRM development has come about through listening to its dealer customers. Since November 2015 it has had a small group of dealers testing the system whom Ibcos refer to as “early adopters”.

Mike goes out to visit these dealers once every month or two in person to see how they are getting on and how they are interacting with the system.

Greg Hepworth, Product & Development Manager,

believes this dealer feedback that Ibcos has been collecting and acting upon has been invaluable to the system’s growth.

“We’ve invested a lot of time understanding our users,” Greg says.

“As we develop these applications and features we’re responsive to our customers.”

Mike agrees, saying, “We’re creating experiences for the inexperienced.”

The early adopter group has included dealers from different machinery sectors, representing various manufacturers up and down the country, in order for Ibcos to hear a cross-section of opinions to help hone the system.

Mike says, “We’ve taken what the early adopters tell us and have adapted the system so it’s as user-friendly as it can be for everyone. We need this to work for young and old, for people who are new to the industry and for those who’ve been part of it for a long time.

“The early adopters give the product to various people within their dealership team to be road tested. We like a mix of people to try it out, both those who love new tech and those who might be more difficult to impress. Feedback from a variety of users is invaluable for the system’s development.”

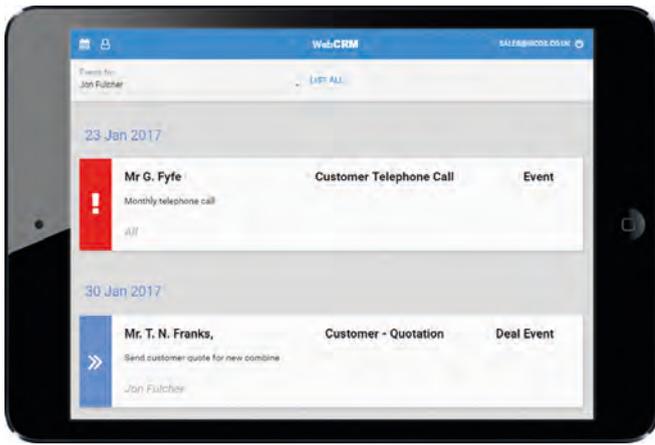
Ibcos is also organising remote meet-ups now for the early adopters, which gives the dealers a chance to interact with one another – sharing experiences of the system, bouncing around ideas and suggestions.

Greg says, “I find when the dealers get together that they find great value in sharing their experiences with different business problems.”

Mike agrees, saying, “The idea of these projects is that they’re supposed to bring benefit to the business. By giving the salesman a tool that allows them to organise their upcoming actions, and whilst doing that also giving them additional information about their upcoming customers, they should see a benefit.

“The system should be helping them to make those sales because they can clearly identify the prospects

The My Events page helps to keep users on top of upcoming actions



they could be contacting, who are potentially in the market for a particular product.

“Sometimes you do just need a reminder to make that one phone call, because it could be the one where with a bit of a conversation, a significant sale can be closed.”

History and the future

The long-established nature of Ibcos’s Gold system, how it’s built up a loyal following of dealers over the years, is what the company believes gives it the edge with innovations such as the Web CRM system.

It is fully integrated with the desktop version with no cumbersome exporting of information from one to the other.

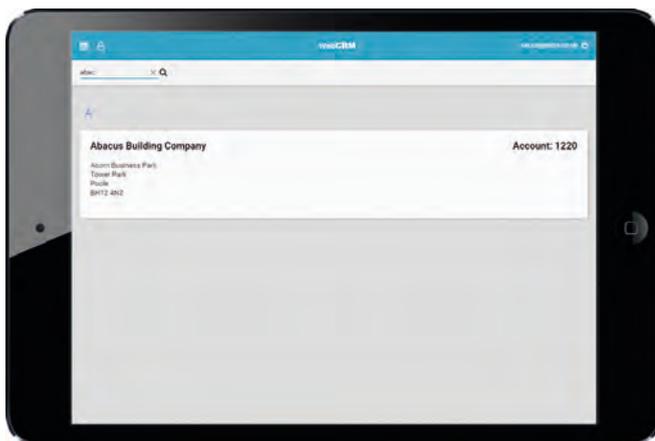
Gold has been shaped by dealer interaction over its lifespan to be tailored to their needs, so it follows that new developments and off-shoots of the system are too.

Greg Hepworth says, “We try to use all this information we have from our long history and relationships with dealers to think ‘what can we do that will really improve their businesses?’”

Does Greg find there is a natural resistance to change among dealers who are used to a certain way of using the system?

“One thing I find is that people expect change,” he replies. “But we are mindful that all changes only enhance the user experience.”

The Customer Enquiry section



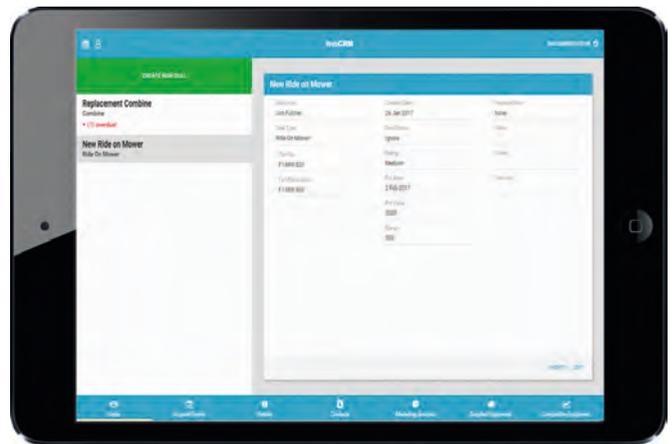
“It’s a fundamental change to be able to offer Gold features through the web – and further down the line we’ll be offering that ability through an app. These are direct benefits to our customers.

“Architecturally, once you’re using a tablet you get access to all those features that a tablet provides which you wouldn’t get on a desktop. Things like notifications, like GPS, like the camera on the device – all these things can come into play.

“We talk to our early adopter groups to ask them: ‘what sort of things are you doing where it would be useful to utilise GPS, for example?’”

“Now we have this architecture to allow us to deliver the CRM aspects of Gold through the web, we may start looking in the future to what other areas of Gold might it benefit our customers to be able to access via mobile devices.

“We’re thinking that possibly the accounts area may be one which could be desirable.”



The Web CRM system allows users to keep on top of their potential deals

“Going forward, all the development choices we shall be making in terms of apps will be cross-platform. It will be vital for our customers that our system is available to them both on Android and iOS.”

There is now a mix of fresh blood and industry experience at the heart of Ibcos.

There has been the recent promotion of Collette Convery to Managing Director from Service Delivery Manager, a position she had held at Ibcos for the past three years.

Young guys such as Mike and Greg who have joined in the past couple of years are on the management team alongside well-known industry figures such as Sales Director Jon Fulcher.

There is a real spread of skill sets, all working together to increase dealers’ productivity.

Greg sums up the company’s responsibility to its customers, saying, “We’re here to help dealers to run their entire business – every aspect of it. We know how vital our service is to them. If we fail, they fail.”



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NEW DEALERSHIP TAKES A DIFFERENT TACK

Focusing on implements and creating a sales/service partnership are just two of the ways in which GSR Farm Machinery and Beckett Agricultural Engineers are working together in an innovative dealer arrangement. MARTIN RICKATSON found out more

With tractor manufacturers increasingly looking to sell full lines of equipment through multi-branch dealerships, could the future for smaller operations lie in specialisation?

That's certainly the thinking behind the recent launch of a new farm machinery dealership venture based where the boundaries of Berkshire, Oxfordshire, Wiltshire and Gloucestershire meet. But in addition to its specialisms, the new operation is also configured differently, with its sales and service/parts operations run by different businesses.

Geoff Reade has worked in the

farm machinery retail trade for a number of years, dovetailing sales with work on the family arable farm. Having begun selling for a local dealer before later specialising in tillage and drilling equipment for them, he then decided to go it alone, but retain that specialisation.

The result was that, towards the end of 2016 when he was offered the opportunity to take on the local sales territory for the Sumo equipment with which he had been become very familiar, Geoff formed GSR Farm Machinery in partnership with his wife, Sarah.

"I've worked on our family farm for 20 years, and for the last seven of those we have used the Sumo

system, originally purchasing a DTS drill, followed by a Strake straw harrow and a Trio tine/disc/press one-pass cultivator.

"I know first-hand the establishment costs that can be saved using the Sumo system, so I'm very keen to promote this and am happy to put my name behind the equipment.

"I've already formed customer relationships with many local farmers over the past few years, and I'm keen to support those customers and gain new ones."

Established in 1991 as SW Agriservices by independent engineer Shaun Wealleans, Sumo now manufactures a range of

strip-till and direct drills, the Trio one-pass cultivator and the Strake harrow from a 100,000 sq ft site at Melbourne, East Yorkshire.

Service and parts support

With farmers to visit and demonstrations to perform over a wide area, plus continued involvement in the home farm, Geoff knew he would need a source of service and parts support. This set him talking to local independent engineer Clive Griffin.

Clive established Beckett Agricultural Engineers Ltd in Inglesham, near Swindon, after working for Shrivensham Agricultural Engineers from 1984 until its closure in 1991. During that time the firm was an agent for manufacturers including Deutz-Fahr, Leyland/Marshall, Kuhn, Kidd, Taarup and others.

With three full-time employees, he took over the repairs side of the business from his former employer, operating from Beckett Works, Shrivensham – hence the business’s name – for 23 years before relocating three years ago to his own comprehensively-equipped workshop in Inglesham, complete with small integral office and parts store, on a site with plenty of outside space.

Upon talking with Geoff, the two decided that their combination of the latter’s product knowledge and

The GSR/Beckett co-operation combines the sales and demonstration expertise of Geoff Reade (right) with Clive Griffin’s service knowledge and workshop/stores/yard premises.



sales and demonstration skills, plus Clive’s service/workshop abilities and the space for stock/demo/used machines available at his premises, meant they could form a partnership that would serve a franchise like that of Sumo very well.

“Doing things this way makes a lot of sense,” suggests Clive.

“It adds to the income we can generate from our workshop, makes use of the space we have here to store demonstration and trade-in machines, and means we’re working with someone we know and trust.

“Geoff doesn’t need to employ anyone to service equipment or have to stock spares, as we take care of that. And we don’t need to get involved in demonstrations, sales and orders. It works well for both parties.

“It also means we bring our heads together to share contacts and potential leads, and help manage any business challenges we might face.

“I’ve never been keen to get into something as complex as new tractor retailing. The investment required is huge and the equipment is getting ever more complicated – there are probably more components in the cab alone on a new tractor than there were in

“I’M SURE THAT USING THE TYPE OF BUSINESS MODEL WE HAVE DEVELOPED CAN HELP BOTH OUR BUSINESSES TO THRIVE”

the whole machine 20 or 30 years ago. And, of course, it's necessary nowadays to make big investments in diagnostic equipment for the servicing of many tractors.

"I would never say never, and if the opportunity came up to take on perhaps a compact tractor range then we might possibly look at it.

"But for now we're focused on implements, as this fits our business model."

franchises retained

Prior to the two businesses coming together to co-operate, Clive already held franchises for other implement lines, including HM Trailers, Kidd Farm Machinery and loader attachment/topper maker Slewtic. These have been retained under the new arrangement.

"To supplement these products and our workshop/service activity, which is based around servicing and repairing equipment for local farmers and providing welding services, plus the supply of steel, tyres and hydraulic hose repairs, we have a small store stocked with parts from the likes of Bepco, Granit, Quality Tractor Parts and Sparex, so there's a good basis on which to add genuine Sumo wearing parts."

Meanwhile, Geoff is looking to add a small and carefully-selected range of other implement franchises to complement GSR Farm Machinery's Sumo specialism.

"Having talked with three or four possible suppliers, all supplying agricultural equipment that would make a good fit alongside the Sumo product offering, we've so far been able to add Tanco bale wrappers and Twose hedge trimmers to our line, plus the HM trailers for which Clive was already an agent.

"We've already had some good sales results, and while this is a difficult time in the industry, I'm sure that using the type of business model we have developed can help both our businesses to thrive." ●

Sumo cultivation and crop establishment equipment is the key franchise around which Geoff Reade and Clive Griffin have built their sales/service partnership



Clive Griffin's workshop premises also serve as the point for customers of Geoff Reade's retail operation to source parts and sundries for their equipment

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DEALER OPPORTUNITIES ON DISPLAY AT LAMMA

New products, new ranges and even new manufacturers were present at this year's LAMMA, the UK's January showcase for farm equipment. While market conditions remain difficult, that meant plenty of new opportunities for dealers, as MARTIN RICKATSON reports

There have been some recent signs of revival in UK agriculture's key arable and dairy markets, with a number of milk buyers raising their pence-per-litre prices and arable commodities benefiting from the fall in the value of sterling. While this is making imported equipment more expensive, it is putting domestic producers of equipment such as sprayers, diet feeders and hedge trimmers at an advantage in their home market.

So there were some signs of optimism at January's LAMMA show, with manufacturers and importers reporting a steady if not spectacular level of serious enquiries, and a number of new opportunities for dealers.

1. New entrants into the UK tractor market are relatively regular in the compact sector, but less common in the higher-hp agricultural market. Two years ago Lindner announced a deal with Co Dublin-based Plant Systems to bring its tractors into Ireland, and at LAMMA the same firm was helping the Austrian tractor maker to put its machines in front of UK farmers for the first time, with a view to seeking an importer and dealers. In addition to an example from the range of 'conventional' Geotrac models of 76-133hp, the firm had on display its four-wheel steer Lintrac 90 (pic 1), a conventional-type four-cylinder 102hp tractor but with a 20-degree steering rear axle. In addition to improved manoeuvrability, Lindner says this configuration provides greater stability and safety when turning on slopes. The tractor also features a ZF continuously-variable transmission.

2. Among the other relatively new names at the show was Armatrac (pic 2), the tractor brand of Turkish firm Erkunt which appointed a UK and Ireland distributor. AS Tractors, early last year. The firm has since invested significantly in raising its profile at LAMMA, taking a big covered stand and having a large sponsorship presence. AS says it is continuing to seek dealers in both the UK and Ireland for its Perkins and Deutz-powered machines. Its focus remains firmly on the livestock farm sector, with a range of four models from 50-110hp.



3. Zetor's UK operation, which is still seeking to fill dealer gaps in certain areas, chose LAMMA to unveil an additional version (pic 3) of the base-spec four-cylinder Major tractor that it introduced three years ago. Where the standard (now badged CL) models are equipped with a four-speed/three-range 30kph transmission and have 61 or 75hp power outputs, the additional Major HS tractor is a 76hp machine with a two-step powershift, doubling forward speed numbers to 24, plus a hydraulic powershuttle and 40kph top speed. Cab revisions include a new adjustable steering column, improved instrument panel and more luxurious seating. Pivoting front mudguards have reduced the turning radius to 3.9m, and fuel tank capacity is up to 120 litres.

4. JCB agricultural product dealers will have been interested to note a second 4000 series Fastrac forward control conversion entering the market, following the launch at last year's LAMMA of a Knight machine. This year it was Suffolk aluminium boom specialist Landquip that launched a forward control Fastrac 4220 (pic 4). Developed in conjunction with Scottish JCB dealer AM Phillip, the tractor unit retains its CVT transmission and 60kph road speed capability. The new machine can accommodate 3,500, 4,000 and 4,500-litre tanks and booms up to 44m, with a tri-fold, narrow-folding design reducing machine transport width down to 2.6m. Landquip says the sprayer can be demounted in no more than 15 minutes and swapped for a spreader unit.

5. There was plenty of new handler news at LAMMA, with Manitou grabbing the limelight by choosing the show to unveil a prototype machine that signals its intention to return to the articulated telehandler market after five years' absence, in a move that will please many of its dealers concerned about competition from other makers in this product niche. Few details were available on the new MLA machine (pic 5), with a full launch likely at February's SIMA show in Paris, but clearly evident was a new wider, deeper cab design with improved skyward vision, plus significant restyling. Engine is likely to be a Deutz powerplant of around 140hp, and max lift capacity/height stats are likely to be in the region of 3.5t and 6m respectively. Manitou was staying tight-lipped on likely transmission choice, though.

6. While the likes of JCB, Manitou and Merlo take the lion's share of the UK handler market, alternative marques continue to seek to grow their dealer networks to gain inroads. Caterpillar, which says it is looking to make dealer appointments in a number of UK areas, used LAMMA to launch new D-spec



TH telehandlers (pic 6), with maximum reach now extending up to 10m – the smallest model lifts to 6m. There's a revised cab interior with optional new screen display for instrumentation that also incorporates load charts and can display the view from an optional reversing camera. Also new is a revised joystick with F/N/R shuttle switch now on the rear rather than the front, plus more effective air conditioning. Realignment of the cab, seat and boom pivot has improved the view rearwards.

7. One of the bigger industry trends that looks like it may potentially result in another round of dealer/franchise reorganisation is the trend to product line expansion by the major tractor makers. In AGCO's temporary building, one of the largest on the show site, Fendt was showing its full combine and forage equipment line for the first time (pic 7). The range mirrors that offered by Massey Ferguson, with straw walker and twin-rotor hybrid combines from the Laverda plant in Italy, plus a full set of mowers, rakes and tedders made in the Fella factory in Germany, and large square balers from the Hesston plant in the US. Laverda, Fella and Hesston are owned by MF and Fendt parent AGCO, but the launch of the machines in green stems from AGCO's plan to develop distinct distribution channels for the two brands, either through different dealers or through the one AGCO dealer having separate facilities and/or staff dedicated to each brand.

8. Also showing a large line-up of implements was Kubota (pic 8), courtesy of the integration into its

agricultural tractor line of a range of machinery from Kverneland. The latter retains its own dealers and Kverneland and Vicon brands, but in UK areas where there is scope to increase market coverage, Kubota's ag dealers are also being offered a full range of orange-liveried products from mowers, rakes and tedders to twin-disc fertiliser spreaders.

Meanwhile, shortly after LAMMA had closed its gates came confirmation from CNH Industrial that it had completed its acquisition of the grassland and arable equipment business of Kongskilde, which also includes brands such as Overum, Howard and JF. The deal has been channelled through CNHi's New Holland Agriculture business, and the firm says this will result in New Holland gaining a significant extension to its product portfolio offering. The Kongskilde brand, sales organisations, dealers and importers, though, will continue to be developed and serviced, according to CNHi. New Holland already sells a comprehensive line of forage and tillage equipment in North America, but its European implement offering is currently limited mainly to balers.

9. Irish diet feeder specialist Keenan, which last year came under the ownership of new parent Alltech, a livestock nutrition company, chose LAMMA to give a UK debut to its first vertical auger diet feeder (pic 9), which comes about courtesy of the firm's recently-announced collaboration with Italian firm Storti. The range of VA models includes 18, 21 and 24 cu m single axle machines, 24, 27, 30 and 33 cu m tandem axle types, and 36, 40 and 44 cu m versions with triple axles. Key features include front right and rear left discharge doors, tungsten-coated auger blades and two additional blades located at the top of each auger, claimed to provide faster bale processing. The company is promising further product news at SIMA in late February.

10. Direct drill firm Claydon, which this year is marking 15 years in the sector, now has a 3m trailed version of its Hybrid drill (pic 10), previously only available as a mounted model. Also new from the firm is a 4.8m addition to the trailed Hybrid range, slotting into the line to target farmers on 24m tramlines who are unable or unwilling to invest in a 6m drill. The move broadens the firm's trailed range to five models (3-8m). The Suffolk firm now has a widespread UK dealer network, but says it still has gaps to fill.

11. Amazone dealers now have a second, lighter range of ploughs to add to the German firm's Cayron range. While the latter are designed and built in Amazone's own factory in Germany, the new Cayros line (pic 11) results from the acquisition of Vogel and Noot's plough

10



11



business. The new Cayros line comprises three- to six-furrow fully-mounted models split into five series according to the power of the tractors they will be paired with. At the bottom are 3/4f models for tractors up to 120hp, with a 78cm clearance and interbody clearances of 95 and 102cm. Next come 4-6f models for tractors up to 140/200/260hp, and then the XS Pro range for tractors up to 380hp.

12. Showing off a plough range for the first time was Alpego UK (pic 12). Sourced from Italian maker Moro Aratri, the line spans models from five to nine furrows and several formats, including mounted in-furrow, mounted in-furrow/on-land and semi-mounted in-furrow/on-land. Bigger models are in the pipeline. The on-land/in furrow ploughs feature a patented pivoting headstock for transport which can be locked for fieldwork, while ploughs of up to six furrows can be specified with a folding system to reduce transport length.

13. Polish long-line implement maker Zagroda continues to expand its offering, which covers everything from grassland and cultivation equipment to drills, sprayers and fertiliser spreaders, plus livestock machinery (pic 13). With various new machines on

display at the show, the firm says it is seeking to fill a number of dealer areas. ●



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WINTER SERVICING SURVEY 2017

Workshops have been even busier this winter

We had a superb response to our Winter Servicing Survey which showed some positive results for dealership's workshops. Significantly, 54% of respondents said that servicing work this winter was up or well up on the levels it had been the previous year.

This is following a similar survey we did this time last year where just a touch fewer respondents (51%) said the same thing.

Again weather came top when looking for factors which most influence service levels with 52% citing this. This year, however, an increased number of respondents felt that their marketing activities played an important role, with 24% naming this as the decisive factor.

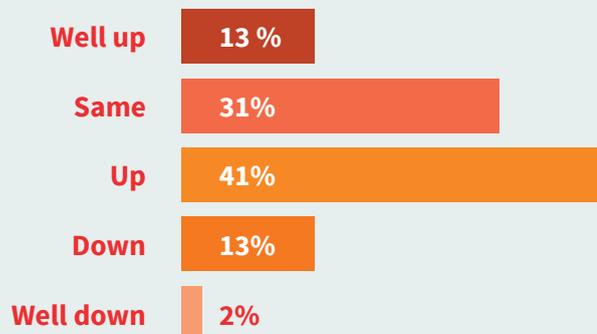
Labour rates, according to our respondents, had stayed the same for the majority, with 56% saying they

were charging the same as the previous year. The 44% that had increased their rates had, in the main, done so by up to 5% (59%).

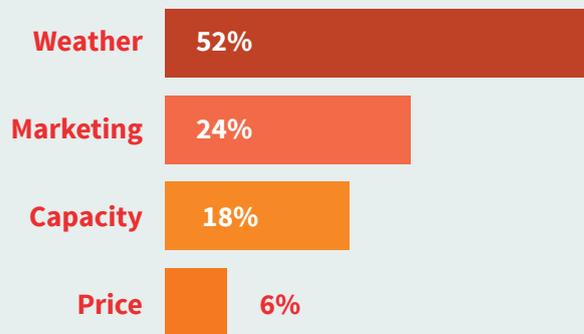
Service staffing still seems to be causing problems for dealers with almost all respondents describing the recruiting process as either moderately or extremely difficult – this has barely changed since last year. And again similar to last year, the majority of dealers who took the survey said they were not looking to increase service staff levels (81%).

In terms of the training available for service staff, "satisfactory" appears to be how most of the respondents view the courses currently available, with only 19% describing them as "inadequate".

How are servicing levels this winter compared with last?



What factors most influence your winter servicing levels?



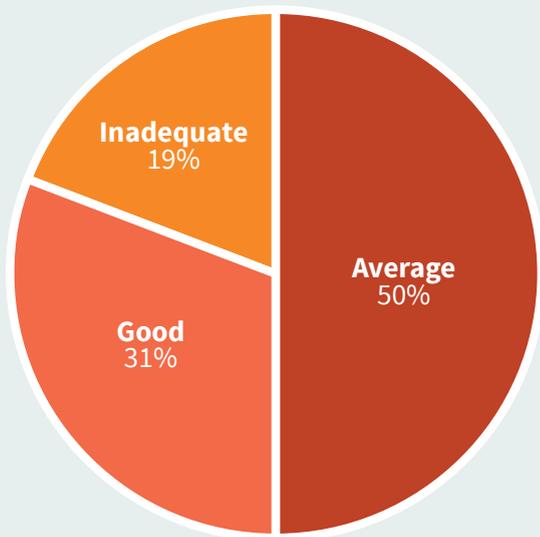
Have you increased your labour rates in the past year?



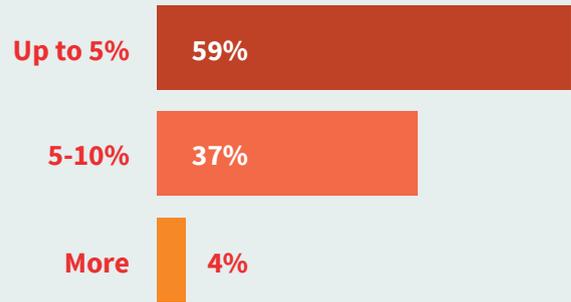
Have you increased your service staffing levels this past year?



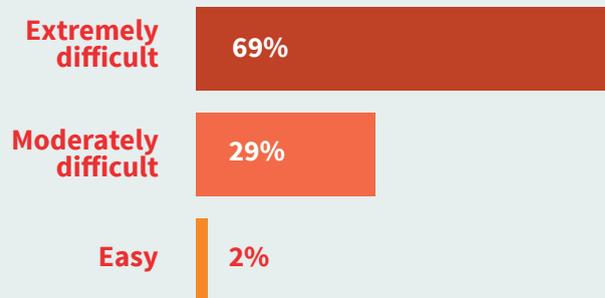
Do you find the standard of training courses available to your service staff...



If you have increased your labour rates this past year, by how much?



When you do want to increase service staffing levels, do you find the process...



YOUR SAY

WE ASKED YOU: "ARE THERE ANY KEY ISSUES WHICH ARE IMPACTING ON THE SERVICE SIDE OF YOUR BUSINESS?"

- Finding good staff is really difficult. There is a real problem in recruiting people into this industry. We certainly struggle to find the right calibre of people to fit our criteria.
- Recruiting quality staff is hard. I have an apprentice in his 4th year and there are only two of them left on the course – he started with 20+ of them!
- The low spec and low priced machinery is not being serviced but discarded for another cheap machine.
- Sending out service reminders at the end of November really helps to get work into our store.
- Companies and customers taking too long to pay bills is a real problem.
- Cost of new machines vs cost of service affects customer willingness to service their machine.
- Internet retailers selling products with no spares back-up is a problem.
- Finding good mechanics is a struggle.
- We find recruiting well qualified technicians to be a very difficult process. ●

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A BUZZING BTME

The educational programme for greenkeepers is its engine, but with plenty of machinery developments, Editor STEVE GIBBS found a trip to Harrogate most worthwhile

There's no denying that attending a trade show as a visitor can be expensive.

You've got travel costs, accommodation if you are intending on going into the show for a couple of days, expensive food options – and possibly the highest cost of all, your time. Time away from your business at any point in the year can be costly in many ways, financially speaking only being the half of it!

However, I would argue, if you can organise a window of opportunity for yourself, the trade events that our industry is currently providing, offer genuine value.

Service Dealer had to split itself in

two again during January to be in both Harrogate and Peterborough for BTME and LAMMA. That perennial problem of these events clashing shows no sign of abating. I spoke to several individuals at the International Centre, who were preparing to shoot off down the motorway because they wanted, or were required to, attend both shows.

Luckily, as you have already seen in this issue, *Service Dealer* could send our agricultural expert Martin Rickatson to cover LAMMA for us editorially, but in an ideal world (from our perspective) these events would be at least a week apart. That way, whoever wished to check out what was on display at both, or indeed man a stand at both, could do so comfortably.

But I suppose the issue is that as these events' primary target audience are two completely different sectors of end-user (greenkeepers and farmers), the organisers have little impetus to get together and make arrangements not to overlap.

Well attended

Anyway, as I said, I attended BTME and it seemed to be buzzing and well populated.

BIGGA issued a statement on the last day of the show saying that 5,260 people had made their way through the doors of the Harrogate International Centre.

When BIGGA's CEO Jim Croxton addressed the press on day two, he said the association had been delighted with how the first day had gone, saying it was around 300 visits up on the first day of the previous year.

He said: "I feel we are closer to the golf industry now than we have ever been."

Numbers at BTME certainly seem to be helped by golf clubs allowing whole teams to visit the show – this feeling different to what is currently happening at the new SALTEX, with mostly just the senior, purchasing decision makers attending.

The hugely popular Continue To Learn education programme is no doubt the major factor which encourages clubs to allow groups of greenkeepers to visit Harrogate.



Reesink Turfcare's Toro display attracted the crowds at Harrogate

Organisers said that 3,094 individual educational experiences took place during the week and Jim Croxton described Continue To Learn as “..the engine of our event”.

The show itself was smaller this year, in terms of floor space, with Hall Q which had been utilised for the past couple of editions, not in use. It was a bit of a ghost hall last year to be honest, and several of the people I spoke to were glad that it was gone as it just didn't generate the same levels of foot-traffic as the rest of the halls did.

This meant that as you walked through the main entrance to Hall M, all the machinery big boys were in one place.

It certainly made a lot more sense thematically to have Kubota in there this year, alongside John Deere, Toro, and Jacobsen – rather than tucked away at the back of the International Centre as they were last time.

Machinery developments

In terms of big machinery news at the show, there were a couple of interesting developments announced.

Advanced Turf Technology (ATT), maker of the TMSystem and INFINiCut premium sportsground cutting equipment, announced that it has sold out to MTD, owner of Cub Cadet. John Coleman MD of ATT and inventor of the systems, told the press that the machines would continue to be manufactured in Sheffield, but the machines would be marketed worldwide under the Cub Cadet brand.

Also announced at the show was that Price Turfcare, a newly established business founded by Ransomes Jacobsen's former International Sales Director, Rupert Price, has been awarded the UK and Ireland distribution rights for Ventrac. Further details on these stories follow this article.

Jacobsen itself, meanwhile, gave a presentation on how Ransomes in Ipswich fits into the global structure of the company now that it has had something of a rejig. Under the umbrella of TSV (Textron Specialised Vehicles) Ransomes holds a key position worldwide in what it terms the 'Equipment' bracket. Alan Prickett stressed how vital Ipswich remained to Jacobsen's worldwide profile. In the States production of Jacobsen turf care machinery is shifting from Charlotte to Augusta into a brand new, multi-million-dollar facility.

So once again I found the trip to North Yorkshire to be valuable, informative and enjoyable. I'm sure that the greenkeepers in attendance found plenty to get their teeth into during the educational sessions, and the exhibitors had enough visitors in attendance to hopefully attract the ones with spending power to their stands.

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NEW DISTRIBUTOR FOR VENTRAC

Price Turfcare launched in Harrogate and appointed first dealers

Price Turfcare launched at BTME and announced it had been awarded the UK and Ireland distribution rights for Ventrac all-wheel-drive compact tractors.

Supported by a group of former colleagues with over 100 years of experience in the grounds care sector, Rupert Price said the new company has bespoke warehousing and distribution facilities near

Bury St Edmunds in Suffolk, with excellent road links via the A14 trunk road to all parts of the UK and to Europe's largest container port at Felixstowe.

Speaking on the final day of the show, Rupert said: "I can honestly say that we could not have had a better launch pad for the business than we have experienced over the past three days. It's great to be back

in the heart of the industry and I have received many good wishes from former colleagues, former competitors and customers during the event.

"It was manic getting everything together for the show in such a contracted timescale, but BTME was too good an opportunity to miss. Jim Croxton and the BIGGA team have been fantastic and incredibly supportive and I thank them for that.

"However, by far and away, the best part has been how well the Ventrac product has been received by potential customers and prospective dealers. Our aim was to get the product known and appoint dealers to cover the UK and this has exceeded all my expectations. We've had serious enquiries across the grounds care sector and significant interest from a major hire company. Seven dealers have been appointed and now the hard work begins following up all the enquiries from the show.

"I must also thank Tim Jeffries from Ventrac who flew in from Ohio to support the launch. His product knowledge has been invaluable when talking to prospective customers and distributors.

"Ventrac has made a leap of faith by giving my fledgling business the distribution rights for UK and Ireland and I hope he can report back that the decision is wholly justified.

"We've done what we set out to do this week and now the hard work really begins. I can't wait to get out there and begin getting these products into the marketplace."



Rupert Price and the team, which includes Peter Driver

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CUB CADET ACQUIRES ATT

Expanding presence in sportsturf market

It was announced in Harrogate that Cub Cadet has acquired Advanced Turf Technology (ATT), the UK-based manufacturer of cutting reel mowers and cassettes specially designed for the sports field and golf maintenance markets.

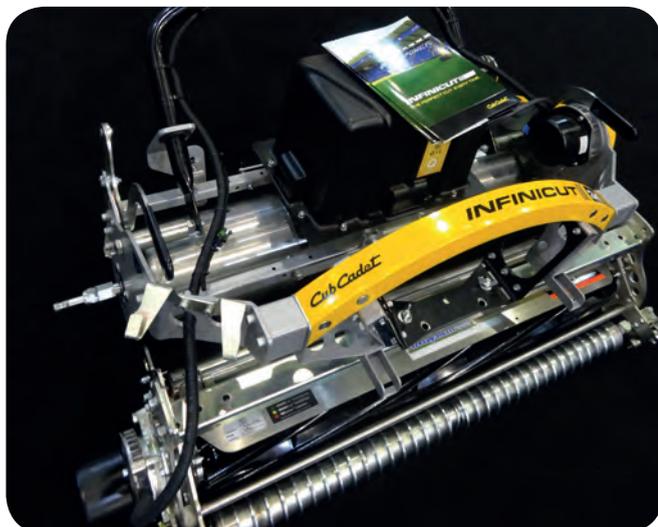
Cub Cadet say the recent acquisition and continued investment in technology is part of their commitment to provide turf professionals with innovative power equipment and tools to cover all aspects of precision turf care. This acquisition follows the recent acquisitions of CORE Outdoor Power (CORE) and Precise Path Robotics.

"The addition of Advanced Turf Technology into the MTD family further demonstrates our ongoing commitment to the professional turf markets," said Rob Moll, CEO, MTD Products, which includes the Cub Cadet brand. "Cub Cadet is dedicated to providing innovative products that enable turf managers worldwide to produce the highest quality playing surfaces. Beyond improving productivity, these products enhance environmental stewardship - an increasingly important attribute for many groundsman and facilities worldwide."

Flagship products from Advanced Turf Technology include the TMSystem and the INFiNiCut. These products have been used by Premier League clubs, golf courses, and sporting facilities around the world.

The INFiNiCut combines a lithium power source with user programmable frequency of clip rate and a dynamic return floating head, allowing the groundsman to optimise machine configuration to turf conditions present on any given day.

The ability to set a mower in this way is a first for the sports field sector and Cub Cadet believe this will lead their entry into the premium sports turf market.



CHARTERHOUSE ROLLER IN WITH NEW MODEL

Graden Z2R launched



Charterhouse Turf Machinery launched a new turf roller from Graden.

The new Graden Z2R (Zero to Roll) is a stand-alone unit that requires no trailer and no unhooking. It is designed for efficient rolling and, being fitted with three wheels which can be raised and lowered as required, quick and easy transportation between the greens.

The Z2R uses zero turn technology to propel the unit forward providing a travel speed of up to 11mph from green to green, and 8.5mph while rolling. The Graden FLEX system provides a constant positive pressure across all rollers while keeping a relatively low PSI on the greens.

The company says one of the biggest benefits is the reduction in manual handling. Being self-contained results in no lifting, hitching or positioning eliminating a lot of the issues relating to health and safety as well as making the whole process much quicker. It also frees up the utility vehicle that would usually be required to conduct the rolling, making it available for other essential tasks around the course.

It has a fuel capacity of 28 litres which should manage around 26 large greens without the need to carry additional fuel. Because of this, the Z2R features a utility tray which can carry a hole cutter and other associated kit. ●

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JOHN DEERE LAUNCH NEW SPECIALIST SERIES

5G Series includes four model ranges

John Deere's latest 5G Series specialist tractor line-up includes four model ranges featuring 3.4-litre Stage IIIB engines with rated power outputs of 75 to 105hp (97/68/EC).

The company says this newly updated series has been specifically designed to provide high levels of comfort, power, hydraulic performance and manoeuvrability to customers who operate in orchards and vineyards, or for other applications which require a narrow tread width.

The 5GF, 5GN and 5GV Series tractors offer customers the choice of an open operator station or a new cab interior and controls layout. Cab features include an electronic hand throttle and new reversing lever, new left and right-hand consoles, a new display, 10% more space and an optional deluxe air suspension seat.

In addition the tractors have an improved turning radius of up to 15% and an increased hydraulic capacity of up to 126 litres/min, utilising three hydraulic pumps.

The 5GL Series 75, 90 and 100hp four-wheel drive models feature a new ex-factory low-profile cab, a

narrow width of 1.4m and a new 24F/12R PowrReverser transmission.

These tractors are particularly suitable for pergola-style vineyard plantations and feature the same increased hydraulic capacity as the other models in the 5G specialist range.



JD's 5G Series

TYM FOR A NEW MID-DUTY COMPACT



New economy TE40 from Reesink Turfcare

Reesink Turfcare has launched the new economy TE40, which it says is suitable for the price-conscious customer who needs a good rugged mid-range tractor.

The TE40 is powered by a 40hp three-cylinder, liquid-cooled diesel engine, available with either a manual or HST transmission. It joins all the other models in the range with its hydrostatic power-steering for manoeuvrability and a tight turning circle, plus a heavy-duty, four-wheel-drive front axle for greater traction where needed.

Suiting general grounds maintenance tasks such as clearing barns, the company believes the unit is a good choice for smallholdings and private homeowners looking for an economical and easy-to-use mid-range compact tractor.

SIROMER'S COMPACT CHOICE

254CH either comes flat packed or pre-built

Forming part of Siromer's road-legal CH Range, the 254CH is fitted with a high torque, water-cooled, direct injection diesel engine with three cylinders.

Measuring 3,405mm x 1,440mm x 2,240mm (length x width x height) the 254CH features a Shuttle Gearbox, which incorporates an independent forward reverse lever, allowing the operator to switch between the two directions quickly and easily, making the 254CH suitable for loader work. With a lift capacity of 800kg and a turning circle of 3,200mm it offers manoeuvrability in compact spaces.

Other features include:

- **Selectable 4WD – driver operated 4WD for greater traction when you require it**
- **Shuttle Gearbox – giving eight**

forward and eight reverse gear options with a top speed of 18KMH

- **PTO Speed – two speed – 540 and 1,000 rpm**
- **Hydraulic Power Steering**
- **Dual Double Acting Hydraulic System – giving 20L/min, for use with tipping trailers, log splitters and a range of additional equipment**
- **Three Point Linkage (CAT I)**

Available in the traditional Siromer red the unit is priced at £5,995 +VAT. It can be purchased as a flat-pack option, giving customers the opportunity to build it themselves or it can be built by Siromer or one of its nationwide partner dealers.

The 254CH can be fitted with a Front End Loader (B861 model),



which is a self-levelling loader designed specifically for the 254CH. The loader offers a lift capacity of 400kg and a digging depth of 140mm. The bucket has a 0.2 m³ capacity.

Siromer says it also offers a huge choice of equipment that is designed to work with the whole of the Siromer range (16–50hp) such as mowers, toppers, ploughs, balers and maintenance equipment.

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KIOTI UK'S MOVE COMPLETE

Now based on the outskirts of St Neots

Kioti UK completed its move from the former Reco premises in Station Road, St Neots at the end of last



year and now has an identity in its own right.

The company is now based in offices attached to Abbotsley Golf Hotel on the outskirts of St Neots with warehousing facilities located just one mile away.

Kioti UK Ltd started operations on 1st February last year following the closure of RECO. Owned by the Pols group, which is based in Holland, and responsible for Kioti sales throughout a number of European countries, the UK operation is staffed by former RECO employees who possess a wide knowledge of the range of Kioti products.

One of the company's pressing criteria was to locate a suitable premises for its operation and General Manager Patrick Desmond is delighted with the new premises. "It gives us a firm base for development for the future in a rural location," he said. "With hotel facilities onsite we have the facility to invite our dealers for training and onsite demonstration work."

Further details on the Kioti range of compact tractors, utility vehicles and mowing machinery can be found on the company's website or by calling 01480 401512.



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A NARROW VICTORY FOR NEW HOLLAND

T4 FNV series for orchards, vineyards and specialty applications

New Holland Agriculture has introduced the new T4 FNV series of narrow tractors for orchards, vineyards and specialty applications.

The tractors run 3.4-litre four-cylinder engine developed by FPT Industrial. The Common Rail turbocharged engines deliver power ranging from 75 hp to 107 hp, with maximum torque of 444 Nm on the T4.110 VNF at the top of the line up. The new FPT engine delivers a better performance than its predecessor, resulting in a more powerful tractor as well as lower cost of ownership.

The new T4NFV series complies with Tier 4A emissions standards

using a Cooled Exhaust Gas Recirculation (CEGR) system and second-generation Diesel Oxidation Catalyst (DOC) technology. This solution results in a compact engine installation that is well suited to the space constraints in Specialty Tractors. It doesn't require filter regeneration, there is no filter to replace and the engine hardware is simpler so that maintenance is easier, and the temperature on the muffler's external surface is lower.

The fuel tank capacity on the T4.110F has been increased by 20 litres to 98 litres, resulting in best-in-class fuel autonomy and a consequent increase in productivity, as fewer refuelling

stops mean more time in the field.

The T4NFV Series tractors feature large rear hitch lift capacities and are available with an electronic draft control system to provide more precise rear hitch control. They also feature a front three-point hitch with PTO, providing greater versatility while operating between rows. The heavy-duty front hitch has a lift capacity up to 1970 kg - double the capacity of the previous model. The redesigned front PTO is designed with a purely hydraulic PTO clutch that is directly linked to the engine shaft and delivers 93 PTO hp - 7% more than the previous model.

The new Engine Speed Management system accommodates fluctuations in engine load while maintaining the desired engine speed. The operator can set two different speeds and toggle between them with a simple switch. This is a simple and extremely fuel-efficient feature that adds to the excellent Total Cost of Ownership of the T4 FNV series.



BRANSON DEAL FOR DINGLEY DELL

Turf Machinery Engineering advise nursery

Dingley Dell Nurseries at Chobham near Woking is a family business that has been established for more than 60 years.

They have earned a great reputation supplying garden centres and landscapers with a wide range of shrubs and herbaceous plants.

When the time came to replace a tractor they took advice from Andy Weinel at nearby Turf Machinery Engineering and purchased a 74hp Branson K78.

Clive Newington of Dingley Dell said, "Although I had not seen a Branson tractor before I was immediately impressed with the appearance and quality of the finish. When I started to use it I was even more delighted with the cab layout, easy controls and manoeuvrability especially the shifting

between forward and reverse. This made mowing around the site with a flail mower or moving stock with a fore-end loader so much easier.

"I also found that with Branson you get a lot more for your money plus the service from Turf Machinery Engineering." ●





WORKERS' RIGHTS

WORKPLACE MONITORING

It's not unreasonable for employers to want to be confident that their staff are doing their job and not wasting time, writes *SME Digest* Editor, Adam Bernstein. It seems, then, that employee monitoring goes hand-in-hand with staff management.

But how far can monitoring go?

Put simply, employers do have the right to monitor staff while at work. Whether via CCTV, watching email, listening to calls or checking phone logs, noting website visits or checking tills for operator abuse, employers can act. However, these forms of monitoring are covered by data protection law.

It's important that employers, before monitoring, should understand why they are monitoring; consider any negative effects through an impact assessment; consider if there are alternatives to monitoring and use the least intrusive method; and finally, contemplate if the monitoring is really justified.

In general, employers must tell employees that

monitoring is in place, what is being monitored and why it is necessary. If there's a strong justification allied with an impact assessment the consent of staff members will not be necessary.

Monitoring is legal if the equipment is provided by the employer for work purposes; if the monitoring relates to work; and, most importantly, if the employer has reasonably tried to tell employees that they are to be monitored.

What counts as a justifiable reason for monitoring without the need for consent? The law says: where it's to check facts that are relevant to the business, to check that procedures are being followed, or to check standards.

The reality of this means that employers can monitor to prevent or detect crime; to make sure that systems are working properly and effectively; to watch for unauthorised use of telecoms systems, web and email; to see if received emails or phone-calls are relevant to the business; and for any purposes that relate to the interests of national security.

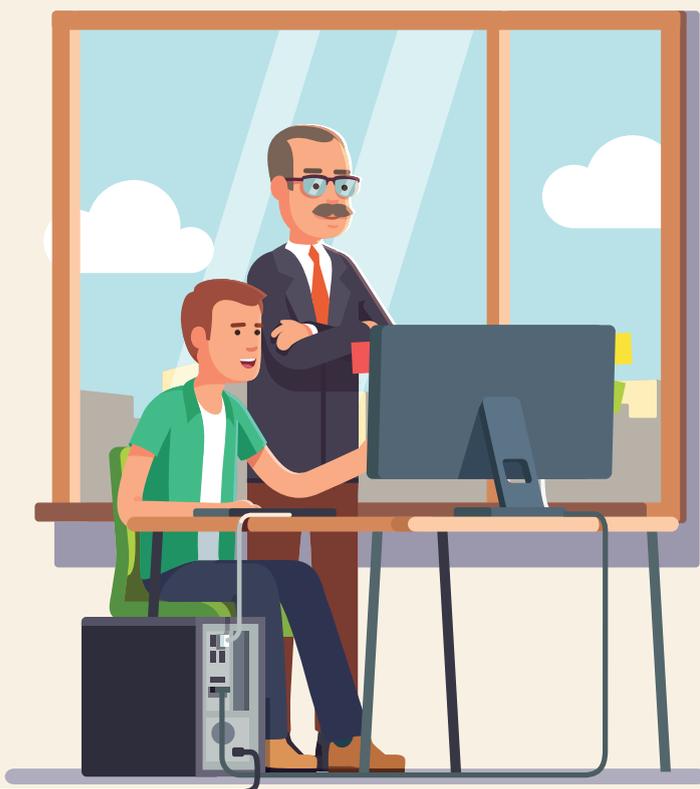
Can employers use secret methods of monitoring? In a nutshell, no, as it's rarely legal because data protection law requires that staff are told of ongoing monitoring. Further, the law requires no secret monitoring be allowed in areas such as staff toilets where there's an expectation of privacy, unless there is serious crime involved.

The best solution for employers wanting to monitor staff is to write (and communicate) a policy to all staff. The policy should then be incorporated into the employment contract making offences subject to the workplace disciplinary procedure.

See www.acas.org.uk/index.aspx?articleid=5721



Edited by Adam Bernstein



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MAINTAINING COVER

SME Digest editor Adam Bernstein writes, the Insurance Act 2015 came in on 12th August 2016 and brings the most significant reform to how businesses buy insurance in more than 100 years. Whether you buy buildings or contents cover for your business, motor cover for vans, or public and employee liability cover, this new legislation is going to affect how you buy insurance.

Under the new Act, there is now a duty governing the information that you must disclose before a policy is taken out – the “Duty of Fair Presentation”. A failure to comply may provide insurers with grounds to refuse to pay your claim, or reduce what they pay. You now need to disclose not only information you know, but also information which you ought to know. This includes material information which should have been revealed by a “reasonable search”.

The old automatic remedy of avoidance – effectively cancellation – of a policy in the event that a policyholder fails to disclose material information to an insurer, has been replaced by a range of “proportionate remedies” based on what the insurer would have done had a fair presentation been made. This includes amending the terms of the policy to those it would have agreed had a fair presentation been

made or paying only a proportion of the claim.

Insurance policies frequently contain various terms such as “warranties” and “conditions precedent”. These are conditions an insured business must comply with – say a working smoke alarm or a set of anti-ram raid posts.

Previously, breaches automatically permitted insurers to refuse a claim. However, the Act has the effect of transforming

to rely on a breach of the fire alarm warranty in declining a flood claim.

In business contracts, the parties to a policy are free to contract out of any part of the Act, apart from those relating to basis clauses – a declaration stating that representations made by the policyholder are true and accurate. The Act allows contracting out, removing the rights that the new Act confers on policyholders and you need to be aware of this.

“YOU NOW NEED TO DISCLOSE NOT ONLY INFORMATION YOU KNOW, BUT ALSO INFORMATION WHICH YOU OUGHT TO KNOW”

warranties into “suspensory conditions”. Here the insurer can deny your claims while you are in breach of warranty, but if fixed your cover will restart.

Further, an insurer will only be allowed to rely on a breach of a warranty or condition precedent in declining a claim if your loss is connected to the breach. For example, an insurer will not be able

Overall the Act should be welcomed. However, you need to understand what information you are required to disclose to insurers and what searches need to be carried out to reveal this information.

See <https://broker.aviva.co.uk/document-library/files/in/insuranceact2015guide.pdf>

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MENTAL HEALTH IN THE WORKPLACE

According to a charity, the Centre for Mental Health, 91m working days are lost in the UK to mental health problems every year and nearly half of all long-term sickness absences are caused by mental health problems, writes *Lee Ashwood, Senior Associate in the employment department of Eversheds.*

If an employee has good mental health, they will feel good about themselves, work productively, interact well with colleagues and make a valuable contribution. Unfortunately, good mental health is rarely continuous. Someone may have good mental health generally but, for example, may suffer with stress from time to time – and the smaller the dealer the greater the risk of one individual being overloaded.

Failing to spot or deal with the mental health issues of an employee can exacerbate their problems. Ultimately it may result in the employee making a claim against the employer in the Employment Tribunal.

If you think an employee might have mental health problems, it is important that you approach them sensitively. Drawing comparisons with others or attributing blame because of their behaviour may only worsen the situation.

It is important to remember that mental health issues affect everyone differently and those with long-term

mental health problems, that is lasting or likely to last more than 12 months, will most likely be deemed to be “disabled” by an Employment Tribunal. This, in turn, means they are entitled to have “reasonable adjustments”, such as flexible working hours, a quieter working space or increased supervision so that they are not at a disadvantage when compared with their colleagues. A failure to make reasonable adjustments is a common claim of discrimination and, accordingly, compensation in Employment Tribunals.

If you do not help your employee by implementing reasonable adjustments you will probably find their mental health does not improve, their productivity drops and their absences increase. Worse, you may find your dealership facing a claim that you have failed to make reasonable adjustments from the employee. If the employee succeeds they may be awarded as much as £33,000 to compensate them for any upset caused and also any financial loss they have suffered as well.

Remember, help is at hand through mental health charities and organisations such as ACAS.

See www.mind.org.uk/workplace/mental-health-at-work and www.acas.org.uk/index.aspx?articleid=1900

SME NEWS

Stop late payments

The Federation of Small Businesses has published a report looking at the way small firms and the wider economy are affected by poor payment practice. *Time to Act: The economic impact of poor payment practice*, has found that existing policy interventions have had no discernible effect on tackling problems around the UK’s poor payment culture in the past five years. Small businesses report that, on average, 30% of payments are typically late compared with 28% in 2011.

The impact on small businesses can be devastating. The report shows that 37% have run into cash flow difficulties, 30% have been forced to use an overdraft and 20% say that late payment has hit profits. At the extreme end, late payments and resulting cash flow

difficulties have caused businesses to fail.

See [www.fsb.org.uk/docs/default-source/fsb-org-uk/fsb-report--late-payments-2016-\(final\).pdf?sfvrsn=0](http://www.fsb.org.uk/docs/default-source/fsb-org-uk/fsb-report--late-payments-2016-(final).pdf?sfvrsn=0)

Government makes it easier to crackdown on nuisance calls

From 30th December 2016, the Telephone Preference Service (TPS) was transferred from Ofcom to the Information Commissioners Office (ICO) and a transferral of powers means that ICO can deal with complaints at a quicker rate.

TPS is a free service for mobile and landline phone users, which blocks unsolicited sales and marketing calls.

Previously, Ofcom kept up-to-date registers of the telephone and fax numbers of people who have notified TPS that they do not

wish to receive direct marketing calls. But by placing responsibility for the service with the ICO, which currently levies fines to nuisance call firms, it will be even easier for the ICO to go after companies in breach of the Privacy and Electronic Communications Regulations (PECR). It further has the power to clamp down on organisations that make unsolicited telephone calls to those registered to TPS without their consent.

As the ICO has direct access to the data, it also has control over how the register is maintained, as well as how complaints are recorded and handled.

See www.gov.uk/government/news/government-makes-it-easier-to-crackdown-on-nuisance-calls-crooks

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

ARIENS INVESTS IN APPRENTICES

Aim is to recruit two every year

Ariens Company says it recognises the need to invest in the next generation of British engineers, to build on its culture of nurturing the best talent.

The Ariens Company Apprenticeship Programme started in 2014 and the aim is to recruit two new apprentices every year to ensure and maintain this success.

Tanya Bezuidenhout, Ariens HR Manager UK and Scandinavia, says, “Developing new talent within engineering is key to the business’s success. With the current skills shortage in engineering, we’re proud to show our commitment in this economic climate, by making long-term investment in new talent, offering extensive training and career development opportunities.

“It’s so rewarding to witness our apprentices grow in confidence and become skilled engineers. We’ve been really pleased with how things have been going and we’re now looking to recruit two more apprentices to grow our talent pool further.”

Ariens Company currently has three apprentices across different areas of the business ranging from Tool Making to Electrical Engineering: Charlie Crago (20) Tool Maker Apprentice – Level 3 NVQ Extended

Diploma in Engineering Toolmaking; Max Tod (20) Manufacturing Mechanical Engineer Apprentice – Level 3 NVQ Extended Diploma in Mechanical Manufacturing Engineering and Christopher Duckham (18) Electrical Engineer Apprentice – Level 3 NVQ Extended Diploma in Electrical and Electronic Engineering. Although each apprentice position is full-time, they also spend one day a week at college studying for a professional qualification.

“I was attracted to the apprenticeship straightaway,” says Charlie Crago. “Its well-developed pathway meant I was learning from an expert who would take a personal interest in my development and skills.”

Max Tod endorses this: “I’m so glad I decided to give an apprenticeship a go. It’s a great way to gain experience on the job and quickly develop new skills.”

Ariens says the success of the Countax and Westwood brands is down to the people who build the tractors. Each and every employee is passionate about Ariens’ products and they continuously work to drive quality at each stage of the manufacturing process.

To find out more about Ariens Company’s UK Apprenticeship Programme contact Tanya Bezuidenhout on 01844 278 800.



Dave Chivers (second left) with the apprentices whose progress he is helping to oversee: L-R Christopher Duckham, Charlie Crago and Max Tod

AGCO AWARDS APPRENTICES

Vital for the future of the industry



James Booth is presented with the AGCO Academy 2017 Apprentice of the Year Award by BAGMA Director Keith Christian

Industry experts and training professionals from across the agriculture sector told the audience during the AGCO Academy Apprentice Awards ceremony, that the importance of high service levels at agricultural dealerships is crucial to the future success of the industry, and this is underpinned by the emergence of newly qualified dealership technicians.

During the awards ceremony, hosted by AGCO in the 17th year of its industry-recognised apprenticeship scheme, recently qualified apprentices and guests heard from a number of keynote speakers about the importance of bringing in and retaining young agricultural engineers to the industry.

Freddie Pullan, AGCO's Technical Training Manager, told the audience that the investment AGCO places in its apprenticeships scheme is fundamental to its future plans, particularly in the crucial UK and Irish markets.

"New technicians are the key component to the success of our dealership networks, so we place huge investment in the apprenticeships, as do our dealers. But equally we get the returns in terms of the most skilled technicians coming out at the end of their training."

The apprenticeship scheme combines classroom and workshop based training at Warwickshire and Worcestershire College Group's (WCG) Moreton Morrell campus and practical on-going training at the apprentices' dealership. It is co-ordinated by Course Leader Tim Hutchinson of WCG in conjunction with the AGCO training team.

Winners

The big winners on the day, B&B Tractors of Warsop, Nottinghamshire, echoed Mr Pullan's comments. The Massey Ferguson, Challenger and Fendt dealership has four depots covering a customer base spread over eight counties, and was delighted to see its apprentices pick up two of the

key awards at the ceremony.

James Booth, based at B&B's Tideswell depot in Derbyshire, picked up the prestigious Apprentice of the Year Award, while his colleague Jonathan Cook, based at the company's head depot in Warsop, collected the Most Improved Apprentice of the Year Award.

They were joined by B&B Tractors' Group After-sales Manager Andrew Walker, and Group Services Manager Barry Hammond, who were justifiably proud. "We've been using the AGCO apprenticeship scheme since 2011, and have now had eight qualified technicians come through the scheme," said Mr Walker.

The other key winner on the day was Glasgow-based Matt Griffin, who was voted by his peers as the Apprentices' Apprentice of the Year.

Tony Linfield, AGCO's Training Development Manager said: "We want to encourage youngsters to stay on in the agriculture industry – do something practical, get paid but also receive a qualification. It also demonstrates our commitment to our network of dealers – they're incredibly important to us and we want them to have the very best staff that they can."



The 2016 AGCO Academy apprentices were joined by the AGCO training team and WCG's course tutors to receive their award

LTA LEVEL 4 ACHIEVED

One of the highest training accolades for Clive Pinnock



Clive Pinnock

Reesink Turfcare's Clive Pinnock, who has been in the industry for over 32 years, is the first in the turfcare sector to achieve a level four in the Landbased Technician Accreditation scheme (LTA), one of the highest training accolades there is.

Clive completed all his training through Reesink, which was

recognised as an assessment training centre in 2016 by the administrators of the LTA scheme to offer training to level two and three.

Neil Adams, Commercial Training Manager at Reesink Turfcare, said: "Clive has been granted LTA four status by the Engineering Council for his services to the industry over the past 30 years, which is a fine achievement. By gaining this LTA four award Clive is now recognised as both an associate member and a Master Technician by the IAgRE."

The LTA scheme is supported and developed with the backing of the major manufacturers of agricultural, horticultural, forestry and grounds care equipment and is administered by IAgRE on behalf of the industry. It provides a common means of benchmarking, monitoring and assessing, while also providing encouragement and recognition for both employers and

technicians and other employees who voluntarily commit to continual professional development in pursuit of technical support excellence.

Neil said he hopes this LTA four award "will highlight the importance of loyalty to others not only to the LTA training scheme but to the industry and its organisations as a whole".

Clive said this training will complement his "lifetime of experience" and he hopes it will benefit those he trains on the cutting technology and after-cut appearance training programme at Reesink.

"I wanted to add to my practical experience with the training qualifications I strongly believe in," he said, "so when Reesink was made a training centre it made absolute sense to go through the training pathway here and it's been a great experience."

APPRENTICE TRAINING FIRSTS FOR DEERE

First female and forestry technicians

John Deere's first female and forestry technicians have been registered in the latest intake for the company's award-winning apprenticeship scheme, managed by training provider ProVQ, which recently celebrated its 25th anniversary.

A total of 34 apprentices have signed up to begin their first year of training in the work-based Ag Tech, Parts Tech and Turf Tech advanced apprenticeship programmes, including Zoe Parker of dealer Ben Burgess Coates and Matthew McPherson of John Deere Forestry in Carlisle.

The apprentices, their families and sponsoring dealers attended an induction day at John Deere's Langar headquarters and were given a tour of the branch and a ride and drive session with the latest Gator utility vehicles. They also visited the new John Deere Apprentice Training Centre at nearby Radcliffe-on-Trent in Nottinghamshire. This is the British agriculture and turf industry's first and only purpose-built apprentice training facility, designed specifically and solely for John Deere dealer apprentices.

In addition the dealers took part in an employer's workshop, which provided an overview of developments to the scheme for 2017 and what will be required in terms of apprentice mentoring, support and career opportunities. This is in line with plans for the new Government-led apprenticeship framework that has recently been announced, which aims to attract three million apprentice starts by 2020. ●



John Deere's latest apprentice induction

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COMMERCIAL

MAKITA MATCH PETROL WITH CORDLESS SAW

36v direct drive 1,100-watt output motor

Makita says its new DUC353Z Twin 18v brushless motor chainsaw matches the logging performance of similar sized petrol-powered saws.

The saw's motor has a rated output of 1,100 watts, similar to a 32cc petrol machine, and comes fitted with an identical 35cm-long bar and a chain speed of 20 metres per second. Trials have shown that two fully charged 5.0Ah batteries will deliver over 60 cuts through five-inch diameter timber, at least seven linear

metres of cutting per charge.

This back-handle saw weighs 5.2kg ready to operate with an ergonomic soft-grip handle; variable speed trigger and constant speed control; automatic electric chain brake on trigger release, with kickback brake protection and lock-off lever.

The 200ml chain oil tank has adjustable flow through the pump with metal gears to the automatic chain lube system and has a capacity display window. The tool-less chain tensioning and adjustment system is included, while the strong metal spike bumper allows easier cutting. The chain catcher can be removed for machine servicing.

In addition to the drive brake safety systems the main power system is automatically turned off if the operator does not grip the lock-off lever 10 seconds after the machine is switched on. The same happens if the operator does not squeeze the trigger switch within one minute after switch-on, even if the lock-off lever is gripped.



COMMERCIAL

LOOK SHARP AND STAY SAFE WITH HUSQVARNA

2017 PPE clothing range launched

For 2017, Husqvarna has launched a new PPE range designed and developed with all types of applications in mind, and priced accordingly.

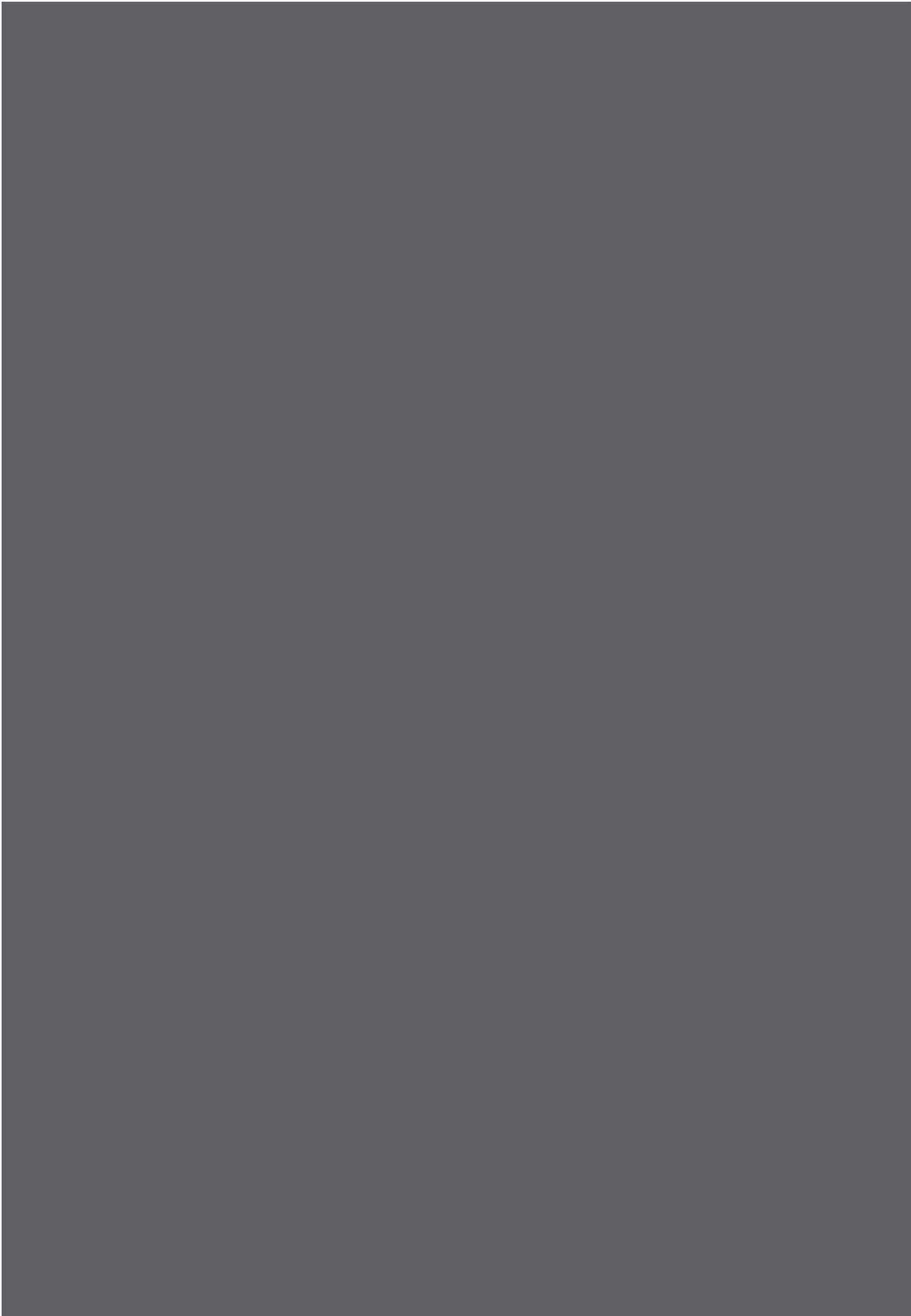
The whole range has been redesigned, including the Technical Type C Protective Trousers which now come in a charcoal grey colourway in a tight fit with pre-bent knees for extra comfort. The range also boasts a new feature on the Technical Extreme Protective Trousers, offering enhanced saw protection and water resistance thanks to

additional fibre and waterproof layers, all pre-bent for maximum comfort and movability.

Husqvarna's protective clothing is available in its Classic, Functional, Technical and Technical Extreme ranges with clothing suitable for domestic users up to forestry and arborist professionals. Each garment has been designed and developed with the user in mind to allow for effective and ergonomic features.

To read more about Husqvarna's new PPE Ranges visit www.husqvarna.com/uk





COMMERCIAL FORESTRY

TOP OF THE TREE

Lightest and most compact ECHO

ECHO's CS-2511TES top handle saw weighs in at 2.3kg (dry weight w/o bar and chain) making it the company's lightest and most compact saw to date.

The company says the engine produces 1.10kW to give the saw a superior power-to-weight ratio. The saw fits easily into the hand with its ergonomic contoured handle and patented palm rest for greater control and comfort. The controls are positioned logically and are easy to use, while the attention to detail that includes a swing-out lanyard ring enhances balance and makes climbing easier. There are narrow louvres in the body to prevent ingress of pine needles and debris penetration into the engine compartment.

Wider tank openings enable easier oil and fuel filling and the oil adjuster is on top for easy access. The starter grip cord allows the operator to open the oil and

fuel caps, even when wearing gloves, for easier maintenance. A dropout prevention nut is held on with a wire spring so it cannot be lost when the operator needs to maintain the chainsaw, even if they are at a great height.



DOMESTIC

AN AGILE AND OPEN VIKING

MR 4082 mows lawns of up to 4,000m²

Viking says the MR4082 mows lawns of up to 4000m² quickly and comfortably.

The unit has an open design at the front allowing the user to clearly see the mowing area. Compact in design and with a small turning radius of 70cm, the MR 4082 features a steel mowing deck offering a cutting width of 80cm.

Powered by a VIKING EVC 4000 motor which boasts 16% more power compared with the previous model, it features a 6.5L fuel tank.

The ride-on mower comes with a 250L grass catcher box as standard, incorporating a level indicator that emits an audible signal when the box requires emptying.

Depending on the density, dampness and cutting height of the grass, the gardener

can determine the signal threshold for the beep, ensuring that the volume of the grass catcher bag is always utilised effectively.

To empty the grass catcher box the user, without dismounting, pulls the long, ergonomically-positioned lever, tipping the catcher upwards. Due to the excavator-shovel-like shape and smooth floor of the box, the grass clippings will fall out on their own accord.

All the controls are arranged in a clearly laid out control panel. Push the selector lever on the steering wheel forwards and press the pedal to drive forward. Reversing is equally simple by moving the lever backwards. Unique to VIKING, this intuitive system provides added safety and comfort for the user as the right foot remains on the drive pedal during all manoeuvres. The driving speed can be controlled due to a variable speed hydraulic gearbox.

Activation of the mowing deck is simple. The electromagnetic blade clutch sets the blade in motion at the push of a button. The lever for cutting height adjustment is conveniently located close at hand, right next to the seat.



COMMERCIAL

SAMURAI ARRIVES IN UK

New UK and Ireland distributor for shaft-driven brushcutters

Bedford-based ICB Plant & Machinery Ltd has been granted the exclusive distributor rights to market the Japanese Canycom range of brushcutters in the UK and Ireland. Marketed under the Samurai brand, the company believes these are the only mechanical 4WD shaft-driven deck equipped all terrain brushcutter mowers in the UK marketplace.

ICB Plant & Machinery Limited, a family-run company, also holds the exclusive distributor rights in the UK and Ireland for Canycom construction tracked machinery.

MD, Ian Staniforth, said: "We're delighted to be the sole importer and distributor of these quality Japanese-made mowers. Their ability to destroy anything that passes under the cutter blades is incredible; their unique shaft drive makes them so much more destructive. The brushcutter videos on YouTube demonstrate their staggering capabilities."

The unique shaft drive means 100% of the power from the industrial Subaru engines is transferred to the cutting blades. This enables them to cut longer and taller vegetation, and branches up to 36mm.

The brushcutters are hand built using steel forged in their own factories, following centuries-old processes.

Notably, the quick release cutting blades are manufactured using the same processes as those of a Samurai sword (which the family made for generations before brushcutters).

These very low centre of gravity four-wheel drive machines have a stability angle of 30 degrees. An additional feature is the unique Hydro + Mechanical Drive system, which has all the benefits of an automatic transmission with the power of a mechanical drive.

Dealer opportunities are available in selected areas. Call 01234 436456. www.icbplant.co.uk



COMMERCIAL

EASY OPTION FROM PELLENC

Rasion Easy pedestrian rotary mower

Following the launch of the Pellenc Rasion Basic and Smart models in 2015, the company has announced the latest pedestrian rotary mower in the range: the Pellenc Rasion Easy.

The Rasion Easy is a combination of the previous two models as Etesia UK Operations Director Les Malin explains: "We found that the manual operation of the Rasion Basic has been more appropriate to commercial operators yet they also liked the self-propelled element of the Rasion Smart. For this reason, Pellenc has launched the Rasion Easy – a combination from both of the previous models."

The Rasion Easy has an IP54 water rating, which as time goes on

will be the standard through the rest of the Pellenc tool range, and features a grass density detector – a patented feature exclusive to Pellenc which allows the mower to detect the height and density of the grass and change the engine speed accordingly. This saves power as operators do not have to run the machine under full-load unnecessarily.

A cutting width of 60cm with height of cut between 25-75mm, 70L grass box capacity and two front swivel wheels ensure that the Rasion Easy is ultra-manoeuvrable. Weighing less than 30kg and folding handlebars aids transportation between sites.

All Pellenc batteries and tools come complete with a three-year commercial warranty as standard.



FASTER SOLO OR COMBINATION OPERATIONS

With new KUHN front-mounted disc mowers

KUHN Farm Machinery has expanded its range of front-mounted disc mowers with the addition of two new machines, both of which can be used either as solo machines or in combination with rear-mounted gear.

The GMD 3125 F (3.10m working width) and GMD 3525 F (3.50m) join the company's line-up of 2.80m and 3.10m machines and have been designed for solo operations or for use in combination with rear-mounted mowers or as part of a triple gang set-up where working widths can extend to 10 metres.

Both new models are equipped with KUHN's maintenance-free OPTIDISC cutter bar (seven cutting discs on the 3125, eight on the 3525, two FAST-FIT knives per disc) and use twin PTO-powered swathing drums to produce a well-centred swath, the width of which can be varied between 1.00 and 1.20 metres.

The new machines feature the company's LIFT-CONTROL hydraulic suspension system: this fast-acting, low ground pressure system allows the mower to accurately follow ground contours and safeguards the quality and cleanliness of the forage sward by reducing soil contamination as a result of ground impacts. It also helps to reduce wear and tear on working parts and skids, and keeps fuel consumption to a minimum.

The pendulum-style suspension also enables a 30-degree range of cross-plane movement and up to 70cm of vertical travel. The mowing units can also rotate from front to rear in a range of -6.5 and +5 degrees for added ground contouring capability.

All machines in the GMD mower range are protected by the PROTECTADRIVE system, which prevents impact damage by allowing the individual disc's drive shaft to shear. Hardwearing FLEXPROTECT side guards are also fitted as standard.



SULKY COVER UP

Rolling cover for X40+ and X50+ fertiliser spreaders

SULKY UK has launched a hydraulically-driven self-winding rolling cover for its X40+ and X50+ fertiliser spreaders which simplifies loading operations.

The new hydraulically-driven self-winding rolling cover can be operated manually as well as remotely from the tractor cab, simplifying loading operations which is particularly useful when working without assistance.

The half-moon shape of the cover sheds water effectively. It

winds from the centre, making the underside of the cover and therefore the hopper, less likely to be contaminated with water, mud or other debris.

When fully open the cover rolls back to give maximum space for loading. A centralised lock on the handle-side makes it simple to secure the cover.

The cover is available as an option on all new X40+ and X50+ spreaders and can be retro-fitted to previous models.



MASCHIO BOOSTS HP ACROSS ITS RANGE

New generation HD gearboxes

New generation HD gearboxes are now fitted as standard to the Maschio ORSO, TORO and JUMBO range of power harrows.

“As tractor horsepower continues to increase on our customers’ farms, Maschio has developed a new series of machines with gearboxes large enough to cope with the challenge,” explained David Day, Maschio Product Manager. “The new gearboxes have double the oil capacity, strengthened parts and increased cooling capacity, making them capable of smoothly transferring the extra horsepower, while increasing the longevity of our machines.”

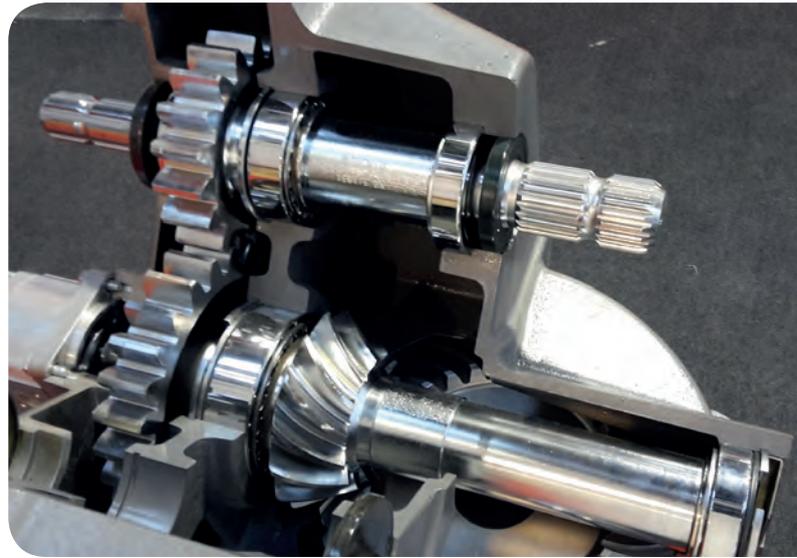
New heavy-duty bevel gears have been installed in the gearboxes, with 85mm shaft diameters, increasing their width by 5mm, making them stronger and more resilient.

To keep the machines running smoothly, a forced oil recycling system has been fitted with twin holes at the top of the gearbox, increasing the oil flow to where it is needed. The new gearboxes use synthetic oil and have a glass oil plug for ease of checking oil levels.

Double drain plugs for gearbox oil also make

maintenance an easier task.

Any extra heat generated is easily dissipated by 300mm (33% larger) cooling fans and enhanced ventilation, with outer fins fitted to increase surface area and radiate heat to keep the gearbox cooler. ●



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EVENTS 2017

MARCH 2017

- 24-9/4 Ideal Home Show, Olympia, London
www.idealhomeshow.co.uk
- 15-17 Agritechnica Asia, Bangkok, Thailand
www.agritechnica-asia.com/
- 18-19 West of England Game Fair, Shepton Mallet, Somerset
www.westofenglandgamefair.co.uk

APRIL 2017

- 11 AEA AGM Conference & Luncheon, London
www.aea.co.uk
- 13 CountryTastic, Three Counties Showground, Malvern, Worcestershire
www.threecounties.co.uk/countrytastic
- 25-27 The Commercial Vehicle Show, Birmingham NEC
www.cvshow.com
- 20-23 Harrogate Spring Flower Show, Harrogate, North Yorkshire
www.flowershow.org.uk/spring-show-2017

MAY 2017

- 1 North Somerset Show, Wraxall, North Somerset
www.nsas.org.uk
- 10-13 Balmoral Show, Belfast
www.balmoralshow.co.uk
- 13-14 Nottinghamshire County Show, Newark, Nottinghamshire
www.nottinghamshirecountyshow.com/
- 23-27 Chelsea Flower Show, London
www.rhs.org.uk/shows-events
- 18-20 Devon County Show, Clyst St Mary, Exeter, Devon
www.devoncountyshow.co.uk
- 24-25 Grassland & Muck, Stoneleigh Park, Warwickshire
www.grasslandevent.co.uk
- 27-28 Hertfordshire County Show, Redbourn, Hertfordshire
www.hertsshow.com
- 29 Surrey County Show, Guildford, Surrey
www.surreycountyshow.co.uk/surrey-county-show/
- 31-1/6 Staffordshire County Show, Stafford, Staffordshire
www.staffscountyshowground.co.uk/staffordshire-county-show/
- 31-1/6 Suffolk County Show
www.suffolkshow.co.uk/
- 31-3/6 Royal Bath & West Show
www.bathandwest.com/royal-bath-and-west-show

JUNE 2017

- 2-4 Gardening Scotland, Royal Highland Centre, Edinburgh
www.gardeningscotland.com
- 4 Rutland Show, Oakham, Rutland
www.rutlandcountyshow.com
- 8-10 Royal Cornwall Show, Wadebridge, Cornwall
www.royalcornwallshow.org
- 8-10 South of England Show, Ardingly, West Sussex
www.seas.org.uk/south-of-england-show
- 14-15 Cereals 2017, Boothby Graffoe, Nr Lincoln, Lincolnshire
www.cerealsevent.co.uk
- 15-18 BBC Gardeners' World Live, Birmingham NEC
www.bbcgardenersworldlive.com
- 16-18 Three Counties Show, Malvern, Worcestershire
www.threecounties.co.uk/threecounties
- 20-21 Royal Cheshire County Show, Knutsford, Cheshire
www.cheshirecountyshow.org.uk
- 20-22 Salon du Végétal, Nantes, France
www.salonduvegetal.com
- 21-22 Lincolnshire Show, Grange-de-Lings, Lincolnshire
www.lincolnshireshowground.co.uk/whats-on/event/lincolnshire-show-2017
- 21-24 House & Garden Festival, Olympia London
www.houseandgardenfestival.com
- 22-25 Royal Highland Show, Edinburgh
www.royalhighlandshow.org
- 25 Derbyshire County Show, Elvaston, Nr Derby, Derbyshire
www.derbyshirecountyshow.org.uk
- 25 Royal Isle of Wight County Show, Newport, Isle of Wight
www.riwas.org.uk/
- 28-29 Royal Norfolk Show, Costessey, Norwich, Norfolk
www.royalnorfolkshow.co.uk

JULY 2017

- 1 Monmouthshire Show, Monmouthshire Showground, Monmouth
www.monmouthshow.co.uk
- 1-2 Smallholders & Country Show, South Of England Showground, Ardingly
www.smallholdersshows.co.uk
- 2 Cranleigh Show
www.cranleighshow.co.uk/
- 4-9 Hampton Court Palace Flower Show
www.rhs.org.uk/shows-events/rhs-hampton-court-palace-flower-show
- 7-9 Kent County Show, Kent Showground, Detling, Kent
www.kentshowground.co.uk
- 8 Newport Show, Newport, Shropshire
www.newportshow.co.uk/
- 11-13 Great Yorkshire Show, Great Yorkshire Showground, Harrogate
www.greatyorkshireshow.co.uk
- 15 Camborne Show, Gwealavellan Farm, Nr Coombe, Camborne, Cornwall
www.camborne-show.org.uk
- 24-27 Royal Welsh Show, The showground, Llanellwedd
www.rwas.wales/royal-welsh-show/
- 19-23 RHS Flower Show, Tatton Park, Knutsford, Cheshire
www.rhs.org.uk/shows-events/rhs-flower-show-tatton-park
- 22 Mid Devon Show, Knightshayes, Tiverton, Devon
www.middevonshow.co.uk
- 25-27 New Forest & Hampshire County Show, The Showground, New Park, Brockenhurst, Hampshire
www.newforestshow.co.uk
- 28-29 Border Union Show, Springwood Park, Kelso, Scottish Borders
www.buas.org/
- 28-30 The Game Fair, Hatfield House, Hertfordshire
www.thegamefair.org



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IT HAD TO HAPPEN

It's imperative the dealer sector takes charge of the battery revolution

Just as the specialist trade was gearing up to embrace cordless battery garden machinery as 'its' product the inevitable has happened as STIHL announced its intention to place some of its battery products in non-specialist showrooms.

Was it inevitable? That's what many dealers believed when they first encountered the product, the fear of losing service work and their core business which is internal combustion engine-driven machines.

But this move is not new to the industry's resolve. Let's not forget the world came to an end for the specialist diehards when electric and petrol lawnmowers first appeared in the sheds.

It was believed to be a disaster for the dealer network as the best known brands and products were sold to the mass at cut prices. 'Tin' deck lawnmowers replaced the traditional aluminium mowers as best sellers.

Then a dustbin lid with four wheels and a cheap engine for £99 all the way from the USA capped it all. The dealers were doomed!

Sold down the river, or that's what was thought.

Odd though – almost 40 years later, GGP the biggest supplier of petrol-powered products to the mass merchants, is reporting stronger and stronger links with the dealer network and it's pulling back its business with the sheds.

It's interesting that mass merchants are looking towards the East to source their garden machinery offering and they'll be selling at very keen prices.

Well, we've seen and heard all this before – we wish them well when they need after sales and technical help, because they will – and will they remember it's

the specialists who mop up after them, plus selling off the returns?

Dealers have done a great job of finding their place in the market. The survival instinct continues and whatever happens with sales of battery/electric, is it not even more imperative now that the dealer network embraces this market sector, domestic and professional, and takes charge of the battery revolution?

Is it a revolution? It's claimed by many manufacturers that there's a lot of mileage in this

pay for one. Suddenly Black and Decker come out with the electric strimmer and the rest is history. That exposure created a mass market for brushcutters and nylon cord trimmers that is bigger than ever today and dealers take a very large slice of that market.

And let's not forget the Flymo electric leaf vac. What has that done for autumn sales in the dealer network? Thousands of petrol blower vacs are now sold by dealers nationwide and now there are battery versions being

THERE ARE REAL POSITIVES TO COME FROM STIHL'S MOVE

technology and the product will become more and more specialist-related as batteries become stronger, more efficient and able to power the bigger professional machines that are now emerging.

There are real positives to come from STIHL's move. Even though the product it's intending to place in garden centres and hardware stores might not be top-end, the main thing is that the concept will get real exposure. The more times the customer sees the product the more curious they become.

There's an old saying: "What you see is what you buy." Isn't it exposure that creates a market?

It's a reminder of what happened to the nylon cord head business way back in the mid-seventies. The trade had to get out there to find a suitable customer for the expensive petrol versions, as the general home owner would never

lifted from dealer shelves by people who would never consider petrol and are fed up with cables.

Perhaps it wouldn't be a bad idea if all the Doubting Thomases just got on with it.

Isn't the dealer network here to stay?

If so the cordless garden tool bandwagon is rolling. Time to get on? ●



JIM GREEN



MOW-VING GESTURE

HAYTER DONATES TO LOCAL HOSPICE

Limited Edition Platinum mower

A Hastingwood hospice providing quality care for people with life-limiting illnesses has welcomed a kind donation from local business Hayter to help with much needed funds for its work.

The St Clare Hospice in Hastingwood, near Harlow, was presented with the brand new Hayter Limited Edition Platinum mower before Christmas as part

of Hayter's 70th anniversary celebrations.

Hayter, based in Spellbrook, Bishop's Stortford, made just 500 of the special Platinum Limited Edition Harrier 41 Autodrive mowers as part of its 2016 70th anniversary celebrations. The mowers are painted in a silver 'platinum' finish, instead of the traditional Hayter British Racing Green colour. Each mower was numbered, and models numbered two and three were offered to Mrs Susan Hayter, wife of the founder of Hayter, Douglas Hayter, one for a charity of her choice.

The local hospice charity was selected to receive the mower by Mrs Hayter, who said: "Douglas and I used to live in old Harlow not far

from the St Clare Hospice. Years ago when the hospice was first founded we gave them a Harrier as a raffle prize, which must have been a good 30 years ago. It seems fitting that 70 years on we can support them once again.

"It's important to support the hospice due to the fantastic work they do there and as it's expensive to maintain and keep going."

Julie Dommett, Marketing Manager at Hayter, commented: "We were delighted with Mrs Hayter's choice of charity and are really excited to be able to contribute to such a valuable cause. It was fascinating to see the work St Clare Hospice does and how much of a difference they make to people with these life-limiting illnesses."



L-R: Julie Dommett, Hayter; Amy Jacobs, St Clare; and Susan Hayter

DRESSED TO A T

DEALER'S NEXT GENERATION SERVICE

J Carr creates branded shirt for young fan

Colin Smith is a self-employed gardener who spends a lot of time at his local Cub Cadet dealership, J Carr and Son, Boston.

When working, Colin wears branded clothing supplied by the dealership, much to the envy of his grandson Austin.

The doting grandfather decided that it would be a treat for Austin to receive his very own piece of Cub Cadet branded clothing, but, unfortunately, the dealership was unable to find anything available for a six-year-old.

The story might well have ended there, but Managing Director Charles Carr took it upon himself to find a solution and enlisted his partner, Jo Douglas, to make a bespoke t-shirt for Austin, complete with Lawnflite and Cub Cadet branding. They presented it to him in the showroom and made his day.

When Colin got in touch with EP Barrus with the news, he commented: "I can think of no other dealership that would ever make such a magnificent effort to

please a little boy by presenting him with your merchandise." ●



Austin Smith in his specially made Cub Cadet branded t-shirt



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