

SERVICE DEALER

THE VOICE OF THE INDUSTRY

JUL / AUG 2017

THE FUTURE

*For dealers,
for technicians,
for innovations*



- ❖ SDF Expansion
- ❖ ATV Update
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- ❖ Service Dealer Conference & Awards 2017



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SPECIAL FEATURE

EDITOR'S MESSAGE

Welcome to the July/August 2017 edition of *Service Dealer*.

We are taking a look this issue at what the future may hold for the specialist dealer. We have fascinating pieces by Martin Rickatson who spoke to the guys running Farol's newly-built head office and branch premises at Milton Common, in East Oxfordshire – while Chris Biddle makes a welcome return considering the role of the technician of the future, speaking with South-East dealer Burden Bros.

What's common with these guys, and indeed with dealers across the country, is that in some respects the future is well and truly here already. As anyone who runs a dealership will know, machinery technology and the skills required to sell and service it have advanced in leaps and bounds in recent times. As Chris points out, words like 'fitter' and even 'mechanic' have been lost to history now. Highly skilled technicians are the order of the day in service departments across grass-care, professional turf and agricultural machinery dealerships.

With these increased skill levels required, however, the job of recruiting new staff may become even more difficult than it is already. For despite being an industry with ever-advancing sophistication in its machinery, it still isn't exactly seen as sexy for the majority of qualified young people entering the job market. This despite the products they would be working with utilising cutting-edge robotics, connectivity and alternative fuels. Certainly those fears were expressed by dealers who responded to our recent *Future Dealerships* survey.

Therefore the challenge for all involved in the industry now must be to promote just how bright and cutting-edge the future truly is for specialist outdoor powered machinery dealerships.



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SHOCK AS C&O SWITCHES FROM BLUE TO RED

Heritage of selling Ford/New Holland tractors stretched back to the 1930s

Just a year and a bit after being announced New Holland Dealer of the Year, C&O Tractors which operates from five branches across Wiltshire, Dorset, West Sussex and the Isle of Wight, has given notice to CNH and announced its appointment as the full-line Massey Ferguson main dealer covering South Central England.

“We’re very excited to be joining the Massey Ferguson family,” said Andy Coles, C&O Tractors’ Chairman and Managing Director. “The strength and depth of Massey Ferguson’s product line-up provides a huge choice of equipment. The extended geographical responsibility afforded by the new Massey Ferguson franchise gives us greater opportunity to serve farmers and contractors across the whole region and drive the business forward.”

Mark Casement, AGCO Director Distribution Management UK and Ireland, said: “This is a significant new appointment in this key territory. C&O Tractors is highly-experienced, extremely well-equipped and fully-focused on serving customers in this important farming area which accounts for nearly 10% of total industry tractor sales in the UK. It’s a great pleasure to welcome them on board.”

The move ends over 80 years of C&O and its

predecessors representing ‘blue tractors’ (Fordson, Ford Tractors and New Holland). C&O Tractors bought CNH dealer Stanley Pond of Blandford, Dorset in 2000. Ponds had in turn bought neighbouring CNH dealer, A Brewer & Co of Wilton in 1988. Brewers had started selling Fordson Tractors as a sub-dealer in the 1930s, becoming a main dealer in 1955.

The announcement of the franchise switch was simultaneously made to staff and to CNH, by directors at all the C&O branches on 24th April – and it is clear the shock announcement took everyone by surprise.

The decision to switch franchises will have been a particularly poignant moment for Richard (Dick) Spencer, Sales Director, who joined C&O Tractors in April 2015, having spent all his 30-year career at CNH, most recently as Dealer Development Manager.

Speaking to *Service Dealer*, he said: “This has been a massive decision, probably the hardest any dealer of our size has had to take. However, Andy Coles and the management team believe that future dealer profitability is key – and that sustainable profitable growth can be achieved through our new association with AGCO. The decision to take on Massey Ferguson was based on the belief that we will be able to provide our customers with a better after-sales service.”

He added, “Keeping our discussions with AGCO completely under wraps for several months was difficult at times, but we wanted to make absolutely sure that the move made sense, today and in the long-term.

“It’s true to say that our staff were a little shell-shocked, but they’ve been brilliant and there’s a new sense of excitement and motivation across the branches.”

In the few days since the announcement, C&O has sold eight or nine Massey Ferguson tractors “with a good number in the pipeline”. Dick Spencer says the reaction from customers has been predictably mixed, “but these are early days, and most say they rate our staff very highly and will continue with their support”.

The company says it is not looking to change any of its other franchises, which include Kuhn, Merlo, Teagle, Shelbourne Reynolds, Honda and Polaris, as a result of the switch to Massey Ferguson.

C&O will continue to represent CNH during its 12-month notice period.



Dick Spencer (left) and Andy Coles

INDUSTRY

JOHN DEERE RECOGNISED AS ONE OF THE BEST FOR SCHOOL LEAVERS

Ranked in top 100

John Deere has been listed for the first time as one of the best 100 employers for school leavers in the UK, the only agricultural and turf machinery company to be so recognised (for the full list, visit www.allaboutschoollleavers.co.uk/employer-rankings).

John Deere's three-year Ag Tech and Turf Tech and two-year Parts Tech apprenticeships, run in partnership with national training provider ProVQ, lead to IMI Level 2 & 3 Diplomas in Landbased Engineering, and registration at LTA2 level in the industry's Landbased Technician Accreditation scheme. In subsequent years qualified technicians undergo further education and adult training within the John Deere University programme, on a career path that can ultimately lead to the highest possible LTA4 Master Technician accreditation.

Commenting on their inclusion in the 2017 School Leaver Awards, ProVQ md Julian Lloyd said, "We beat

some very strong competition from other household names, coming first for an engineering and manufacturing company and third overall in the 'Best Intermediate Apprenticeship Programme' category.

"To be recognised as one of the country's top 100 employers for school leavers, as judged by the apprentices themselves, makes us all very proud of the achievement



John Deere apprentice graduation 2016

DEALERS

DEALER EXPANSION FOR NEW HOLLAND IN DORSET

Francis Bugler Ltd to increase area

Following the news that C&O has given up the franchise, New Holland has announced that Francis Bugler Ltd is to expand by investing in Dorset, with a special focus in the area around Blandford.

In a statement, New Holland said that as part of the expansion there are plans to open a depot "to provide excellence in customer support and pursue new sales opportunities".

Francis Bugler Ltd already operates in three other depots in Beaminster Dorset, Yeovil, Somerset, and Axminster, Devon.

John Bugler, Dealer Principal for Francis Bugler Ltd, commented: "After over 30 years of our successful partnership with

New Holland, we believe it's time to expand our business and enhance customer service and support in Dorset.

"We strongly believe that together, Buglers and New Holland can grow our business and look forward to an exciting new venture with the New Holland brand, our loyal customers and many new ones."

Andrew Watson, New Holland

Business Director UK & ROI, added, "We're delighted with the news. It's exciting to hear that our dealers are investing in our industry and in our brand. We look forward to supporting them growing the business.

"Francis Bugler will offer a great wealth of knowledge of New Holland machines, together with the highest level of assistance and local support."



DEALERS ATTEND STIHL ROADSHOWS ACROSS UK

Spring tour concluded in Scotland

The eighth and final STIHL Spring Roadshow took place earlier this year at the Carnegie Conference Centre in Dunfermline, introducing dealers to the company's latest products.

This event followed Roadshows at Merrist Wood College, Old Northamptonians RFC, Bicton College, Swansea Bay Golf Club, Chetwynd Deer Park, Pavilions of Harrogate and Myerscough College – allowing dealers from across the country to attend.



L-R: The team at Meldrums in Cupar – Bob, Kenny, Dave and Jane, with Bella in front!



James Marshall at his Dunning showroom

In a written introduction to the attending dealers STIHL GB MD Robin Lennie said, “Over the next few months STIHL will launch a new series of lithium-ion powered garden tools – this time designed for smaller outdoor spaces, and for the first time we will be launching these at sub-£100 price points.

“This offer will give us the opportunity to attract new customers into your stores who perhaps previously considered STIHL to only be a professional brand or one that was judged to be out of their price range.”

At the Dunfermline event, Head of Marketing at STIHL GB Simon Hewitt reiterated to the audience that the company very much believes that cordless is going to be a big part of the future of servicing dealers, but also reassured them that “petrol is not going away”.

Simon also reassured dealers that the company is very much loyal to their Approved Dealer network, despite looking to potentially sell the entry-level cordless products through non-traditional outlets. But again, it was stressed that any new retailer must meet stringent criteria and would never be large chain stores.

He also told the dealers that despite the Viking brand disappearing by 2019, by being merged into STIHL, in the short term the company would be aggressively marketing the Viking range and encouraged dealers to keep selling the products as proactively as they could. Support for Viking from the company will be ongoing.

Among the many Scottish dealers who attended the event were the team from Meldrums, based in Cupar, and Marshalls Garden Machinery, of Dunning. As would be expected, different dealers had varying views on the future for cordless equipment. Kenny McConnel of Meldrums, for example, represented a more traditional view that the machines can be a hard sell and that dealers are having to compete against internet retailers who heavily discount. Whereas James Marshall, from Marshalls, saw them as playing an increasingly significant role in his dealership.

All the attendees had a chance to get hands-on with some new products with five stations set up showcasing different sets of equipment. Available for the dealers to interact with were Viking domestic walk-behind mowers, including battery-powered units; larger Viking 6-Series mowers; Viking ride-ons; iMow robotic mowers; and the new STIHL Compact Cordless range.

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INDUSTRY

TH WHITE IS NEW JENSEN CHIPPER DISTRIBUTOR

Through its Machinery Imports division

The Jensen wood chipper range is now being distributed exclusively by TH White Machinery Imports throughout the UK.

Jensen chipper models are available tracked, trailed or tractor-mounted, solving issues with slopes,

embankments or difficult terrain

TH White says the brand will further strengthen its offering to its groundcare dealer network while continuing to work with Jensen's current dealers across their UK territories – Arbrep Services Ltd at Alton, Dennis Barnfield Ltd at Carnforth, Riverlea at Pembrokeshire and West Wales, and Beaver Plant Ltd at York.

Additionally, TH WHITE Groundcare will offer Jensen wood chippers through its branches in Reading, Tetbury, Redditch and Stockbridge.

A spokesperson for TH White said, "This experienced and carefully selected professional dealer network brings a wealth of sale and service expertise to assist clients in selecting the right wood chipper for their intended use and then maintain that equipment for its lifetime."

The new Jensen wood chipper range will be managed from TH White's Stockbridge branch.



Bill Johnston (left), Business Manager of Jensen UK, with Jensen Dealer, Charles Walter of Arbrep Services Ltd

DEALERS

DEALER APPOINTMENT FOR VENTRAC IN SCOTLAND

SGM Contracts take on machines

Price Turfcare has appointed SGM Contracts in Scotland for the Ventrac machines.

Based on the Belleknowes Industrial Estate, Inverkeithing near Edinburgh, SGM has an established customer base, including an extensive hire business featuring equipment from a number of major manufacturers.

Rupert Price, Managing Director of UK importer Price Turfcare, said: "From my point of view, I wanted a focussed dealer who could give Ventrac the best possible coverage bearing in mind the product can be utilised in a multitude of markets. The product is particularly appealing to the hire market and therefore my first choice in Scotland is

SGM, who I have known for many years."

Managing Director of SGM, Steven McInroy, commenting on the agreement added, "We're always on the lookout for niche,

but quality products to add to our portfolio from both a sales and hire perspective and we're delighted to be promoting the product."



Rupert Price of Price Turfcare with Steven McInroy of SGM Contracts

DEALERS

GREENMECH REALIGNS DEALER NETWORK

In South-West England

GreenMech says it has continued its dealer realignment programme by replacing TH White with new dealers New Forest Farm Machinery and GA Groundcare, while current dealer Burden Bros Agri Ltd will be extending its coverage area.

All current warranties relating to GreenMech hippers, sold by TH White, will be supported by these new dealers.

Based in Ringwood, New Forest Farm Machinery will be providing sales and support throughout the Hampshire and Dorset regions. With over 25 years of engineering experience, New Forest Farm Machinery will be adding the GreenMech brand to its range of professional groundcare equipment.

Taking over the areas of Wiltshire, Berkshire and Gloucestershire will be GA Groundcare. This Wiltshire-based business specialises in professional and commercial groundcare, as well as arboricultural equipment, and will be changing woodchipper suppliers to represent GreenMech.

Finally, Burden Bros Agri Ltd will now be servicing new and current customers in Surrey, adding to its established areas of Kent and Sussex.



The team from GA Groundcare

Commenting on the new arrangements, Sales Director for GreenMech Martin Lucas, said: "We're very pleased to have joined forces with a number of new dealers in the South-West. All of these partners have proven track records for providing quality sales and customer service and we look forward to the opportunities this will offer new and existing customers in these areas."

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OBITUARY

PAT BUTTERLY*Founder of FGM Claymore*

FGM Claymore are sad to announce the passing of its founder Patrick J (Pat) Butterly, who died following a short illness at his home in Dublin, Ireland.

Pat was involved in bringing many well-known garden machinery products to the UK in the early 70's and FGM Claymore shows a strong presence in the UK market today.

He will be greatly missed by all who worked with him in the industry and our thoughts are with his wife Eileen, sons and daughters Karen, Paul, Joann, John and Kieran, along with his 20 grandchildren.



OBITUARY

KIM DAVIES*Co-founder Celtic Mowers*

It was with a very heavy heart that Celtic Mowers announced the passing of their co-founder Kim Davies.

After an ongoing battle against cancer, Kim passed away quietly with his family present at Ty Olwen Hospice, Morriston Swansea the afternoon of the 6th June 2017.

Kim was a huge personality and he liked nothing more than working life - indeed Celtic Mowers, along with his family, was his life.

Keeping the dealership in the family and its succession was of the utmost importance to Kim so it's business as usual under the continued leadership of Terry Flynn & Gary Evans.

Gary from the Swansea dealership said, "Terry and I are honoured to take the business forward and continue building on the foundation laid by Kim & his late wife Sue. We have grown steadily over recent years and we look forward to developing the business further".



INDUSTRY

KUBOTA ENGINES EXPANDS MITCHELL PARTNERSHIP*Distribution now into two new territories*

Kubota UK Engine Division has announced it has strengthened its strategic partnership with Mitchell Powersystems (MPS) after extending the distribution of Kubota's full range of engine solutions into two new territories.

This latest announcement now means that MPS will distribute Kubota's complete range of oil- and water-cooled diesel and dual fuel engines in the North-West of England and Northern Wales from its Sutton-in-Ashfield depot, as well as supply the South and South-East of England

from its Romsey depot. Each branch will also deliver full support services and spare parts to dealers and Original Equipment Manufacturers across a range of industry sectors.

This means that Kubota has terminated its relationships with Phoenix Power Services and

Woodleigh Power Equipment, which were previously responsible for the North-West and South respectively. MPS Sutton-in-Ashfield and MPS Romsey have resumed responsibility of these former Kubota UK Engine dealer territories. ●



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The NEW Husqvarna 100 Series Battery kits makes ease of use and low noise much more affordable. The kits which include product, battery and charger takes performance and efficiency to a new level.

The NEW range targets a much larger growing domestic market that will help to drive new customers and additional revenue to the Husqvarna authorised dealer.

The NEW battery kits are evidence of the continued investment in battery technology that will ensure that the Husqvarna authorised dealer network in partnership with Husqvarna will remain at the forefront of the shift from petrol to battery.

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Together we build the future.



BATTERY TRIMMER 115iL KIT - £195.00



BATTERY HEDGE TRIMMER 115iHD45 KIT - £195.00



BATTERY CHAINSAW 120i KIT - £240.00

The logo for the Service Dealer Conference 2017 is centered at the top. It features a red shield-like shape with the words 'SERVICE DEALER' in large, white, bold, sans-serif capital letters. Below this, in smaller white capital letters, is 'THE VOICE OF THE INDUSTRY'. A green banner with white text wraps around the bottom of the shield, reading 'CONFERENCE'. Below the banner, the year '2017' is written in white on a red background. The background of the entire page is a collage of images related to the industry, including people in meetings, a person at a podium, and various pieces of machinery, all overlaid with a blue and yellow geometric pattern of rays.

**SERVICE
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CONFERENCE

2017

STRONG THEME AND SPEAKERS AT SERVICE DEALER CONFERENCE

November's event will feature a diverse line-up of expert speakers, explains Service Dealer owner, Duncan Murray-Clarke

The theme of the conference this year is key to not just our industry, but a rapidly changing world. We at *Service Dealer* are delighted to announce our exciting speaker line-up for this year's Conference which takes place once again at the Oxford Belfry Hotel, Thame, Oxfordshire on Thursday 16th November 2017.

Entitled *The Challenge Of Change: Embracing & Adapting To A Changing Market*, we are developing on from the success of last year. As such we have decided for this November, rather than a single keynote speech, to instead provide our specialist dealer delegates with multiple expert speakers.

These four speakers we have chosen to present to the Conference will offer a diverse range of insightful, fascinating and highly relevant talks for our independent dealer readership. Grasscare, professional turf and agricultural machinery dealers alike will all benefit from attendance.

You can read more about who our speakers are below. The topics they shall each be covering tackle the Conference's theme of Change from their own unique and highly qualified perspectives. The business lives of dealers who sell everything from small garden mowers, through commercial grass-cutting machinery up to large agricultural tractors will all be able to relate to their subjects. Environmental sustainability, recruitment, the weather and Brexit will all be addressed.

There will be some familiar elements at the

Conference this year as well. We're running the very popular Breakout Sessions once again which see delegates split into smaller groups, allowing for lively and interactive debate. This year we shall be offering sessions on the timely subjects of *Communication and Technology*. Julio Romo will be taking a day out as Head of Digital Engagement at the Department for International Trade (DIT) and returning to run a session.

Also returning in November after his superb plenary last year, is dealer development expert Simon Batty. His afternoon session will see delegates involved in the discussion on how to recruit the right staff and win profitable customers – and how to keep both long-term.

Finally, the Conference will wrap-up with a panel debate and a Q&A session, allowing dealers to have any burning questions that the day's content has ignited in them to be answered.

Our ethos, as ever, is to provide our delegates with valuable hints, tips and ideas which they can take away back to their dealerships and put into practical use.

We really hope as many of our readers as possible will be able to join us for what is always an educational and highly enjoyable day.

For the full Agenda of the Service Dealer Conference, ticket booking information and details about the Dealer Of The Year competition please visit www.servicedealer.co.uk



THE SPEAKERS

Caroline Drummond MBE, Chief Executive of LEAF

Caroline has been running LEAF, the farming and environmental charity, since it started in 1991. She graduated in agriculture and has broad practical agricultural experience from across the globe. Her work focuses on encouraging more sustainable farming practices and building a better public trust and understanding of farming, food and the environment – values that she is personally extremely passionate about. She is actively involved in many industry partnerships and initiatives.

In 2009 Caroline was awarded the MBE, she has an Honorary Doctorate from Harper Adams University, a Nuffield Scholarship and was awarded Honorary Fellowship for the Society of the Environment.

Caroline is actively involved with the British Nutrition Foundation, North Wyke, the Agri-tech initiative – The Centre for Applied Crop Science, the IAgRM, and the Science Museum.

Jim Wade, Principal of JCB Academy

Jim Wade started as Principal of JCB Academy in January 2009, 20 months before the school opened for its first cohort of students.

Jim has been a Principal for over 16 years and before starting teaching, worked for Citibank at its UK head office in London. He has always been involved in technical and vocational education, and started his teaching career with involvement in the Certificate of Pre-Vocational Education back in the mid-1980s, and was Deputy at Somerset's first technology college. He is passionate about the role technical education plays in developing life chances for young people and currently sits on the Institute of Engineering and Technology (IET) Education and Skills Policy Panel, as well as the UTC Principals' steering group. Jim will be discussing recruitment and its associated challenges.

Representative, Planalytics

A representative shall be joining us from the US-based Business Weather Intelligence service, Planalytics.

The organisation helps companies effectively assess and proactively address how the weather impacts their business. Its analytics, online tools and services help companies measure and manage the impact of weather throughout all facets of a firm.

It is the pioneer of climate-driven solutions, making it possible for companies to use weather as a metric in their everyday business practices.

Through emerging Cloud technologies, its weather analytics are now available faster and more efficiently than ever before.

In 2001, Planalytics opened an office in the UK.



Caroline Drummond



Cedric Porter



Jim Wade

Cedric Porter, Supply Intelligence

Cedric Porter is a journalist and agricultural supply consultant.

He provides international market advice to a range of clients, including machinery manufacturers.

Cedric is also the co-editor of *World Potato Markets* and in 2016 launched *Brexit Food and Farming*, a monthly analysis of Brexit developments.

He is a regular speaker at conferences in the UK and abroad and in the past year has spoken in the US, Canada, Panama and a to a number of European audiences.

Cedric is a trustee of LEAF (Linking Environment And Farming) and a Governor at Hadlow College in Kent.

He will be addressing the Conference on the issue of Brexit.

OUR 2017 SPONSORS

The following organisations have confirmed their sponsorship of the 2017 *Service Dealer Conference and Awards*. We'd like to welcome them on board and thank them for their support and input.



Sponsorship correct at the time of print



BREXIT: ‘HUMUNGOUS TASK’

This year’s AEA Conference heard speakers highlight threats and opportunities, reports Chris Biddle

A year is a long time in the annals of AEA history. Or so it seemed at this year’s AEA Conference held on 11th April at the London headquarters of the Institution of Civil Engineers. The conference’s title, *New Horizons, Fresh Opportunities* said it all, but equally could have been sub-titled *We are where we are, or If we knew then what we know now.*

The Speakers

Opening the conference, AEA Director General and CEO **Ruth Bailey** looked back at the last conference in April 2016. “Who would have forecast the result of the EU referendum, Theresa May as PM or the election of Donald Trump?

“We have a new world order which throws up fresh challenges for the business community, especially in the fields of skills and training, legislation and competitiveness. Brexit will provide us all with an humongous task, but will be a gateway to a different way of doing business, particularly for the farming community which should throw up some great opportunities.”

Justin Urquhart-Stewart, Financial Media Commentator gave a barn-storming account of the present state of the world economy,

focussing on the impact of Rooster Booster (China) and the Trump Pump (US).

He painted a largely optimistic picture (employment high in the US, UK and rising in the Eurozone), the changing role of China where manufacturing is taking a back-seat to the service sector, and the poor state of the Russian economy despite the sabre-rattling. “Russia’s GDP is just 45% of the UK’s – and their Navy is full of rust-bucket warships,” he quipped.

He was particularly sharp on the prospect of a second Scottish referendum. “Scotland’s economy is on a par with Greece, which presumably is why they call Edinburgh the Athens of the North!”

A considered and balanced account of the prospects for the UK farming sector was presented by **David Swales**, Head of Strategic Insight at the AHDB (Agriculture and Horticulture Development Board). “Consumer trends are changing at the same time as we’re facing up to the impact of Brexit,” he said. “There’s been a huge growth in the consumption of chicken, mainly at the expense of beef. Price is still the driving force, and regretfully ‘Britishness’ is not as important as we like to think”.

On the subject of the removal of farming subsidies, David said forecasts suggested that 35%

of farmers could experience bankruptcy or severe financial distress. “On the other hand, more liberal trading conditions with less support and fewer regulatory burdens could benefit many farm operations.”

However, he issued a staggering statistic on the readiness for a new agricultural regime. “Research reveals that only 32% of UK farm managers have formal training compared with 68% in Germany.”

The final speaker was **Bill Reitman**, Senior Vice-President of Briggs & Stratton. “I think we have to accept that what has been, won’t always be in the future,” he predicted.

“For a company like Briggs & Stratton with a 108-year history, change is always more challenging.”

He then explained in some detail how consumer research and a detailed ‘R & D journey’ resulted in the development of the company’s new In-Start system – petrol engine technology coupled with the instant starting advantage of cordless mowers.

Summing up the tone and tenure of the conference, the B-word was never far from the surface. But critically, each of the speakers used the C-word (confidence) as the critical driving force to overcome all the challenges ahead.



After-lunch guest speaker

The guest speaker at the AEA lunch was **Simon Weston** CBE, the Falklands veteran and charity campaigner.

He spoke about his experiences during the Falklands conflict during 1982 when the *Sir Galahad* was destroyed in Bluff Cove on the Falkland Islands. Welsh Guardsman Simon Weston, was to become a name and face that was going to become well known for his struggle to overcome his injuries (46% burns) and redefine his role in life.

Simon's message was one of achievement, of triumph over adversity, of seizing the moment and succeeding.



Bill Reitman



Simon Weston



Justin Urquhart-Stewart



David Swales

NEW AEA PRESIDENT ELECTED

Mark Ormond addressed the conference

Mark Ormond, Managing Director of SAME Deutz-Fahr UK, took over the annual presidency of the AEA at the annual conference.

During his speech, Mark highlighted the importance the AEA will be to its members as we head on our path out of the EU.

Mark was born into a farming family and has 20 years' experience in the agricultural machinery industry at both dealer and manufacturer level. His early career was spent in the implement sector but Mark moved to SDF as MD in 2015. That role makes him responsible for all sales and aftersales issues for the company in the UK and ROI.

"The Brexit process will create unknown challenges and opportunities for our industry. Although the weak pound has resulted in increases to the cost of imported machinery, farm profitability improved substantially in the 2016-17 year. That created a significant increase in demand for agricultural tractors and machinery," explained Mark. "March tractor registrations reached a record high.

"As the UK continues on its path out of the EU, members will rely heavily on the AEA for economic information, market data, and standards information, all of which will change dramatically in the coming years.

"The AEA is very well placed to provide its members with accurate and timely information to

ensure they can react to the needs of the market to maintain/improve their business activities. Furthermore, strong connections to government institutions and to Brussels will ensure we can lobby for the best interests of our members during the Brexit negotiations.

"The Board has worked hard, in recent years, to ensure the AEA provides for its members' needs. That will now be more important than ever."

Mark also said he looks forward to meeting members and non-members at regular AEA meetings and at industry events during the course of the year, and welcomes ideas to further improve the standard of service provided.



New President Mark Ormond with Ruth Bailey, AEA DG & CEO

THE DEALERSHIP OF THE FUTURE?



A few hundred yards from the Oxfordshire venue for the annual Service Dealer conference now lies one of the most modern farm, turf and outdoor power equipment dealership premises in the UK. MARTIN RICKATSON paid a visit to Farol's recently-built new headquarters

Agricultural equipment, particularly that used in arable farming, has changed out of all recognition over the 40 years since Farol was formed. Back in 1976, quiet cabs had only just become compulsory on new tractors, fuel consumption was measured by gauge guesswork, and self-steering meant holding the front wheel against the furrow wall.

Fast-forward four decades, and the role of the dealership in supporting farm machinery has changed just as much as – indeed because of – the equipment itself. Dealer premises are having to change as a result, and there are few better examples than Farol's newly-built head office and branch premises at Milton Common, near Thame in East Oxfordshire.

Farol was founded in 1976 by ex-SCATS manager and agricultural engineer George Vellacott, after teaming up with farmer and

financier Roland Harris. Based in premises at Lewknor, Oxon, it began as a machinery trading and engineering enterprise, developing a sizeable global export business and later expanding by adding a Fiatagri tractor franchise, a transport business and, in 2003, a tyre arm.

The company diversified to complement the new retail side of its business by becoming a major importer and exporter of new and used tractors, combines and machinery, and the Vellacott family later became the full shareholders in Farol, this remaining the case today.

In 1988 Farol became a Case IH dealer, and 11 years later opened a second branch in Byfield, between Banbury and Daventry. The following year a third dealership was opened in Pewsey, near Marlborough, Wilts, and in 2001 George Vellacott's son Matthew

took control of the business as Managing Director.

Three years later Farol switched its main agricultural franchise to become a John Deere dealer, a move which saw the replacement of its Pewsey premises with larger facilities near Hungerford, and the opening of a new dealership in Atherstone on the Warks/Leics border. In 2009 further expansion saw the opening of a new branch at Midhurst to cover West Sussex and East Hants.

The following year, the Atherstone site was replaced by new premises at Trinity Marina, Hinckley, an ex-Land Rover showroom being turned into a one-stop shop for agricultural and groundcare equipment, tyres, parts and service in a modern building with plenty of outside space for new and used equipment to be displayed.

In 2011, Farol diversified by becoming a John Deere

Farol's newly-built head office and branch premises at Milton Common, near Thame in East Oxfordshire





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“IN ADDITION TO LOCAL ADVERTISING, WE’VE BUILT UP OUR PRESENCE ON SOCIAL MEDIA SUCH AS FACEBOOK, LINKEDIN AND TWITTER”

professional groundcare dealer from its Oxon, Leics and Berks branches, and more recently has broadened this by acquiring Godfreys’ western territory and its Wokingham depot. Two years later, with the firm having expanded considerably to employ 200 staff, 80 based at its head office, and having also added construction/plant franchises to its portfolio, the need for new premises there was identified, and plans were made for a purpose-built structure alongside the outdated ones, encompassing new large workshop bays, a showroom, office/training/meeting space and parts storage. The new facility was completed just a year before *Service Dealer’s* November 2016 visit.

Modern dealership

“The purchase of our Hinckley premises, a building previously used as a premium car showroom, gave us a good idea of what a modern dealership building should be like,” explains Matthew Vellacott.

“We need to serve multiple types of customer, from farmers to home-owner gardeners, but while some want to discuss business machines worth thousands of pounds and others are seeking a new lawnmower, they have many similar requirements. We wanted to provide them with a welcoming premises, and had the space at

Milton Common to create from scratch what we needed – a place to help customers and potential customers, and somewhere we can educate them as to what we can do for them.

“In order to do this, what we’ve tried to do is redesign the traditional agricultural dealer stores and showroom, putting more of the parts behind the counter – there’s no point in being Arkwright’s store and having every single pin and fitting on shelves – and instead putting on display more of the tools, toys and home-owner grass equipment – items that need to be handled and demonstrated, and which will produce fast turnover and be profitable. While we do have an internet sales presence and have 2,000 items on eBay with 2 full-time people overseeing this, the showroom is for items that we wouldn’t want to sell online – items that require advice and support, such as domestic mowers.

“It’s also important to ensure visitors – and the staff who serve them – are provided with comfortable surroundings, and that we play our part in conserving energy, so the new premises feature automatic doors, underfloor heating and a water recycling system.”

According to Guy Champion, Farol Sales and Marketing Director, other initiatives and developments

have helped to increase footfall into the new showroom.

“Our car, truck and agricultural tyre business now also works from part of the same new building, and in addition to attracting more tyre clients this has helped to bring in new potential customers to the showroom while they wait. We’ve also held initiatives such as a pre-Christmas toy fair, which has attracted more than 500 visitors. The new premises have definitely resulted in new trade from ag/turf/construction customers, but it’s also helped attract other visitors too.

“In addition to local advertising, we’ve built up our presence on social media such as Facebook, LinkedIn and Twitter to show people what we can do for them, and attract them by using tools such as competitions. Those are all important elements of building our brand and keeping us in people’s minds.”

Cutting-edge developments

But agriculture remains at the heart of the company, and it’s here that Farol is also taking significant steps to keep at the cutting edge of developments in the industry. That means not only the latest in workshop facilities and diagnostics to quickly repair complex equipment when necessary, but also the staff and precision

technology to help customers select the most efficient technology for their businesses and obtain the most from it.

To this end, Milton Common has been designated the Farol focus depot for FarmSight, John Deere's technology package for enabling individual remote monitoring of machines to aid in preventative maintenance, economical fuel consumption and maximum output efficiency, plus the ability to gain more detailed agronomic information for improved decision-making.

"We now employ four full-time FarmSight staff across the group, and as a unit they're making a profit," says Matthew Vellacott.

"Within this we have dedicated sprayer sales managers for the North and South of our sales area, and they work together with the FarmSight specialists to promote sprayers and precision technology as a package.

"In addition, we now have screens at all depots to show the status of all machines monitored using JDLink telematics, so that staff can help customers identify ways to help maximise the efficiency of their equipment by analysing workrates, idle times and

other data.

"This is the future of arable farming. Small percentage gains in efficiency can add up to result in large savings, and ultimately boost profitability both for us and for our customers. The early adopters from both parties will gain the biggest advantages – we will be able to offer our customers the best technology with knowledgeable support, and they will benefit from the returns to be had. We now have a team in place that can show potential customers what this technology can do, and we have the potential for sales even to users of other makes of equipment.

"Full-time support staff with specialisms are a big part of what we offer. When I first started I used to drive our lorry and sell machinery, but soon realised the two needed to be distinct and focused. We have a dedicated re-marketing team, and a full-time service contract sales manager. The latter is particularly important, as PowerGard warranty sales have become a very important part of John Deere machine retailing, helping spread profit on a machine sale over up to five years. And our parts and service departments are now treated almost as one, with

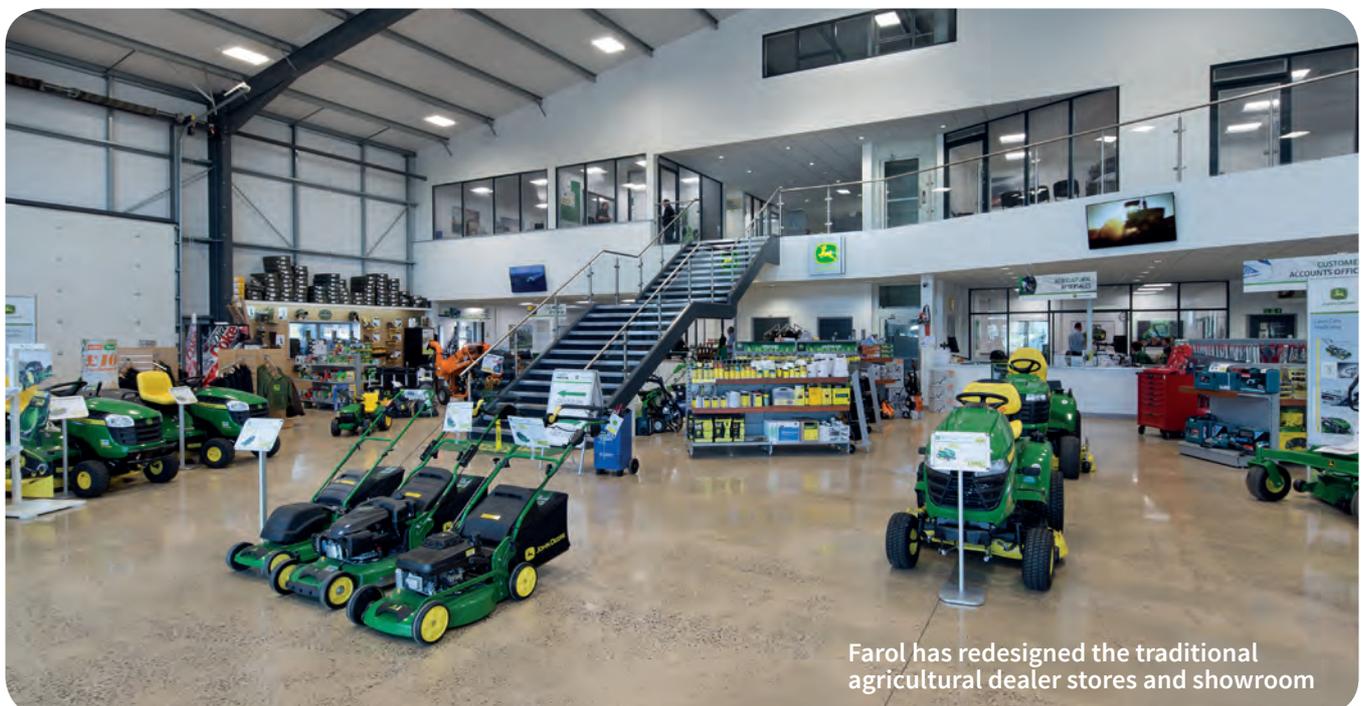
parts sold as a package and parts staff trained to fit as well as supply."

With so much going on within the business to boost the number and level of services provided to customers, staff management and communication have been a core focus, says Mr Vellacott.

"We've found ourselves firefighting some personnel issues in the past. Now we've recruited a full-time HR manager, which will take some people management pressure away from line management.

"As a company, we don't have multiple layers of management, with a very flat structure, and we're very open with the firm's performance, such as market share and profit figures. Now we're trying to improve our staff communication, using ideas such as a monthly staff newsletter.

"Over the past decade we've increased our turnover from £13m to a projected £80m for 2017 and staff numbers from 59 to over 200. We need to empower everyone to do what they feel is the best way to do their job, and be as efficient as possible. That can only come through good facilities and good communication." ●



Farol has redesigned the traditional agricultural dealer stores and showroom

THE AG-TECHNICIAN OF THE FUTURE

The dealership of the future will be a different model, employing specialist skills and selling services rather than products, says CHRIS BIDDLE. Our industry evolves, but the revolution in new agri-technology has only just begun

YOU cannot assess the role of the ag-technician of the future without considering the ag dealership of the future.

It is 100 years since Harry Ferguson's 'eureka' moment when he spotted the weakness in a tractor and plough as separate units. No matter that his original prototype three-point linkage hitched a plough to a Ford T car, the seed was sown. Early versions in 1921 were mechanically operated, but Ferguson was soon to develop a hydraulic system which was to revolutionise the farm tractor. After flirting with Ford and incorporating the system into a Ford-Ferguson tractor in 1939, Ferguson struck out on his own when the joint relationship broke down. The former Standard Motor Company factory at Banner Lane, used as an armaments factory, was refitted and production of the iconic Ferguson TE20 'Grey Fergie' commenced in 1946.

So why the history lesson?

It is arguable that despite the addition of many 'bells and whistles', and of course the ever increasing size of tractors, that today's farm work-horse is essentially a scaled-up version of Harry Ferguson's creation.

So whilst the challenge of

growing more food from finite resources has exercised the minds and skills of plant breeders, biotechnology and chemical 'boffins' – mechanical solutions and systems to meet the demands of food production in the future just haven't kept pace.

Higher and higher yields are being squeezed from cropping fields but bigger, better and faster machinery is no longer enough. Smart farming is the watchword, and that is changing the portfolio of machinery and equipment appearing on farms today – and will shape the future direction of suppliers and dealers in the years ahead.

DEALER DEVELOPMENT

Recent years have seen enormous technological advances in tractors and machinery in order to improve operating efficiencies through the rise and rise of connected equipment. Precision agriculture has enabled the application of precise and correct amounts of inputs such as water, fertiliser, and pesticides, increasing productivity and maximizing yields.

All the major manufacturers are developing systems to meet advancements in precision farming which really only emerged in the latter part of the 1980s.

The introduction of 'intelligent' tractors and machinery only marked the start of a technological revolution that is already shaping the dealer of the future – and by definition the quality of staff required to act as the efficient support between the manufacturer and the farmer.

To see the changing impact on a dealer's *modus operandi*, I recently visited Burden Bros, a John Deere dealership in the South-East of England. What a fascinating set up and a pointer perhaps to future farmer, dealer, manufacturer relationships.

The undoubted advantage of a 21st century dealership, such as Burden Bros, is that support services required for the new technological age of tractors and machinery can be incorporated into the fabric of the business.

Luke Alexander, Group Operations Manager says, "It's interesting that John Deere CEO Samuel Allen now says that Deere is in the software business rather than in the machinery business. That's the way we're developing our business".

So the big question is: Are you selling machinery or service today?

"Both, of course," replies Luke, "but our role is to work closely with the farmer to provide solutions



that will increase his productivity, whether it be GPS-steered tractors (over 60% of tractors sold by Burden incorporate Deere's automatic steering system), intelligent controls, or remote maintenance checks on combines or sprayers."

No longer does the farmer have to plough a lonely furrow, nor is the dealer pure salesman, nor order-taker. They are forming partnerships in which the dealer plays an absolutely critical role in advising the customer on bespoke solutions for his farming operation. The dealership acts as the technical nerve-centre, most remotely, to ensure that down-time is kept to an absolute minimum and has the tools to know when a machine will develop a fault.

All of which is shaping a new breed of dealer, where support staff are well trained and disciplined in IT systems, software analysis and advance communications. And that means a gradual breaking down of the traditional dealer structure – and creates the need to recruit high-calibre staff.

Being a relatively new dealership, Burdens has been able to build a highly qualified team. A few months ago, David Sturges, joined as Head of Strategy and Business Development. The move has been



Support staff must be well trained and disciplined in IT systems, software analysis and advance communications

a return to his roots, and although his high-profile career had included spells as Sales and Marketing Director of Hayter, Managing Director of Countax and more recently CEO of John Deere turf dealer Godfreys, David came from a farming background and gained a BSc in Agricultural Technology at Silsoe and an MBA from Cranfield University.

"I can't think of a more exciting time for agriculture," says David. "Just like the development of mobile phones, a new piece of technology or upgrade is being added almost daily and we have to ensure that we can embrace and react to constant change."

He joined a Burden team well-staffed with university graduates. Luke Alexander has a BA from Lancaster University, whilst the FarmSight precision farming

division at Burdens is run by Kris Romney and Chris Cormac-Walsh, both from farming backgrounds and both have studied to degree level at university.

There are growing pains, however, says Luke. "The traditional dealership – sales department, parts and service departments – still lie at the heart of the business, and there can be issues in integrating the FarmSight operation from time to time."

What is clear from the Burdens model, however, is that the traditional roles of the farm machinery salesman and of dealer service teams is changing rapidly. No longer are there 'all-rounders'; they are being replaced by product specialists, highly versed in selling sprayers, or forage equipment or combines. The FarmSight team are consultants, their role

is to act as business advisers to farmers, helping them to optimise the performance of expensive machinery and maximise the return on their investment.

No longer do dealers necessarily need to 'mug-up' on a tractor's technical specifications – horsepower, torque, turning circle, payloads, fuel capacity and the like. What counts are the 'embedded economics', according to Professor Simon Blackmore, who heads the robotic farming unit at Harper Adams University.

"A good example is Autosteer on tractors, which can cost around £15,000–£20,000 but allows farmers a positioning accuracy of 2cm, thus providing them with precise data on where their tractors have been and minimising the skip and overlap of applied treatments. Usual savings of employing this technology are between 10-15% on chemical expenditure, so many farmers can gain pay-back for it within just a few years and are quite happy to invest.

"However," says Prof Blackmore, "new technology needs to make the farmer's life simpler. Agricultural technology has to be developed like any other piece of high-tech equipment, like your smartphone. It has to be developed to a level of sophistication on the inside that



Left, David Sturges and right, Luke Alexander of Burden Bros Agri

makes it revolutionary but has to remain simplistic on the surface so people can just pick it up and use it without having to have a PhD and an engineering degree to be able to understand it.

"New technology has got to make the farmer's life simpler, and do what it says on the tin, and then they will start to invest in it."

At the World Agri-Tech Investment Summit in London last November, Joachim Stiegemann of Claas warned about the danger of a disconnect between the farmer and the over-production of data. "We're producing more and more data and

reports, and I fear that more data in the end will result in us selling fewer machines. We're facing a cultural, as well as a technological change," he said.

ROBOTICS

On the horizon for dealers are many new technologies that they are sure to have to embrace in the coming years. Robotics in particular. Many are still in the embryonic stage but leading farm machinery suppliers will wait until they see the economic case before buying the developer or commissioning the research.

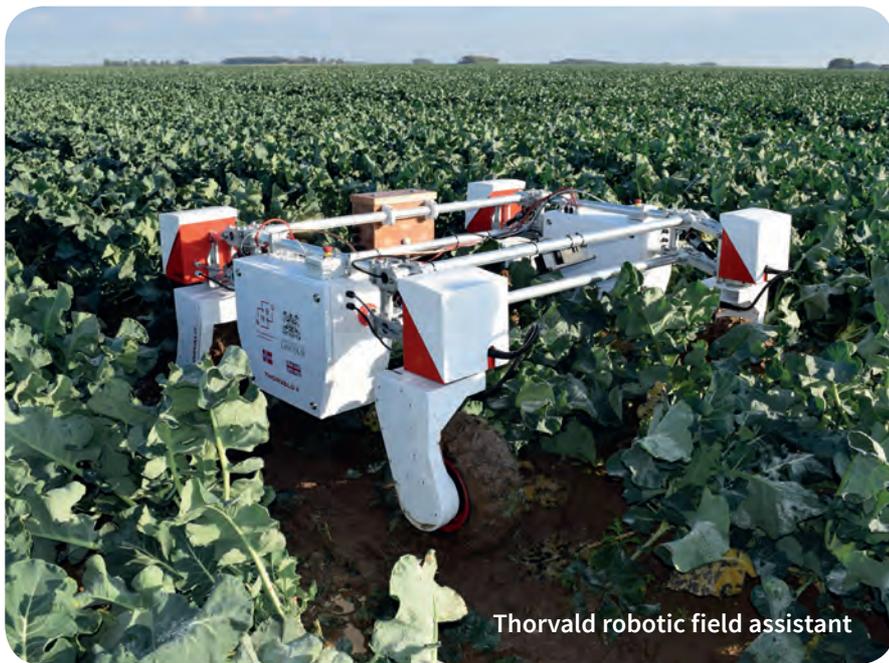
Then there are drones. Who would have forecast their inclusion in the farming package even 10 years ago?

And what about the growing alternatives to the diesel-powered tractor? What is the future for a Tesla-style tractor? In the US, the Autonomous Tractor Corporation has been one of the first to develop a robotic system for its Spirit tracked vehicle using a local guidance system based upon laser/radio navigation.

Kraig Schultz, CEO of the Autonomous Tractor Corporation said recently, "Teslas today carry about 100 kilowatt hours of batteries, but even just a 200



Dealer technicians now and in the future need to be highly-qualified individuals



Thorvald robotic field assistant

horsepower electric tractor would need about 1,500 to work for a full day. Batteries alone would cost farmers about \$350,000 (£275,000) for such an electric tractor and would weigh more than the tractor!”

Biofuel and part-biogas-powered tractors are also on the horizon. Valtra’s range includes dual-fuel options, running on diesel alone or a mix of diesel and 90% biogas, whilst New Holland has adapted a T6 prototype which runs on 100% biomethane, a technology already used by commercial road vehicles – and has also produced an experimental renewable hydrogen-powered concept tractor working out of a futuristic energy-independent farm.

In a recent report, the National Farmers Union anticipates that both diesel-electric hybrid and battery-electric tractors will be widely available from 2020 onwards.

MILLENNIALS

Yet, technological advances alone may not be enough: there will also be a need for agronomists, farmers and dealers to understand how to use data and advanced control systems to enable improved agricultural production.

Dealers themselves will probably be recruiting agronomists, crop specialists and others to work as part of their team.

So dealers, such as Burdens, have a vital role to play in the future as a vital cog in enabling efficient, timely and profitable food production.

Innovative machinery solutions need to be coupled with hard-headed business advice to ensure a return on investment for farmers. The machine itself is no longer the key driver – it’s what it will achieve in terms of quantifiable benefits for the farmer, particularly at a time when farm incomes and labour availability are under pressure.

There are already problems emerging with the compatibility of software systems, particularly between machines of different origins – issues which dealers regularly have to resolve.

Hence the need for highly qualified staff.

It could be said, that if the industry managed to get its recruiting act together, then those often referred to as ‘millennials’ or Generation Y, already have the IT skills to make a success of a career in agricultural machinery. The word ‘fitter’ has thankfully been consigned to the bin, ‘mechanic’ is even old-hat’ ‘technician’ is the

current preferred nomenclature.

But visualise a future where farming is conducted via an Uber-style system, where machines are hired via an app for a specific time-scale or task. We will certainly see the rise of specialist precision farming companies, such as Precision Decisions, where farmers can just buy a farming solution off-the-shelf via a service company rather than buying a tractor and having to develop the expertise needed to run that tractor.

Meanwhile, dealers must ensure that they have the expertise in-house to react to change. As Luke Alexander says, “Technology doesn’t stay still, but wherever it goes, we will be ready.”

The skill sets of dealer staff will evolve, electronics will come into greater play – but repairing a robot is likely to involve the replacement of a CPU and reprogramming via a laptop, much the same as with today’s machinery.

The Burden Bros model is fascinating. Here you have a farming company linked to a contracting business, linked to a sales route for used equipment – with a John Deere dealership tacked on to supply new machinery, along with ongoing upgrades and improvements.

One thing is for sure: looking 20 years ahead might seem a stretch. And yet, it is only 25 years since the internet came into full use. Young recruits joining now will only be in their late 30s in 2037, with a long career ahead of them.

Ours is an industry based on evolution, yet from where we stand today, the revolution has only just started.

Chris Biddle is the Editor of Landwards, the professional journal of IAgRE, the Institution of Agricultural Engineers, and the founder of Service Dealer. This article is an edited version of a feature published in the Summer 2017 issue of Landwards ●

TOMORROW'S WORLD TODAY



Editor Steve Gibbs takes a look at current cutting-edge concepts which may give an indication of what the dealership of tomorrow could look like

Whenever one gets into a discussion, speculating where future trends might lead us, you do run the risk of looking like an episode of *Tomorrow's World* circa 1983 – which foresaw us all walking round with fax machines strapped to our backs, eating our dinner in pill form. On the moon.

However, to perhaps get a sense of what sort of future innovations may become increasingly common for outdoor powered machinery dealerships, we can look at some of the cutting-edge ideas which are starting to be developed by the major manufacturers right now.

Be sure that if concepts like these take off for any company pioneering them, everyone will want in with their own versions.

Retail concept

In terms of retailing and hiring machinery itself, Husqvarna is currently piloting a fascinating project in Sweden.

Launched this May, homeowners in Stockholm have been able to access pay-per-use power tools for the garden, eliminating the need to maintain and store hedge trimmers, chainsaws and other tools that are used less frequently.

The project is part of the company's commitment to 'explore innovative and sustainable solutions for taking care of gardens and green spaces'.

The Husqvarna Battery Box, is a 'smart', 8x3m, unattended container with 30 electronic lockers that store battery-powered garden care products. Homeowners can reserve tools via an iPhone app, get instructions, pay, and open the locker to pick up their pre-booked power tool.

The 'box' is currently placed at Bromma Blocks, a shopping centre 15 min west of Stockholm city. Renting a garden care product will cost just over £30 a day.

The connection between the Husqvarna Battery Box and the customer is enabled via Bluetooth. For identification purposes, the customer uses the Swedish ID app BankID. Payments are charged to the registered



Husqvarna's Battery Box concept currently being trialled in Sweden

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Will dealerships of the future be stocking new product lines such as drones?

credit card at the end of the month.

“People are already sharing homes and cars,” said Pavel Hajman, President of the Husqvarna division. “To share products that are only used occasionally, like a hedge trimmer, makes a lot of sense for some users. Husqvarna Battery Box is proof of our commitment to explore new solutions that merge innovation and sustainability, benefitting the homeowner, the community and our distribution network.”

Husqvarna’s Battery Box is the result of a partnership that includes high-tech companies called Telenor Connexion, Flex, Zuora and HiQ. Flex builds the connected box and reports its status on events handled through a cloud solution with Telenor Connexion. Zuora supplies the subscription payment solution and HiQ builds the app and the system needed to bring everything together. The shopping centre Bromma Blocks provides the space for the test.

Doug Britt, President of Industrial and Emerging Industries at Flex said, “In a period of technological transformation, when ordinary objects are becoming connected, there is enormous opportunity for companies that embrace the new business models. Flex is thrilled to be helping Husqvarna integrate connectivity, creating a flexible experience for its customers.”

Meanwhile Sanna Sultan, Manager of Bromma Blocks, summed it up saying, “Husqvarna Battery Box gives a glimpse of what shopping centres may look like in the future.”

But does it give a glimpse of what specialist dealers will look like in the future?

The Husqvarna project only really extends the popularity of ‘click and collect’. No longer do we have to wait around for products to be delivered, we can choose a delivery option to suit – and that can often be from a container at a 24-hour convenience store with no connection to the source of the goods.

Many dealers already have safe containers to receive

urgently required parts ‘over-nighted’ to their premises and dropped off out of hours.

What will be interesting is the way that Husqvarna decides to roll out the initiative in the future. How will it involve the dealer network? Could, and should, containers be incorporated into dealerships – either internally or externally? Will dealers be involved in the restocking of products in non-traditional locations?

Who will be responsible for the safety of the product, and who will the renter ring when things go wrong?

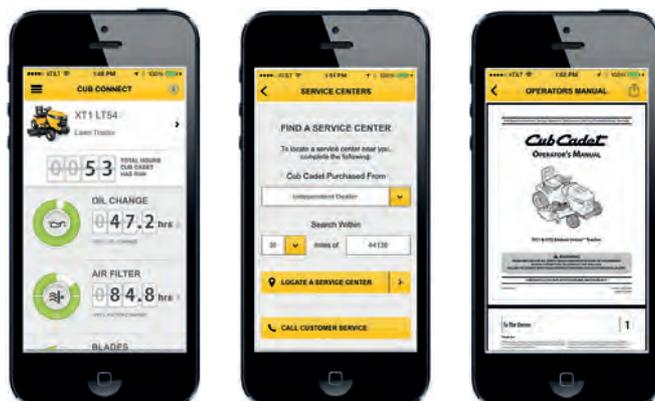
It is inconceivable that major suppliers such as Husqvarna would handle all these issues centrally. The dealer must be involved.

Apps

A key element of the Husqvarna project is, of course, utilising the powerful computer which all consumers carry around with them in their pockets nowadays.

It doesn’t seem too much of a stretch to speculate that smartphones and their apps are likely to play an increasingly significant role in the business lives of dealers of the future. We’ve seen in these pages in recent months how robotic mowers are already beginning to harness the available technology for remote app control – Etesia’s SKD ExxDrive and Viking’s MI 632 PC iMow both spring to mind.

Spreading the use from just robots though, Cub



Cub Connect app

Cadet has now launched an app for consumers to have more control over their ride-on mowers. The Cub Connect app consists of an automated maintenance dashboard and log, which the company hopes will make it as easy as possible for users to keep their machines running at peak performance. It helps with this by keeping track of a wide variety of maintenance records over the lifetime of the equipment.

The dashboard provides real-time monitoring and indicates when it's time, down to the hour, for an owner to check or change the oil, air filter, blades or battery. It also allows for the adding of personal maintenance records, such as tyre rotation, and gives the option to download the operator's manual. It will send automated reminders when required.

Significantly the app also enables users to locate and contact authorised dealers directly from their mobile device, so that when they receive a reminder, they can quickly and conveniently get everything booked in.

The Bluetooth enabled app, is currently available for the Enduro XT2 and XT3 lawn tractors.

Will this increased usage of smartphone technology mean that in the future dealers will have to be specialists in telecommunications as well? Will we see floorspace in the showroom given over to mobile providers? To handset manufactures?

Who knows? That could be way down the line. What could very well start to happen in the immediate future though, is that the sending out of servicing reminders from the workshop via 'snail mail' could begin to be phased out.

If customers are receiving reminder pings straight to their phones, and presumably directly into their to do lists and calendars, this could prove an efficient and effective method of making sure that workshops are full year-round.

Precision agriculture

But what of agricultural dealers? The agricultural machinery sector is arguably considerably more advanced already in terms of technological developments than its domestic and professional machinery cousins.

Precision farming is commonplace. Many large ag dealers are hubs for RTK-based autosteer systems, for example.

Ever more advanced systems and solutions are continually being released. For example, at the recent Cereals event LH Agro debuted Topcon Agriculture's next generation X35 touch-screen console.

This 12.1 inch X35 console uses Topcon's latest Horizon software to provide icon-based and user-



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Topcon X35 console

definable views for a variety of farming operations.

“The X35 console adds to Topcon’s premium range of precision farming systems by offering additional benefits above and beyond the previous X30 unit,” explains Richard Reed of LH Agro.

“Utilising the new Horizon Software Remote Support Tool, technicians can now take full-control and fix issues remotely,” Richard continues. “Now native within Topcon’s Horizon Software, the tool operates as fluidly as having a support technician in-cab”.

The company says support for up to six cameras allows the operator to monitor multiple views through the X35 or via XTEND on a phone or tablet device ensuring machines are functioning correctly.

“As with previous Topcon consoles, the X35 is an all-in-one system with full ISOBUS Universal Terminal (UT), TC-BAS, TC-GEO and TC-SC compatibility,” Richard adds. “It provides variable rate control for up to eight products and is designed to allow full data management capability through its cloud-based technology. The user can seamlessly transfer data such as guidance lines, yield maps and crop sensing from the X35 to the cloud, where it’s accessible from the farm or agronomist’s office or other machines where it can be interrogated to maximise returns on inputs.”

Systems like this make anything that *Tomorrow’s World* once predicted seem truly archaic. We are living in the future now. Or at least the world of high-end agriculture is.

But surely this advanced level of tech will start to migrate into the professional groundscare sector, if not the domestic sphere? Concepts such as Husqvarna’s Fleet Services are already proving this to be the case.

Battery power

What’s next though? If we think in terms of today’s machinery trends then a good bet must be the ever-growing use of non-fossil fuel powered machinery.

Grass machinery manufacturers are certainly heading that way. The challenge currently and in the future for manufacturers must be to power ever-larger equipment via rechargeable batteries.

An indication of this came at the SIMA show in France this year where John Deere received a Special Mention from the organisers for its SESAM electric tractor.

The SESAM (Sustainable Energy Supply for Agricultural Machinery) is the industry’s first fully battery-powered tractor. This prototype machine produces 130kW of continuous power and is based on the 6R Series tractor chassis, using an adapted DirectDrive stepless transmission, with a speed range from 3-50kph at full power. The tractor is emission-free, develops high torque at low speeds, and has a maximum output of around 400hp, with no energy losses when idling.

John Deere says the SESAM tractor is a central component of its vision of the energy-autonomous farm of the future. Potential benefits include the use of farm-produced renewable energy and new farm business models that would allow farms to provide electric power grid services in rural areas, for example.

Currently, one battery charge lasts for up to four operating hours in typical mixed mode operations or for around 34 miles of road transport work, while charging time is about three hours. The battery is designed to last for 3,100 charging cycles.

As we have said time and time again in these pages, the beauty of independent dealers is their ability to adapt and change to developing market conditions. With whatever technology prevails in the future, consumers and professionals alike will always desire advice, help and service from dedicated experts.

It could be the case, though, that dealers in the future of all machinery persuasions will need to be open to the belief that their go-to tool is likely to be the tablet rather than the spanner. ●



John Deere’s SESAM tractor

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BUSINESS MONITOR



DEALERS CONFIDENT FOR THEIR FUTURE

Strong belief that cordless sales will increase – but worries over recruitment

In response to our survey on how dealers viewed the future for their businesses, we heard from an industry that appeared to be confident that the specialist sector will have a continuing important role.

To the direct question of 'what is your level of confidence for your business looking ahead to the future', an overwhelming 58% declared themselves 'confident', with 21% going as far as to say they were 'very confident'.

Interestingly, what with the current hot-topic of battery vs petrol machinery, 51% of respondents feel that sales of petrol-powered machines will stay 'roughly the same' in the future. However, the vast majority of dealers who answered our survey certainly accept that battery-powered machines are likely to play an ever-increasingly significant role in their businesses of the future – with a huge 84% predicting their sales to increase.

In terms of servicing work, most respondents felt levels

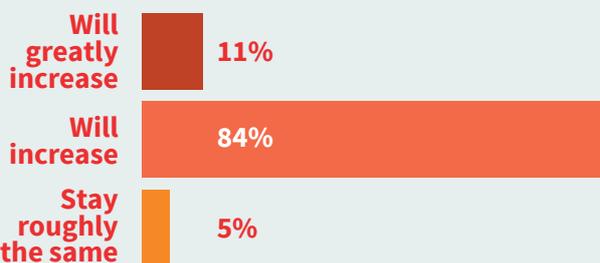
would stay 'roughly the same' (42%), but there clearly are a proportion who are worried about the cordless influence with 32% believing levels will fall. Most felt that parts and accessories sales would continue as they are.

A clear area of concern is that of recruitment, with a significant 74% of respondents thinking that this will become increasingly difficult for their business in the future.

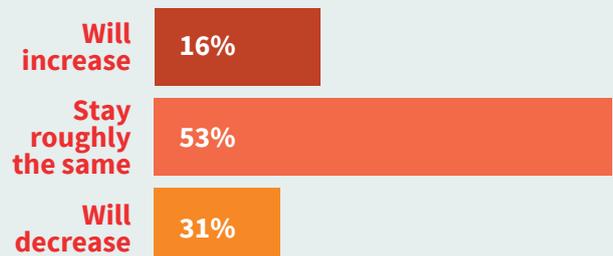
There was a fairly even split among dealers who answered the survey regarding succession plans: 37% currently have no plans, while 32% have a family member lined up to take over from them.

And finally, when asked if they believed their dealership will diversify into new technology such as drones in the future, most dealers who responded were fairly cool to the idea. Most offered an unsure 'perhaps' (68%), with the next most popular answer being 'not likely' (16%).

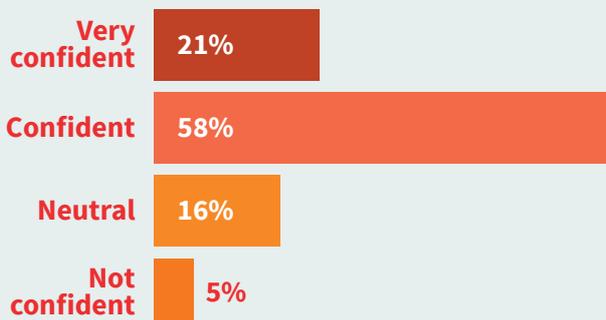
What is your prediction for your sale levels of battery-powered machines in the future?



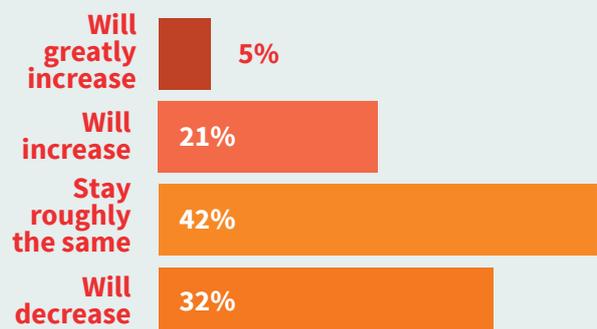
What is your prediction for your sale levels of traditional fuel powered machines in the future?



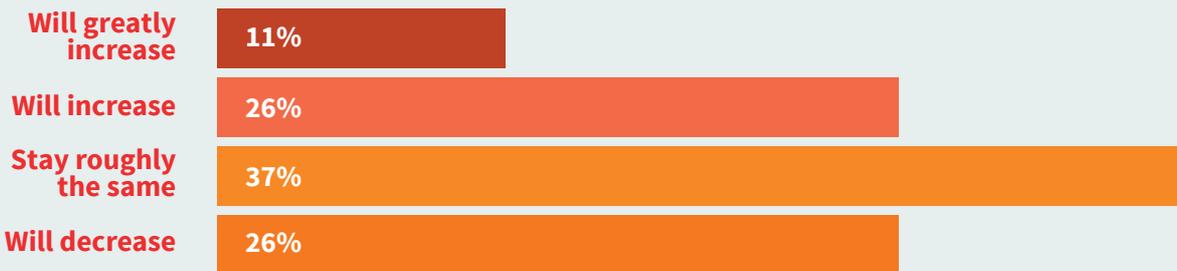
What is your level of confidence for your business looking ahead to the future?



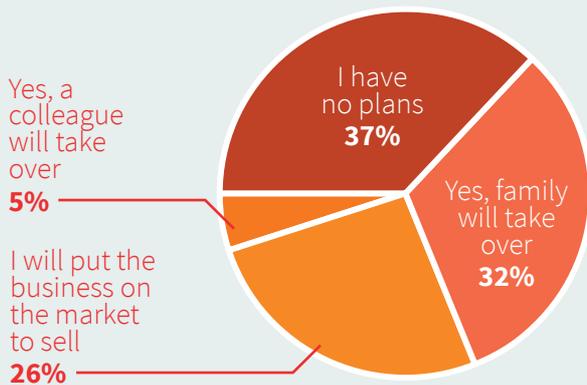
What is your prediction for your servicing work in the future?



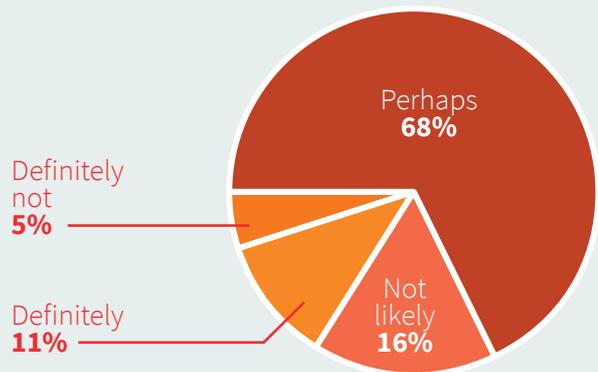
What is your prediction for your sale levels of parts and accessories in the future?



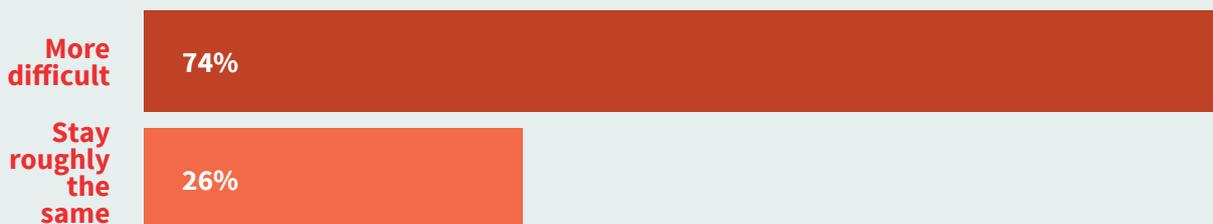
Do you have succession plans in place for your business?



Do you think your dealership will diversify into new technology such as drones in the future?



Do you think recruiting for staff in the future will become...



YOUR SAY

WE ASKED YOU TO LET US KNOW WHAT CHANGES YOU BELIEVE YOU WILL SEE IN YOUR BUSINESS IN THE FUTURE?

- We will see a gradual decrease in petrol machine sales and repairs, with battery product sales going up. I think this will decrease sales in oils and other accessories for combustion engine products.
- I predict two things are guaranteed to become more significant in the future – battery power and robotics.

- There are many makes of battery powered machines fighting for the same market. We have noticed when collecting and returning ride-ons that many customers have bought battery mowers on the internet and I would think it's often after having purchased a cordless vacuum.
- More battery powered products will continue to be introduced as battery life continues to be improved.
- Nothing I have seen so far indicates to me that our business will change significantly at all.

NEW PRODUCTION SITE TO SUPPLY DEUTZ-FAHR DEALERS

SDF, the group formerly known as Same Deutz-Fahr, invited dealers from across the UK and around the world to the May opening of the redevelopment of its German tractor factory site, the focus of 130hp+ Deutz-Fahr production. MARTIN RICKATSON joined them

Following four years of planning and construction which have marked the largest manufacturing investment in the company's history, SDF, the business behind Deutz-Fahr tractors and other farm equipment, now has significant additional facilities at its Lauingen location in southern Germany, including a completely new tractor manufacturing complex on a greenfield site.

With SDF's key brand recently making a number of major appointments for Deutz-Fahr in key areas of the UK, picking up some

significant new names following other manufacturers' reshuffles, the recent official opening of the new plant gave new and current dealers a good look at SDF's plans for the future of its tractor business. Recent Deutz-Fahr dealers recruited from other 'big four' brand names include Bell Agricultural in Kent and Mark Weatherhead in the Cambs/Beds/Herts region, with both areas having had no previous recent coverage.

Designed to take over the primary tasks of tractor assembly from the firm's long-established buildings on the same site, the new factory,

which is part of a €34m (£29.3m) investment, has been built on land acquired by SDF immediately across the road from the older factory buildings, which are now devoted to cab production. Home to agricultural machinery manufacturing since 1870, Lauingen became a Deutz facility in 1969, and until 1996 was home to Deutz-Fahr combine production. Today this takes place in a factory in Croatia, and Lauingen has now been the primary Deutz-Fahr tractor-making site for 21 years. SDF also makes tractors in Italy, Turkey, India and China, combines



The new facilities are producing Deutz-Fahr 6, 7 and 9 series Agrotion tractors, and from next year will also make the 11 series of up to 440hp

in Croatia and grape harvesters in France.

SDF is now using the facility to produce four- and six-cylinder tractors of 130hp and above, and while the site will, as before, also manufacture equivalent Same, Lamborghini and Hurlimann models, Deutz-Fahr is the 'home' brand as well as the group's biggest, representing 63% of SDF's revenues. For this reason, the site is regarded as a Deutz-Fahr facility, and the vast majority of its production will be of 6, 7 and the new 9 series Agrotron tractors bearing the green-and-black livery. By 2018 the factory will also be producing the planned 11 series Agrotron models of up to 440hp.

State-of-the-art facility

The 150,000 sq m plot adjacent to the existing premises was purchased specifically for the new facilities, and now houses a new L-shaped building with a covered area of 42,000 sq m. The facility



is supplied by a components warehouse comprising 4,000 storage areas for large parts and a small parts facility with 25,000 locations which is served by an automatic handling arrangement,

a shuttle-based system which dynamically adapts to the throughputs varying throughout the day and the ongoing production process.

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The Power Behind The Brands



powered production line design that carries machines slowly along as they are assembled, the main build area also includes innovative powered walkways for staff. Components are delivered at the moment they are required on the line, and staff walkways move in parallel to the tractor line at the same speed, making component installation easier and faster while minimising the time workers have to spend unnecessarily moving around each machine, suggests SDF.

Completed powertrains are passed to the next stage of manufacturing by overhead cranes.

In addition to the individual quality checks at each installation step, in-line hydraulic testing and a pneumatic test take place at the end of powertrain production, with up to three powertrains tested simultaneously for functioning and tightness at a hydraulic operating pressure of 220 bar. Once this is completed, the tractors move to the paint shop and then to final assembly.

Average build time per tractor

is 16 hours, with a new machine leaving the line every 12 minutes. Production capacity is claimed to be 30-35 units/day, or four tractors/hour, depending on the model. That translates to an annual figure of 5-6,000 units, again depending on model. Currently the factory produces three different Deutz-Fahr ranges, but it is planned for this to increase next year. Smaller Deutz-Fahr and other SDF group tractors for northern Europe are mostly built at the firm's plant in Treviglio, Italy.

After final assembly, the computer-controlled final acceptance of the completed tractor takes place, with functions of all installed components tested individually for each tractor, a range of different engine and transmission speeds imposed on the machine, and the front axle and front axle suspension are load-tested.

Representing expenditure of €20m, the largest individual investment within the factory has been in the paint facility, where the powertrains move through a mostly automated painting process.

After manual masking, protecting selected components through targeted covering and closing off, the powertrains are cleaned by robots to remove oil, grease and contaminants. To shorten the first drying process before priming, cavities and recesses are blown out with air nozzles, after which primer is applied manually before the subsequent top coat is sprayed on by a robotic system. SDF claims this guarantees that all powertrains pass a salt water spray test of 720 hours without signs of corrosion. As a comparison, in the car sector manufacturers usually measure corrosion using a 240-hour test.

The facility has its own electricity supply, with a combined heat and power plant generating the heat required for drying in the paint shop as well as the electricity for the entire production process. Excess heat is used for heating the workshops, and surplus electricity not required is fed into the public grid.

Dealer benefits

Meanwhile, dealers are also expected to benefit significantly from a new training, museum and 'brand experience' facility for Deutz-Fahr, sited adjacently to the new factory.

Constructed over a 10-month period, the new 3,800 sq m two-storey Deutz-Fahr Arena houses an exhibition hall for current products, the Deutz-Fahr Museum – which includes classic Deutz and Deutz-Fahr tractors and combines, such as examples of the DX series and the forward-control Intrac – plus a cinema, merchandise shop and cafeteria. There are also conference and training rooms for dealers and customers, and outside is a test track enabling visitors to operate tractors for themselves.

The firm says it expects to the facility to host up to 3,000 dealer and importer staff annually for training, with around 10,000 customer visitors also coming through the doors. ●



Built adjacent to the older factory, SDF has constructed a completely new assembly plant primarily for Deutz-Fahr tractors of 130hp-plus

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Cleveland Land Services		Cleveland
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Fairways		Scottish Highlands
J G Plant		South East Wales
Loxston Groundcare		Somerset
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Riverlea		West Wales
Thompson Groundcare		Yorkshire
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IN 2 EASY STEPS

ATV & SIDE-BY-SIDE SALES RISE

By 5.7% in 2016

The number of All Terrain Vehicles (ATV) and Side-by-Side units recorded by the AEA ATV/Quad Group increased by 5.7% in 2016 to 11,773 units.

Theodora Levanti-Rowe, Outdoor Power Equipment Economist at the AEA said, "The machines covered in this enquiry are those of a type sold mainly into agriculture and do not cover leisure or sports units."

Group Chairman, Stephen Morris of Honda UK, commented, "After some years of Side-by-Side units increasing at the expense of ATVs, we're pleased to record that in 2016 both categories grew."

The AEA does not comment on individual manufacturer's performance, only on industry trends, so there is no indication of which brand might be dominating the market.



POLARIS LAUNCHES NEW RANGER

Diesel UTV benefits from a host of new features

Polaris has announced the introduction of the latest Ranger Diesel UTV with new features.

The 2017 Ranger Diesel HD benefits from Active Descent Control for controlled hill descents, automatic four-wheel braking on steep inclines and Electronic Power Steering. A new seven-pin trailer socket now comes fitted as standard and comfort is ensured with the Lock & Ride Pro-Fit cab system



and a range of accessories.

The new vehicle incorporates a 1,028cc Kohler three-cylinder overhead cam liquid cooled engine. The company says this diesel engine utilises indirect injection and delivers smooth power with reduced combustion noise.

The compact, heavy-duty design has a cast iron crankcase for durability and an aluminium cylinder head for weight reduction. It is also EPA/CARB Tier 4 compliant.

Polaris says the Lock & Ride Pro-Fit cab system provides a new standard in accessory integration. The highly modular design offers options from robust canvas doors and a poly windscreen, to premium automotive glass tip-out windscreens and electric windows. The roof and rear panel on the 2017 Ranger Diesel come as standard.

The payload capacity is 680.4kg, with a gas-assisted rear dump box that can handle 454kg of materials and a full-sized pallet.

There is 907kg of towing capacity available and when the going gets rough the on-demand all-wheel drive kicks in for more forward traction when it is needed, reverting back to 2WD when the terrain smooths out.



EUROMECC RTV RIDE AND DRIVE HIGHLIGHTS MODELS

Kubotas rev into action

Kubota UK returned to Rockingham Castle recently for the Euromec customer Ride and Drive day.

In its third year, 100 nationwide guests from a range of sectors including commercial, industrial, private estate and local councils were invited to enjoy off-road driving experiences provided by the Sturgess Group and Kubota UK.

Speaking about the day, Peter Crewe, Managing Director at Euromec said, “It’s not every day that our 4x4 customers are given the opportunity to be behind the wheel of a Kubota utility vehicle, or vice versa for that matter. Our Ride and Drive Day is designed specifically to let both our Sturgess and Kubota UK customers enjoy a driving experience that we can guarantee they’ll have never tried before.”

Kubota’s RTV1140 was a popular addition to the day, allowing groups of four to be driven around the track by an experienced member of the Kubota team or get behind the wheel themselves. The company’s RTV-X900, RTV500 and RTV400 models were also put to the test by users, along with a range of 4x4 vehicles.

Michael Blissett, a Euromec customer from Harrington said, “I’m familiar with the Kubota brand as I own a Kubota compact tractor which I use for log splitting and grass cutting. However, I’ve never driven a utility vehicle before, so being given the chance to take

their RTV1140 for a spin around the track really opened my eyes to just how powerful they are.”

Testing conditions

Situated in the rugged grounds of Rockingham Castle, which boasts the official Land Rover Experience track, the course featured steep hills, winding paths and boggy terrains, with heavy rainfall on the day adding to the fun.

Ken Williams from Gloucester said, “Being given the opportunity to get behind the wheel of both machines and experience their capabilities when stretched to the limit was an absolute joy. As a Sturgess customer, I’ve never driven a Kubota RTV and I was really surprised at just how rugged and resilient they are. I own a large piece of farm land so will definitely consider purchasing an RTV500 for getting around with ease.”

With the grounds team at Rockingham hosting eight Kubota utility vehicles within their own fleet, the vast grounds and muddy elements created the perfect setting for the day.

Peter Crewe continued, “The event really allows customers to experience just how powerful the machines we have on offer are. When visitors come to a showroom, it’s hard to explain the sheer capabilities of the vehicles, so it’s a fantastic opportunity to really put them through their paces and see what they can do.”

LPG POWER FOR RTV 500

Euromec has launched an LPG fuel option for the Kubota RTV500 utility vehicle

For vehicles used in schools, factories and universities, Euromec says LPG offers clean power without the downtime and cost associated with electric power and batteries.

The company says the LPG-powered RTV is the result of development driven by customer demand. Under the front bonnet is a refillable LPG tank, plumbed and wired into the vehicle's main systems. On the dashboard, controls tell the operator how much fuel is available; the RTV can be switched to petrol if LPG is not available. Refilling the LPG tank is easy using the nozzle mounted just under the front bumper.

Apart from using the refillable LPG tank the RTV can also use LPG from a bottle. In the front right-hand corner of the load area a bottle mount and fuel line make fitting and changing a gas bottle simple.

Euromec boasts that this LPG option offers better running costs, whole life costs and cold weather performance than battery power. The company also says it has the added benefit of 100% availability as it does not need recharging.

This LPG fuel option for the Kubota RTV500 is only available from Euromec. It does not infringe the Kubota product warranty.



ACE CHOICE FOR KIDS

New 150 EFI single-seat youth model with protective cab frame

Polaris has announced the single-seat ACE 150 EFI, the industry's only single-seat youth model with a protective cab frame.

Modelled after Polaris ACE vehicles, the new 150 EFI gives kids 10 years old and older (varies by market) the single-seat freedom enjoyed by their adult counterparts.

“Polaris continues to innovate its youth line-up to provide a wide variety of safe, fun options for kids,” said Craig Scanlon, Polaris Off-Road Vehicles Chief Retail Officer. “This new model is another way for families to share the off-road riding experience together.”

The vehicle has several features to provide a safe, enjoyable ride. The 150cc, Electronic Fuel Injected (EFI) engine has four speed-limit modes. Standard from the

factory the vehicle is limited to 16km/h (10mph). Adults are able to adjust the top speed to 24km/h (15mph), 35km/h (22mph) or 47km/h (29mph), based on the skills of the rider. Other safety features include LED daytime running lights, seatbelt, side nets, whip flag and parking brake. Additionally, the vehicle comes with a video explaining safe operation and a helmet to reinforce the importance of wearing proper safety gear.

The 150 EFI offers a large ergonomic range of adjustability to grow with the driver. This includes ample amounts of headroom, tilt steering wheel and pedals, and adjustable bucket seat for growing riders. Likewise, the vehicle, features (15.2cm) 6-inch. of rear suspension travel, (22.9cm) 9-inch. of ground clearance, and 22-inch tires.

For added customisation, the unit can be accessorised with poly roof, half-windscreen, and front and rear bumpers.

The vehicle will be available in Indy Red with full availability later this year. It joins the Phoenix 200, RZR 170 EFI, Outlaw and Sportsman 110 EFI, and Outlaw 50 as part of the Polaris youth line-up.



ARCTIC CAT OFF-ROAD VEHICLES TO BE BRANDED TEXTRON

Following February's acquisition

Textron Off Road has announced that it will be releasing its first Side-by-Side as the result of the Arctic Cat merger in the spring of 2018.

The Wildcat XX will feature a 125-hp Triple 998 engine, 17.5-inch of front and rear suspension travel, King Shocks, KMC 15-inch wheels, 30-inch tires, full doors and a race-inspired ROPS.

It has been formally announced that Textron Off Road will be the name of all Arctic Cat off-road products going forward, while Arctic Cat's sub-brands Wildcat, Prowler and Alterra will remain under the Textron Off Road Brand.

The Arctic Cat name will only exist for snow vehicle products going forward.

Markus Ferch, Arctic Cat's General Manager for Europe said in a letter to its dealers, "We can assure you that the decision to move away from the Arctic Cat brand for dirt products was not taken easily and might emotionally hurt all our green bleeding hearts,

but with the new Textron Off Road brand comes great opportunities that will lead to stronger presence and sales in the future.

"Textron Off Road is synonymous with the world-renowned brands that Textron has to offer and we're proud to be part of the same company that delivers state-of-the-art jets, planes, high performance engines, heavy duty commercial vehicles and military systems and that now will bring that same technology and power to our off-road consumer products.

"Though delivering off-road Vehicles under the Textron Off Road branding soon, we will keep the well accepted product categories Alterra, Wildcat and Prowler.

"While keeping our well accepted product categories, this integration will present new opportunities for you. Arctic Cat distributors and dealers will in the near future have access to a much wider Textron Specialised Vehicle product portfolio. By utilising common channels for manufacturing and distribution as well as the great power of Textron, we'll become a bigger player among the industry.

"Soon you will start to see new products, which are the result of this strategy. A brand new high performance/utility vehicle developed by Textron Off Road will be available in a few months."



SUZUKI ATVS NOW PROTECTED BY CESAR

Datatag-powered system free on utility models

The CESAR security system powered by Datatag is the official security initiative of the Agricultural Engineers Association (AEA) and the Construction Equipment Association (CEA) and now comes free on all new Suzuki utility ATVs.

The kit, once installed, acts as both a theft deterrent and in the event of a vehicle loss, a powerful tool for recovery.

All Suzuki ATVs fitted with the system also benefit from insurance savings with NFU Mutual offering a 12.5% discount and NIG Farmweb offering 7.5% off the premium.

The easy and quick to install Suzuki Datatag kit offers ATVs a unique 'fingerprint' that can be established, by the police or the

insurance industry, in a number of different ways.

The unique identity cannot be erased, however hard a criminal may try, due to the various methods of marking.

All UK police forces have been equipped with thousands of special Datatag scanners that are specifically programmed to read the Datatag electronic transponders which give each motor a unique electronic fingerprint.

Datatag already has extensive experience in producing similar products for the motorcycle market and all Datatag systems meet the Secured by Design standard, the Association of Chief Police Officers'

preferred specification for security marking.

All new utility ATVs come with the CESAR security system for free, including fitting. ●



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TAXATION

MISSED A DEADLINE? ACT NOW

UK tax law is incredibly complex and riddled with deadlines and penalties for non-compliance, writes *SME Digest* Editor Adam Bernstein. Self-assessment is no different and it's so easy to miss a return and find, some months later, that a minor penalty has grown into a large problem.

The key deadlines to note are: 31st October for paper tax returns, 31st January for online returns and the first payment of tax on account as well as a balancing payment from the preceding tax year, and 31st July for the second payment on account.

Missing a deadline is not going to lead to arrest, however, you will be given an automatic penalty for late submission which becomes more severe over time.

If you've missed the deadline, you need to file the return – online, not by post – as soon as possible to

levies so long they meet the grounds of a “reasonable excuse”. Examples of these and details on lodging an appeal are at www.gov.uk/tax-appeals/reasonable-excuses.

However, what HMRC says it won't accept has not always been borne out in tax tribunal judgments. It's notable that a reasonable excuse is not defined in law so if you feel that HMRC is being unreasonable you should seek good tax advice, and if appropriate, appeal to the tax tribunal as every case is decided on its own merits. Cases have, for example, been decided in a tax payer's favour where HMRC has claimed that a return sent by post had been received late; HMRC couldn't



Edited by Adam Bernstein

“WHERE A REASONABLE EXCUSE IS BEING MADE, YOU MUST STILL TAKE STEPS TO COMPLY WITH YOUR OBLIGATIONS AT THE EARLIEST OPPORTUNITY”

keep the penalties and interest to a minimum.

Going forward, you need to take steps to avoid missing deadlines again. The starting point is to collect and collate relevant documents in anticipation of completing your return and if you've not already done so, register with HMRC Online Services (www.gov.uk/log-in-register-hmrc-online-services/register). Filing online grants longer deadlines and removes the worry of postal delays.

While compliance with deadlines is non-negotiable, HMRC must consider appeals against the penalties it

prove the actual date of receipt.

Similarly, a lack of funds may be appealable if you've suffered from an issue outside of your control, such as client bankruptcy.

Where a reasonable excuse is being made, you must still take steps to comply with your obligations at the earliest opportunity.

Finally, you may be able to establish a 'time to pay agreement' with HMRC where the penalty payment is suspended. However, if the agreement is broken you will be again liable for the penalty.

HELP MAKE VAT SIMPLER

SME Digest Editor Adam Bernstein writes: VAT is a tax that, from the government's point of view, is very successful. It raised some £117bn last year – 22% of government revenues, and it's cheap to collect – the VAT-registered trader does most of the work and HMRC just polices it.

The problem is that VAT is an admin burden, is complex and even with help from accounting systems, creates lots of worries. Could it all be simpler? The government is thinking it could and through a review being undertaken by an independent government department, the Office of Tax Simplification (OTS), you have a chance to contribute to simplify VAT.

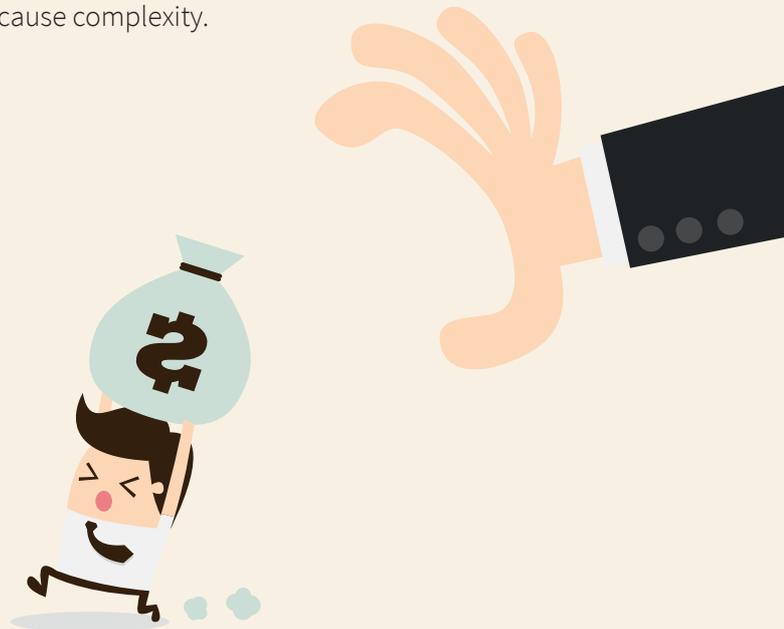
The OTS has identified eight areas that are particularly complex and offer scope for simplification. They are discussed in the *Progress Report And Call For Evidence* it published on its website (<http://bit.ly/2gjQtAl>). Four are particularly interesting to the OTS:

- **The VAT registration threshold:** this is when a business has to sign up for VAT and start charging it. The UK's level is £85,000; most other countries' are around £20,000 and it gives non-registered traders a price advantage compared with the VAT-registered trader.
- **Rates of VAT:** changing tax rates is outside the OTS's remit but what it's interested in are boundary issues that cause problems in practice. Where is it difficult to decide what rate to apply? Is that down to product development where VAT hasn't kept up?
- **Partial exemption:** A trader claims back VAT they have paid on goods and services purchased. The catch is that the purchases have to be linked to supplies they make that are subject to VAT, at the 20%, 5% or 0% rate. If the purchase links to a supply that is exempt or just isn't a supply at all then the VAT can't be reclaimed – this affects charities.
- **Special accounting schemes:** there are a range

of schemes that were designed to simplify VAT accounting. These include flat rate schemes, annual accounting, and retail schemes. The OTS wants to know if they are still working properly? Are they still needed?

It's worth noting that the flat rate scheme changed radically from 1st April and has essentially been made unusable by many. There's more detail at <http://bit.ly/2fuyABb>.

There are other areas listed in its report that the OTS will be examining: VAT administration, penalties and appeals; Capital Goods scheme; Option to Tax; a rulings system; and whether particular business sectors need to be taken into account. But as well as what we have set out, people will no doubt have their own issues that cause complexity.



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THE INTRODUCTION OF THE APPRENTICESHIP LEVY

The long-awaited Apprenticeship Levy for UK employers came into effect from 6th April 2017, writes *Mark Stevens, Solicitor at Veale Wasbrough Vizards*.

It's designed to significantly increase the number of apprenticeships in the UK and is an obligation on all qualifying UK employers to fund new apprenticeships from May 2017.

The levy is charged at a rate of 0.5% of an employer's pay bill and will only be paid on annual pay bills in excess of £3 million. In reality, this affects less than 2% of UK employers. The levy will be collected by HMRC through PAYE, alongside income tax and National Insurance Contributions.

If a company has a payroll of £3 million, they will pay £15,000 in levy payments throughout the year which will gradually appear in their digital apprenticeship account, and they will also gain an additional £1,500 (or 10%) from the government for the same period. Therefore, the company will have £16,500 in their digital account to pay for apprenticeship training and assessment.

However, one aspect of the levy proposals will see each employer receive an annual allowance of £15,000 to offset against their levy payment.

Companies which qualify to pay the levy will need to consider the impact that it may have on their

business, including any changes that need to be made to the payroll system; dealing with associated payroll administration; seeking advice on financial (re-) modelling; and potentially mitigating the impact of the new costs incurred.

The government has announced that any unused levy funds will be used to fund apprenticeship training for small and medium sized businesses, which do not reach the threshold to pay the levy in the first place.

Non-levy paying businesses with over 50 employees, or businesses that have used up their levy pot, will have to make a contribution of 10% towards the cost of apprenticeships. The remaining 90% will be paid for by the government. Smaller businesses will not have to make a contribution for apprentices up to the age of 23. For all employers who take on apprentices between the ages of 16-18, they will receive a £1,000 bonus payment from the government.

However, it is also worth noting that the levy can be used to fund apprenticeships for new or current employees of any age or position, as long as there is a genuine need for training.

Employed adults can undertake apprenticeship training – they do not need to be in entry-level job roles and they can continue to be employed on their present terms and conditions.

SME NEWS

Videos, webinars, e-learning, and emails for the self-employed

HMRC is offering various forms of help and support to those running their own businesses.

There are videos on YouTube that cover Self-Assessment, employment status, and research and development. There are also e-learning tools and free online guides that cover setting up and running a business and what counts as self-employed business expenses.

HMRC is also offering a series of webinars on a wide range of topics where questions can be asked during the presentation of the host. They're aimed at sole traders and business partnerships and are not suitable for directors of limited companies. Viewers will

need to register and log in at least five minutes before a live webinar is due to start. Registered viewers can watch (other) recorded webinars at any time.

<http://bit.ly/116p67T>

Modernised insolvency rules introduced

New rules which guide insolvency practice have come into force and replace the Insolvency Rules 1986 and their 28 subsequent amendments.

Changes brought in include enabling electronic communications with creditors; removing the automatic requirement to hold physical creditors meetings, although creditors will be able to request such meetings; and enabling creditors to opt out of further

correspondence and for small debts to be paid by the office holder without requiring a formal claim from creditors.

The Insolvency (England & Wales) Rules 2016 were developed in cooperation with the insolvency profession as part of the government's Red Tape Challenge. It is hoped that they will save businesses an estimated £20 million annually, enabling greater returns to the creditors of insolvent businesses.

The rules apply in England and Wales. A parallel project to modernise the Scottish insolvency rules is currently underway in partnership with the Scottish Government.

<http://bit.ly/2pCybmO>

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

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Job
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JOB VACANCY - SERVICE TECHNICIAN

Due to the addition of a major new dealership (Tuff Torq Transmissions), we currently have an opening for a full-time skilled technician within our Service Division.

The successful candidate will be an extremely self-driven, physically fit & energetic individual with a proactive and positive attitude. Applicants should possess a high level of previous experience with petrol & diesel engines, although full training will be given on our exact range of engines & transmissions; a degree of computer literacy will also be beneficial.

As well as working out of our Great Dunmow base, the role will also include travelling in our company vehicles across the UK for service/warranty call-outs.

The position offers an attractive salary, private medical insurance & company pension scheme. If you feel that this vacancy is right for you, please email a CV and covering letter to tricia@uni-power.co.uk ; or send via post to: Uni-power Ltd, Attn: Tricia Paveley, Unit 8 Flitch Industrial Estate, Great Dunmow, Essex CM6 1XJ

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CAMPEY TURF CARE SYSTEMS

Service Dealer talks to Richard Campey, who combines being Managing Director of a successful Macclesfield dealership with a thriving professional turfcare machinery imports and distribution business

In its role as a local dealer of professional equipment based out of Marton in Macclesfield, Cheshire, Campey Turf Care Systems is a stockist of New Holland tractors, Trimax mowers, Dennis Sisis equipment and Baroness machines.

Richard Campey has arguably become more well known over the past 30 years though by playing a significant role in bringing into the turfcare industry a wide range of new innovative machinery, which has helped many groundsmen to improve the standard and maintenance of their playing surfaces.

Over the years, his company has introduced the Koro FieldTopmaker, Imants ShockWave, Rotoknife, Koro

Recycling Dresser, Raycam Speedresser and a host of other equipment that revolutionised the way that sports pitches could be renovated.

What had initially started out as a business offering sports turf maintenance work within the North-West of the UK, has now grown into a leading independent distribution business, with machinery available throughout Europe, Asia, Africa and the USA.

A recent visit to the company's headquarters in Cheshire enabled *Service Dealer* to ask Richard Campey about the success of his company and the way he sees his business heading in the future.

Service Dealer: What is the history of Campey Turf Care?

Richard Campey: I've been working in the industry for 41 years. After 10 years at SISIS I thought it was time for a change, and whilst it was hard to break away from a secure job with an established business, I branched out on my own and set up Professional Turf Maintenance Services, doing contract work on bowling clubs and football clubs whilst buying and selling second-hand machinery.

This progressed to buying and selling new equipment and that's how Campey Turf Care Systems came to be. We moved into the

premises we're currently in on 2nd January, 1988 and we're now celebrating 30 years of successful trading.

SD: How many staff work with you?

RC: I employ 26 staff, with 19 working at our head office in Cheshire and seven product specialists who are based throughout the UK and Ireland.

SD: What area do you cover?

RC: In terms of our professional turf care machinery distribution, we're a global company, supplying worldwide.

SD: Can you name any key moments over the years that changed the way you work?

RC: I was over in Holland and saw a photograph on the wall of a different machine. I asked what it was and the Koro story started. 18-months later I met Ko Rodenberg and saw what he was achieving on football pitches

in Rotterdam and realised what the potential was of this new equipment.

We eventually brought the Koro FieldTopMakers into the UK and I do believe they've been a real game changer in the professional sports sector. Renovating a pitch in such a radical way while minimising the down time for sports clubs has been one of the most exciting changes in turf maintenance in the past 15 years or so.

SD: What other brands do you distribute?

RC: Imants, Vredo, Air2G2, Dakota, Raycam, TIP and Votex. We also have a thriving used machinery business and a subsidiary company, Tines Direct, which supplies replacement tines, blades and replacement parts for a wide range of turf care machinery.

SD: Is anything going particularly well for you at the moment?

RC: The Air2G2. We've always looked at unconventional ways of doing things. Why should we



The Koro FieldTopMakers in action

be doing something that we've done for 80-years, ever since turf management started, by putting metal bars or metal tubes in the ground and calling that aeration? There must be other ways of achieving results, and the Air2G2 is truly a different approach. It uses air to de-compact deep into the soil profile with very little, if any, surface disturbance.

I was having a look round at the smaller booths at a golf show in Las Vegas five years ago, where you find new ideas and new companies, when we came across this machine. They had a prototype there and we kept in touch over the year and went back the following January and saw it working on a golf course, and that sold it to us.

SD: Do you use trade shows to promote yourselves?

RC: Trade shows have played a vital role for showcasing the industry and equipment over the years. However, I believe their role is changing. With new ways for professionals to access information online and communicate through social media, the networking aspect of shows has been altered.

For us it is becoming more important to get out there and demonstrate to our customers through open days and renovation tours. This is highlighted by the success of demonstration tours

we do every other year throughout Europe.

SD: Do you have trouble recruiting for your dealership?

RC: We have been very fortunate in attracting excellent people to the company over the years and have built up a very good team.

SD: Do you have succession plans in place?

RC: We have a lot of staff and younger lads who are coming through who are equally as capable of carrying the job forward.

SD: Where do you see the future for your dealership? What new tech might you be stocking more of?

RC: Our ambition is global. We continue to push into new markets abroad and introduce new techniques and products into existing markets too. It's not a case of introducing new technology itself, but to encourage the manufacturers to incorporate advanced technology such as computer controls into current and future models to improve performance.

SD: How do you market your dealership?



New Holland tractors lined up in the dealership's yard

RC: We market and advertise through printed and digital literature, the trade press, social media networking and through our excellent reputation, hard earned and hopefully well deserved.

SD: How are you utilising new technology available to you?

RC: We use Twitter extensively, run our own Facebook page and generally accept that these add to our marketing capabilities.

SD: Finally, the theme for the Service Dealer Conference this November is *The Challenge of Change*. How do you feel about change?

RC: As a company and an individual I've always embraced change if it appears to encourage best practice in sports turf maintenance. ●



Richard Campey talking to a member of the team



Richard Campey

IAGRE LAUNCHES NEW TECHNICIANS GRADE

Recognising the role of service technicians

The Institution of Agricultural Engineers (IAgrE) has launched a new grade of membership to recognise the importance of the role of the technician in the land-based sector.

IAgrE CEO, Alastair Taylor commented, "It's so important that we recognise the important role which our technicians fulfil across agricultural engineering in all of its

forms. These people do such a great job, whether they're working as a service engineer in a dealership, as a precision farming technician in wider agriculture or as a soil science technician. This new grade is a great way of recognising their achievements."

The Technician grade of IAgrE membership is for those who are qualified at a vocational or technical level and have completed an apprenticeship or extended diploma. This grade may include farm machinery service engineers, people working in precision farming and soil science working as technicians, instructors and trainers.

IAgrE Technician members will have a technical qualification in agricultural engineering, land-based technology or related engineering or scientific subject at Level 3. This will include, for example, an extended diploma, advanced

apprenticeship or equivalent in an appropriate subject.

IAgrE President, Rob Merrill added, "There are many reasons why it's good to be a member of a professional body. It's recognition and acknowledgement of your experience, personal skills and knowledge. This leads to a professional identity and greater job satisfaction, recognition and respect from employers, colleagues and customers for the expertise held.

"It helps you with continual professional development opportunities (CPD) and to stay abreast of technology. In the long term it offers greater career prospects and earning potential as well as greater self-esteem, confidence and professional assertiveness."

For further information visit the Institution's website at www.iagre.org



Alastair Taylor, CEO of IAgrE (right)

VIDEO HIGHLIGHTS CAREERS IN SERVICE ENGINEERING

CLAAS raising awareness of options

Since launching its *Engineer your Career* campaign at LAMMA, the team at CLAAS UK has been attending careers events and shows throughout the UK and Ireland.

The latest initiative in the campaign to raise awareness of the careers options available within the high-tech agricultural machinery service industry has been the creation of a short video.

CLAAS says the agricultural service and support industry has changed out of all recognition in recent years, and the number of roles now available under that

'broad brush' title is extensive.

To highlight this, the video profiles CLAAS service engineers at all levels of their career, from current apprentices through to service managers, giving a quick oversight of their job, what it involves and the satisfaction they gain from their role.

"Many people fail to appreciate that agriculture is an exciting industry, with machinery that uses state-of-the-art technology on a par with aerospace and other cutting-edge industries," says Trevor Tyrrell, CEO of CLAAS UK. "It's an industry that has

embraced the internet, satellite technology and computers like no other, as we continue to develop machinery that will help farmers feed an ever-growing population."

The new *Engineer your Career* video can be viewed via the CLAAS UK Facebook page or via the official YourCLAAS Youtube channel at tinyurl.com/lksp7rv



DEALER TRAINING WEEK SUCCESS

For Charterhouse Turf Machinery

Charterhouse Turf Machinery's recent Dealer Training Week saw 68 dealer staff from across the country converging on Charterhouse School to be updated on new and updated kit.

Current and recently appointed dealers from the company's distribution network had the opportunity to get valuable hands-on experience and ask questions.

Burden Bros Agri Group Turf Manager, Alan Pierce, went along with the whole of his sales team. "We all attended the same day and found it to be very well organised with plenty of Charterhouse staff on hand, as always helpful and professional. It was hugely beneficial to see such a wide range of kit in action and we all came away with an enhanced knowledge which we look forward to sharing with our customers."

Ben Turner, Group Grounds Care Equipment Manager from Ben Burgess GroundsCare Equipment added, "Six of my team and I attended and found it to be a worthwhile event. It's always great to get hands on

and develop our understanding of the products. A big thanks to the Charterhouse team for the event and their hospitality on the day."



INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY, TRALEE VICTORIOUS

In Young Engineers Competition

The Institute of Technology, Tralee, Ireland recently won the Institution of Agricultural Engineers (IAgrE) Young Engineers competition. A team from Easton & Otley College, Norfolk, were runners up.

The Institute of Technology beat off competition from other land-based colleges at the event which took place at Kubota's training school, based in

Thame, Oxfordshire.

The competition was open to all UK training and education providers and involves creating a remote or radio controlled vehicle. Teams are given a set of standard wheels, a battery and maximum dimensions, and the challenge is to produce the top performing vehicle of the competition. The vehicle that powers its way to the highest point up a curved ramp is the winner.

Peter Leech, an IAgrE past President and member of the judging panel, said, "We had a brilliant day. Kubota were fantastic hosts and everyone agreed it was a great opportunity for the students to meet other students, exchange ideas and use their creative problem-solving skills."

The event was sponsored by Autoguide Equipment and Bosch Rexroth. Cash prizes were awarded to the winning teams by IAgrE, plus power tools from sponsor Rexroth Bosch Group. ●



PRODUCTS

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COMMERCIAL / DOMESTIC

PRECISELY ZERO FROM CUB CADET

XZ range offers power and performance

Cub Cadet has launched the XZ range of zero-turn riders as part of its Enduro Series.

The company's 360° turning technology lets users mow around obstacles with incredible confidence, making every mowing manoeuvre more efficient. All models within the range feature four-wheel steering, with the XZ2 and XZ3 models combining zero-turn capability with the ease of steering wheel control.

The XZ1 models, of which there are three, with a choice of cutting widths of 107, 127 or 137cm, offer precise performance with lap bar technology. These machines are built with a reinforced steel chassis and heavy-duty fabricated front axles.

The three XZ2 models feature Cub

Cadet Syncro-Steer Technology which comprises steering wheel control and four-wheel steering.

All XZ2 models feature high-powered Kawasaki OHV V-Twin engines and dual hydrostatic transmissions. The floating cutting deck, available with cutting width options of 107, 117 or 127cm, follows the contours of the ground for superior cutting and more uniform look. Although the XZ2s are mulchers, collection is also an option with a 200-litre twin bag.

The XZ3 122 is the most robust, heaviest gauge ride-on, with a fabricated cutting deck, engineered for unsurpassed airflow, blade overlap, and quality of cut. The XZ3 122 has a 122cm deck, with the versatility to mow around fences and trees, with the centrally

mounted deck maximising mowing accuracy in corners and under low obstacles. This model has more cutting height levels than any other in the range, with a cutting height of between 25 to 102mm. It also benefits from dual hydrostatic transmission, low centre of gravity and a wide wheelbase.

Powered by a Kawasaki engine, the operator sits in comfort on a high-backed, padded seat with supportive armrests and an adjustable steering column.



DOMESTIC

INCREASED PETROL POWER FROM COBRA

M51SPC mower launched

A new addition to the Cobra range is the M51SPC mower.

This petrol-powered machine has a 20" cutting width and a self-propelled function.

The machine benefits from a single lever height of cut adjustment that has 10 adjustable cutting heights ranging from 25mm for a low

finish, up to 75mm for tackling longer grass.

It has a 4-in-1 feature that gives the option to mulch, side discharge, rear discharge or collect the cuttings in its 60-litre grass bag.

It is incredibly easy to switch between functions; for mulching simply attach the mulch plug to enable the grass cuttings to go back onto the lawn – alternatively, users can insert the side discharge chute to create neat lines of cuttings as they mow.

The mower is powered by a Cobra DG600 OHV petrol engine that is designed for medium to large gardens.



HE-VA LOOSENS UP

Combi-Lift Pre-Cultivator

A new HE-VA Combi-Lift Pre-Cultivator was launched at the Cereals event which allows soil loosening at the same time as drilling or cultivating.

Designed to subsoil up to 350mm (14") deep, alleviating compaction and improving drainage, the Combi-Lift fits directly onto the tractor linkage, incorporating a heavy-duty rear linkage that can pull another implement behind.

Commenting, James Woolway, OPICO's Managing Director said, "This versatile machine is perfect for a range of tasks and can be lifted out of work when not needed, while still operating the drill or cultivator. This means specific ground can be targeted, such as wheelings, poorly drained areas of the field or pockets of compaction."

It can be fitted with standard subsoiling legs and points or 'low disturbance' legs. In its standard format it is suitable for working in combination with shallow cultivators or cultivator drills, where compaction needs alleviating or soil needs restructuring.

The low disturbance version consists of a narrower leg and smaller, specially designed, tungsten-tipped point. It can be used down to a depth of 250mm (10") to address soil pans and compaction to encourage depth of rooting and improved drainage.

There is a hydraulic two-point linkage on the rear of

the Combi-Lift which allows the working depth of the tines to be easily adjusted from the tractor seat without affecting the drawbar height of the trailing machine.

All models can be supplied with either Hammer-Thru multi-segmented shearbolt (which reduces the need to carry shearbolts) or automatic hydraulic reset leg protection. The hydraulic reset allows the legs to trip back when they hit an obstacle and then reset automatically on the move.

The Combi-Lift is available in 3m, 4m and 6m versions, starting at £7,683 + VAT.



A SAFER CUT WITH ECHO'S SCISSOR HEAD

Attachment suitable for most ECHO brushcutters

ECHO says its ASK-RW23D scissor head, a rotary scissor attachment suitable for most ECHO



brushcutters, helps to reduce the risk of throwing debris and loose objects into the air.

It works on the principle of a 20:1 reduction ratio gearbox and two contra-rotating blades that actually 'snip' the grass or brush – just like a pair of scissors. This means the user has safer and more precise cutting. Grass, weeds or brush simply drop where they are cut.

The scissor head can trim up close to solid obstacles without kickback or damage. Edging golf course bunkers and trimming

grass in shallow water is easily tackled.

The flat-bottom design enables the operator to place the cutting head close to the ground when uncovering hidden landmarks, such as drain covers.

The ASK-RW23D rotary scissor head comes with an 18 over 15 tooth blade kit, and an optional 28 over 24 tooth fine cut blade kit is also available.

The company boasts that the cutting head is well-balanced, making it easy to manoeuvre and comfortable to use.

MAKITA EXPANDS CORDLESS GROUND CARE RANGE

Two-piece brushless linetrimmer for easy transport

Makita continues to expand its cordless tool range, designed for the grounds maintenance industry, while at the same time introducing more new technical functions such as the latest Automatic Torque Drive Technology, ADT.

The new Makita DUR187 18v LXT linetrimmer has a 240watt output brushless motor in the trimmer head, providing capacity to run the head at three selectable speed settings up to 4,000, 5,000 and 6,000rpm. Speed selection is by a button on the control panel in front of the variable speed control trigger which has a lock-off facility.

The company says having the motor at the drive head improves the balance of the machine and eliminates the loss of power through the traditional drive shaft where the motor is at the operator end of the machine.

This new Makita cordless linetrimmer features the innovative Automatic Torque Drive Technology, ADT, where the revolutions per minute are automatically increased from between 4,000 and 6,000rpm according to the density of the weeds being cut. This allows for greater and improved energy saving and lower noise levels.

The lightweight design of the linetrimmer gives an operating weight of 3.4kgs with a comfortable shoulder strap, soft grip handle and forward loop handle for machine control. A foldable wire guard protects the forward sector of the 300mm cutting circle against plant and hard object damage. Soft start, electric brake and reverse rotation add to the efficiency of the linetrimmer, which is only available as a body-only model.

The new two-piece linetrimmer is suitable for operators who need to transport equipment in smaller vehicles. The two-section shaft and split-drive shaft simply slot together and are locked with a single action clasp. Slightly heavier than the DUR187 at 4.1kg, this machine has the same quality attributes with high power output and longer run-time.



SCARIFIER FOR DOMESTIC AND AMENITY USE

Etesia produces the MSC45

Etesia has launched the MSC45 – a powered pedestrian scarifier for domestic and professional use on lawns and amenity areas.

The machine has a working width of 45cm and comes complete with a Honda GX160 5.5hp engine which the company says ensures that it will be suitable for applications ranging from treating the

average lawn to rejuvenating estates and formal grounds.

The pedestrian scarifier can be used for regular use or as part of a maintenance programme, at different depth settings with the use of interchangeable reels that can be swapped without the use of any tools, allowing the spring-mounted tine reel to remove thatch and the scarifier unit to take out more of the bulk. The raking action removes thatch and organic debris to improve drainage characteristics and to allow more oxygen and water into the root zone.

The company says the new model in the new scarifier range has been built for dependable operation and durability.



550 DEALERS ARE ALREADY BENEFITTING - ARE YOU?



Garden Trader attracted over 31,000 page views in its first full month and last month saw well over 40,000. Don't forget that these page views are from people specifically searching for garden machinery equipment, as our promotional strategy has been solely aimed at people searching for products and services from garden machinery dealers. To give you an idea of the site's effectiveness, the top performing individual dealers (mentioning no names) have already appeared over 7,000 times on either product or location

searches /dealer listings, 180 people have viewed their personal dealer page and 52 potential customers have clicked through to the dealer's own website.

We are still offering **free listings** for the rest of 2017 for dealers. If you are not signed up and have a specialist garden equipment offering, then it is not too late for the season. Online registration takes just a couple of minutes and could really help raise the profile of your dealership and all free of charge this year. If you are signed up, please make sure your

listing is fully populated with images, logos, dealership detail as we are noticing a real difference in popularity for those who have. You can see for yourself and check your own listing's performance in your dealer login area.

www.gardentrader.co.uk and click on "Register Dealership" for your free listing

Based on our statistics we conservatively forecast the top performing dealers over the course of a year:

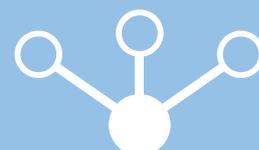
12 MONTH DEALER LISTINGS FORECAST



21,000
appearances in
searches/listings



540
views of their
personal dealer page
on Garden Trader



156
referrals through
to their own website

The above data and annual projection is based on Garden Trader site data taken w/c12th June 2017 and Google Analytics.

TWO OR FOUR-WHEEL DRIVE SCRAPER TRACTOR FROM MCCORMICK

Simple-spec 74hp X4.35M

McCormick tractor distributor AgriArgo has come up with a machine for dairy farmers needing a reliable power unit for the daily cleaning-up routine – the 74hp X4.35M

Likely to be available for less than £17,950 on-farm in two-wheel drive form and £19,950 with four-wheel drive, the tractor is from the new McCormick X4M Series introduced by Argo Tractors, so it benefits from the manufacturer's latest transmission, axle and hydraulics.

"Argo developed the new X4M Series for markets where very simply equipped tractors such as this are commonplace," explains Ray Spinks, AgriArgo General Manager and Sales Director.

"It's not the sort of tractor we would normally sell here, but we recognised what a great low-cost, mid-sized scraper tractor the X4.35M would be."

As standard, the newcomer has a straightforward mechanical clutch and 12x12, 40kph shuttle gearbox with 540rpm pto. A 30kph 16x16 creep option is available for operators who want the extra ratios and slower speeds.

Two-speed pto with an economy 540rpm setting in place of single-speed pto can be added if buyers plan to use the tractor for light field work or with bedding or feed dispensers.

Radial rear tyres (14.9R28) are included for good grip and long service life, with a 12.4R36 no-cost option on the four-wheel drive version enabling buyers to shave a few centimetres off the overall width.

One of the keys to the tractor's low on-farm price is the 4.4-litre Perkins 1104D-44 engine, which is built to Stage 3/Tier 3 emissions rules. It therefore lacks the expensive exhaust gas treatment equipment that adds significant cost to other tractors.

"It has mechanical rather than electronic fuel injection and doesn't even have a turbocharger, so it's about as simple an engine as you can get," notes Ray Spinks. "Turbo charging and electronic fuelling have their place, of course; they're essential for more powerful tractors that must meet tighter emissions rules and the electronics bring speed control features and other advantages.

"But for a scraper tractor, you want something as simple as possible for low purchase and running costs; you get that with the X4.35M, plus the reliability and low maintenance demands of a modern, new tractor." ●



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DOMESTIC

JOHN DEERE GO CORDLESS

Two new battery mowers introduced



John Deere has introduced two cordless battery powered models to its range of petrol and electric walk-behind mowers for residential customers.

Suitable for areas of grass up to 400m² or 500m², with a fully charged battery the cordless mowers operate for around 20 minutes. Charging the battery takes around 90 minutes.

The handles are easily adjusted, to cater for varying heights of operator and individual preference. They are also foldable, making the mower convenient to store where space is limited. Both models come with a two year warranty.

With a cutting width of 40cm and polypropylene deck, the R40B cordless mower is suitable for a mowing area up to 400m² and weighs 19.5kg. The height of cut is simple to adjust, and the mower comes with a 44-litre collection bag. The recommended retail price is £673 including VAT.

The second model, the R43B (pictured), has a 43cm cutting width and an aluminium deck. Designed for areas of up to 500m², this cordless model has a 55-litre collection bag and six easily adjustable height of cut settings from 22 to 80mm. The recommended retail price of this model is £827 including VAT.

DOMESTIC

HAYTER'S OSPREY TAKES FLIGHT

Push and Autodrive models



Hayter have launched a new range of four-wheeled mowers - the Osprey 46.

As first shown to Hayter Dealers at Saltex 2016, the new range comprises of a Push and an Autodrive model – both fitted with

Briggs & Stratton engines.

Designed for a 'typical' UK family lawn, both Osprey 46 mowers have a 46cm cutting width and feature 3-in-1 capability, with cut and collect, mulch and rear discharge as standard. Easy to manoeuvre and use, a single lever adjustment offers seven cutting heights between 25 and 70mm, and the 55-litre grassbag can be lifted through the handle-bar with ease.

Hayter Marketing Manager Julie Domett said: "The Osprey 46 four-wheeled range is an excellent choice for customers either owning their own patch of lawn for the first time, or for homeowners deciding it's time to make the move to their first petrol mower. Either way, the Osprey 46 has been designed to cater to those wanting to buy a good quality mower, but on a smaller budget."

EVENTS 2017

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
- 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
- 24-27 Royal Welsh Show, Royal Welsh Showground, Llanellwedd Builth Wells, Powys, Wales
www.rwas.wales/royal-welsh-show
- 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

AUGUST 2017

- 2 North Devon Show, Barton Farm, Umberleigh
www.northdevonshow.com
- 2-3 Bakewell Show, Bakewell Showground, Derbyshire
www.bakewellshow.org
- 3 Honiton Agricultural Show, Honiton, Devon
www.honitonshow.co.uk
- 3-6 Countryfile Live, Blenheim Palace, Oxfordshire
www.countryfilelive.com
- 5 Garstang Show, Garstang, Lancashire
www.garstangshow.org
- 5 Emley Show, Factory Farm, Emley Moor, Huddersfield, West Yorkshire
www.emleyshow.co.uk
- 5 Dumfries Agricultural Show, Park Farm, Dumfries, Scotland
www.dumfriesshow.co.uk
- 11-12 Shrewsbury Flower Show, Quarry Lodge, Shrewsbury, Shropshire
www.shrewsburyflowershow.org.uk
- 13 Ripley Show, Ripley Castle Park, Harrogate, North Yorkshire
www.ripleyshow.co.uk
- 15-16 Anglesey County Show, The Showground, Gwalchmai, Holyhead, Anglesey
www.angleseyshow.org.uk
- 15-17 Pembrokeshire County Show, County Showground, Withybush, Haverfordwest, Pembrokeshire
www.pembsshow.org
- 16 Gillingham & Shaftesbury Show, Turnpike Showground, Motcombe, North Dorset
www.gillshaftshow.co.uk
- 31 Bucks County Show, Weedon Park, Aylesbury, Buckinghamshire
www.buckscountyshow.co.uk

SEPTEMBER 2017

- 2 Alresford Show, Tichborne Park, Alresford, Hampshire
www.alresfordshow.co.uk
- 2-3 Dorset County Show, Dorchester Showground, Dorset
www.dorsetcountyshow.co.uk
- 3-6 Autumn Fair, Birmingham NEC
www.autumnfair.com
- 3-5 spoga-gafa 2017, Cologne, Germany
www.spogagafa.com
- 9 Usk Show
www.uskshow.co.uk
- 9 Romsey Show
www.romseyshow.co.uk
- 11-13 Glee 2017
www.gleebirmingham.com
- 14 Tillage Live, Wickenby Aerodrome
www.tillage-live.uk.com
- 14 Westmoreland County Show
www.westmorlandshow.co.uk

OCTOBER 2017

- 4 The Dairy Show, Bath & West Showground, Shepton Mallet, Somerset
www.bathandwest.com/the-dairy-show
- 18-20 Green Industry & Equipment Expo, Kentucky Expo Center, Louisville, USA
<http://gie-expo.com>
- 21-22 Countryside Live, Great Yorkshire Showground, Harrogate, Yorkshire
www.countrysidelive.co.uk

NOVEMBER 2017

- 1-2 IOG Saltex 2017, Birmingham NEC
www.iogsaltex.com
- 12-18 Agritechnica, Hanover, Germany
www.agritechnica.com/en/
- 16 Service Dealer Conference & Awards Oxford Belfry Hotel, Thame, Oxfordshire
www.servicedealer.co.uk
- 15 AgriScot, Royal Highland Centre, Ingliston, Edinburgh
www.agriscot.co.uk
- 27-28 Royal Welsh Winter Fair, Royal Welsh Showground, Llanellwedd, Builth Wells, Powys, Wales
www.rwas.wales/winter-fair
- 29-30 CropTec 2017, East of England Showground, Peterborough, Cambridgeshire
www.croptecshow.com/



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WHO IS GOING TO MAKE IT HAPPEN?

The cordless saga continues

The sale of cordless garden tools and who's going to make it happen, plus the story behind the question, is becoming a bit of a saga.

Not since the so-called disaster of the sheds starting to sell lawnmowers has there been such controversy – so much so that the question is worth another inclusion in this column.

The pros and cons, the fors and againsts, the who should sell it, the who will sell it – the questions linger on and it's not really clear what is the percentage of dealers for it rather than against.

Whatever the thoughts of specialist dealers nationwide there's one thing for certain: the products will be sold by the manufacturers because they are too far down the line in development, with new technology coming up by the hour and production in full swing.

One manufacturer (Husqvarna) has announced it's going to test market a vending machine for cordless garden tool rental in Stockholm. Is this the thin end of the wedge? Is this the start of dealers being kept out of the loop?

The cynics may think so. Sweden is known for the rental or leasing of robot mowers, albeit handled by dealers. The market is very different as a large proportion of Swedes have a second home on a lake where they leave the robot mower during the summer and then return it to the dealer for winter overhaul and storage – all in the lease deal. It's about 20 years since robotic mowers were introduced to the UK and they are still struggling to make any real impact on the overall

market. Is there a dealer in the UK offering robotic mowers on a rental/leasing deal?

How the vending machine will work is anybody's guess, but could you imagine this happening in any city or town in the UK? Who's going to clean and maintain the machines? Who's going to police the movement? Who's going to monitor the battery use and most importantly who's going to retrieve the machines that have not been returned? Is the credit card going

The manufacturers are standing by to allow the specialist dealers the opportunity to make it happen.

Otherwise, if the dealers don't get a grip on it, could it be history repeating itself when brands are forced to find additional outlets to the sheds or the internet to create the volumes of sales they require to justify the massive outlay in bringing the product to market?

The impact of cordless garden tools on the market in a very short time has far outweighed the robotic

“SWEDEN IS KNOWN FOR THE RENTAL OR LEASING OF ROBOT MOWERS”

to clock up the hours, days, weeks, months and charge the customer accordingly?

There will be a lot more questions to answer which surely could make this a manufacturer's worst nightmare – or will they pass the nightmare on by expecting dealers to have vending machines outside their premises operating 24/7, with vandals and thieves lined up to pounce?

Perhaps Husqvarna's idea can't be ruled out in Scandinavia? However, scary as it may seem, is it possible it can ever take off in the UK?

No need to panic. Remember, cordless garden tools will continue to be sold in the UK.

mower progress and for that matter any other initiative for many, many years.

But will it be robotic vending machines that have the last laugh as they hire out cordless tools on the swipe of a credit card?

Really the question should be: who is making it happen and who is going to reap the profit benefits in years to come? ●



JIM GREEN



£6,000 RAISED IN MEMORY

CHARITY BIKE RIDE FOR GGP

Devon coast-to-coast route in a day

On Sunday 30th April the GGP UK Team embarked on the crazy idea to cycle the 99-mile Devon coast-to-coast route in one day.

After dusting off their bicycles and investing in some new lycra (to look the part) the team left Plymouth at 4.30 on Sunday morning and drove to the start point at Ilfracombe, slightly nervous of the task ahead.

The main incentive for this cycle ride was to raise money for St Luke's Hospice in memory of a colleague, Darren Cottis. Darren was a much-loved colleague who passed away in December last year after loyally serving the business in Plympton for over 32 years.

As the day progressed the team were given a massive boost as

more and more riders joined the endeavour, keeping the pace honest with their fresh legs. Knowing that the fundraising target had been well and truly surpassed gave the team a greater push to complete this gruelling challenge in the punishing weather conditions.

A lot of sweat, tears, mud and laughter were shared along the

way and the team finally crossed the finish line 10½ hours after they started, 99 miles completed and over £6,000 raised for such a worthy cause.

GGP UK would like to thank all the family, friends, colleagues and dealers who sponsored the event and helped to raise this incredible amount of money.



The team seven miles from Tavistock

CALL THE HSE!

MAN SMASHES MOWER BALANCING WORLD RECORD!

48.85 metres walked – with the engine running!

ITV reported recently that visitors at the National Botanic Garden of Wales were treated to an unusual sight, when a daredevil from New York set a new World Record for the longest distance walked balancing a lawnmower on his chin!

Ashrita Furman currently holds more than 120 Guinness World Records, including the world

record for holding the most world records.

He has now smashed the previous record of 20 metres, clocking up a distance of 48.85 metres, all with the lawnmower still running.



BY ROYAL APPOINTMENT

FORMER AEA DG HOSTS QUEEN

Honour for Roger Lane-Nott

It was a big day recently for former AEA Director General Roger Lane-Nott, who hosted HM the Queen and HRH Duke of Edinburgh in his capacity of Chairman of Governors of Pangbourne College on the occasion of the centenary of the famous Berkshire naval college.

The BBC reported that it was the first public engagement which the Duke of Edinburgh had accompanied the Queen on since announcing his retirement.

It was unfortunate, however, that the bastion of correct English usage, *The Times*, in its formal daily



Court Circular should refer to the former AEA DG as Rear-Admiral Roger Lane-**Knott**. ●



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