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EDITOR’S LETTER

While there appears to be a glimpse of light at the end tunnel as we continue to come out of Covid-19 lockdown, there is still some concern about on the longer term affects the virus has had on our industry.

At the start of the pandemic, the Grounds Management Association (GMA) (then still the Institute of Groundsmanship, IOG) vowed to guide and “stand by all turf care business and grounds care staff,” through the uncertain times. During these past few months it has stuck to its pledge, firstly by making a decision early on to move the SALTEX trade show from November 2020 to March 2021, allowing exhibitors and visitors to plan ahead for when business is hopefully more stable. The membership organisation also lent a helping hand to its members by offering those affected by Coronavirus a three-month deferral on membership fees. Other trade organisations also continue to offer support, such as the British Association of Landscape Industries which has introduced a restart and rebuild strategy to help professionals out of lockdown.

Furthermore, the Horticultural Trades Association continues to campaign to urge the Government to support the UK horticultural industry more. Plant nurseries took a massive hit between March and May, and while garden centres were one of the first retail outlets allowed to re-open as lockdown began to ease, the repercussions on the initial closures affected many businesses that couldn’t access government support schemes and these continue to struggle.

Please do read our news columns and visit LandscaperMagazine.com to find out more of what industry organisations are doing to help their members through these difficult times.

But now onwards and upwards to getting your business back on track. In this issue Paula Warman of Landscaper's Circle brings us some tips this month on using e-marketing to gain customers and brand awareness. Tom Shinkins also offers useful advice on managing and maintaining our sports grounds and pitches post lockdown and Tim Yates celebrates 130 years of Kubota and reflects on how the company has developed over the years.

And finally for those landscapers and landscape architects looking for design inspiration, then read about some hardscaping solutions from some of our trusted suppliers.

Continue to stay safe as we look forward to summer and hopefully more certainty.

Maggie Walsh, Editor
maggie.walsh@sheengate.co.uk

We welcome any news, points of view or feature ideas. Please email maggie.walsh@sheengate.co.uk

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The Landscaper is owned and published by Sheengate Publishing Ltd. The Landscaper is an entirely independent magazine. It is not a member of any trade association or society.

Sheengate Publishing Ltd
Unit A4, Kingsway Business Park
Oldfield Road, Hampton TW12 2HD
0208 939 5600
www.sheengate.co.uk
www.landscapermagazine.com

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News Feature: HTA

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BALI achieves Investors in People Silver

The British Association of Landscape Industries (BALI) has been awarded ‘We invest in people, silver accreditation’ by Investors in People.

Led by BALI Chief Executive Wayne Grills, the team are delighted with the achievement, which was awarded in recognition of the trade association’s investment in its workforce through listening to others, offering training and development, putting the right principles in place and making active efforts to ensure consistency through the workplace, so that all employees from all creeds and backgrounds feel included and benefit from having a voice.

Over the past 12 months BALI held several joint-working workshops with employees to ask them what they would like to see the association provide by way of added benefits, to help enrich the business for its members and nurture them as individuals in their roles. Employees were also assessed privately and independently, and the assessor noted an overwhelming sense of pride from the team who believe BALI provides an excellent service to both its staff and its members.

Paul Devoy, CEO of Investors in People, says: “We’d like to congratulate BALI for achieving Silver accreditation on We invest in people. It’s a remarkable effort for any organisation, and places BALI in fine company with a host of organisations that understand the value of people.”

Wayne, who has been at the helm of BALI for more than nine years, adds: “What a fantastic achievement for everyone at BALI. I would like to start by saying a personal thank you and well done to our Operations Manager, Kirsty Wood, who has taken a lead on this project from the very start. It doesn’t mean we plan on stopping here.

“Over the next 12 months we will continue to work hard on the areas where further improvements can be made, and we’re involving our employees to do just that. By including them in the process, we now have some excellent recommendations, actions and a way forward. Congratulations everyone, together we are better.”

Investors in People operates in 75 countries with an active community of over 15,000 organisations. By helping to support over 11 million people worldwide their company ethos, to make work better, is now reflected on BALI following the awarding of the silver accreditation.

Industry welcomes SALTEX move

The recent announcement that trade show SALTEX is rescheduling from November 2020 to Spring 2021, has been met with support from both exhibitors and visitors.

The Grounds Management Association (GMA) Board of Directors said that the unanimous decision was based on ensuring the safety of everyone connected with the event and to provide the respite required to readjust to changing professional and personal circumstances. Furthermore, the GMA Board, believes that by acting now, it will allow everyone to plan as effectively as possible and help the industry to regroup and recover.

Regular exhibitors have praised the timing of the decision.

Says David Cole, managing director of Reesink Turfcare, “We are pleased to see the GMA take decisive steps to deal with the growing doubt and anxiety about SALTEX going ahead in November. It would have been a difficult decision for a variety of reasons, but for us the right one to remove uncertainty and replace it with a forward date that we can look forward to with optimism. Early March keeps us in the ‘pre-season’ window to be able to give focus to the exhibition before the pressures of the season takeover.”

David’s views are echoed by Caroline Shaw, European marketing manager for Trimax Mowers who adds:

“The decision to postpone the largest show of the year couldn’t have been easy but the decisive action, coupled with the determination to put the health and well-being of our industry professionals first, is something we are proud to support.”

Roger Moore, sales and marketing manager for Dennis and SISIS also agrees: “In these difficult times the industry will need its trade show and we believe that the postponement until March 2021 is the right decision for both exhibitors and visitors.” While Tom Shinkins, operations manager at GKB Machines, believes that the new dates could be advantageous, saying: “I believe the new dates will actually be more beneficial because we’ll be able to arrange demonstrations with prospective new customers straight after the show.

Speaking on behalf of the GMA Board, Geoff Webb, CEO at the GMA commented: “We would like to thank our exhibitors, visitors, partners and suppliers for their support and patience during this challenging time. It has been highly encouraging to see the industry come together and support the GMA’s decision.”

SALTEX will take place on 3 and 4 March 2021 at the NEC, Birmingham.

For more information visit www.gmasaltex.co.uk
TRANQUILITY GARDENS FOR NHS STAFF

Bart’s Health Trust, one of England’s largest NHS trusts, recently enlisted the landscaping and maintenance services of Ground Control to revamp the outside space of Newham Hospital.

Gardens and outdoor spaces have been transformed at the London hospital as a way of thanking staff and commemorating all those who tragically lost their lives to Covid-19.

The week-long project involved the revitalising of new courtyard gardens and other outside spaces into retreats and places of comfort for staff, patients and visitors.

With a goal of complimenting the character of the existing gardens and softening the environment to provide a level of tranquility to users, the work involved substantial pruning, planting a variety of new plants, removal and replacement of outdated furniture and installing new planters and trellises.

Memorial plaques have also been added to gardens in memory of those who died during the pandemic.

Essex-based Ground Control utilised its design and installation expertise to upgrade the external spaces for staff, patients and visitors, providing them with a retreat and a place of comfort – and the result has already been a big hit with all the hospital’s staff.

“The replenished tranquility gardens will provide a much-needed space for visitors to reflect and remember those who sadly lost their lives to Covid-19,” says Adam Sewell-Jones, Interim Chief Executive at Newham Hospital. “I’d like to thank Ground Control and supporters for the work they have done to transform the gardens.”

“The therapeutic and restorative nature of hospital green spaces is widely evidenced and I believe the new tranquility gardens will go a long way in supporting the wellbeing of our staff, patients and visitors.”

“A challenge we’ve always had is keeping the courtyard to a standard with our limited resources,” explains Justin Pereira, Director Estates and Facilities, Newham Hospital. “So when the phone call came through, I grabbed it with both arms because I knew everybody would appreciate the open courtyards. Having a wonderful open space with nice, clean furniture, will lift morale. Sadly, we’ve had two colleagues pass away because of Covid-19 and the idea of a memorial came from their colleagues who want to remember them and have a place where they could go and quietly reflect.

“A few months ago this space was full of six-foot high weeds, the door was locked and it hadn’t been used for some time,” says Giuseppe Labriola, Associate Director of Midwifery and Nursing. “It’s been brought back to life and refurbished and now we have a perfect area for women to mobilise who are in the early stages of labour and for staff to use to grab a quick breath of fresh air. It’s been completely transformed and we’re really thankful for everyone who’s been working on the project.”

“From a public health point of view, we know that access to green space aids recovery, is good for health and makes you feel better,” explains Andrew Attfield, Associate, Director for Public Health at Barts Health NHS Trust. “The volunteers have clearly worked very hard – not just with their hours and their time, but with their hearts – to make this commitment to the NHS and to Newham Hospital.”

Ground Control’s original plan was to offer the garden to the Nightingale Hospital in East London – but with the hospital currently in standby mode, the decision was made to switch venue to another London-based hospital.

“There’s never been a more important time to provide a peaceful retreat for front line workers, patients and their friends and family,” says Chris Bawtree, Construction Project Manager at Ground Control. “This is a practical way of saying ‘thank you’ and showing our support for the amazing work undertaken by all NHS staff especially during the pandemic.”

Suppliers Green-tech were among other companies that partnered with Ground Control. They were delighted to be asked to help and donated £4,500 worth of Green-tech substrate for use in the planters and ornamental bark mulch for dressing of the planted areas.

Says Richard Gill, Sales Director at Green-tech: “We were delighted to be asked by Ground Control and proud to be involved. The landscaping industry is full of generous individuals and companies who all rose to the challenge but hats off to Ground Control for pulling it all together and achieving such amazing results in just a week. It will be welcomed and beneficial to so many.”

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The Royal Horticultural Society (RHS) has suffered losses of millions of pounds due to the impact of the Coronavirus and, as a result, the gardening charity has taken the tough decision to cancel some of its shows next year.

Expecting losses this year of up to £18m, the charity has had to look closely at its finances in order to safeguard its future. This will mean stopping some areas of work that require substantial investment in order to operate.

So, sadly the RHS has made the decision to cancel the Cardiff Flower Show and Chatsworth Flower Show in 2021.

In addition, The London Spring Show in April 2021 will move to RHS Garden Hyde Hall, where it will be enjoyed by more visitors and the RHS hopes to move the London Botanical Art & Photography Show, also in April, to another venue in London.

Whilst the charity is seeing a slow recovery following the Coronavirus, it is unsure what the future holds so is now focusing on reducing its financial liabilities for 2021. The organisation hopes to once again consider additional events to provide new gardening inspiration and experiences for its members, as well as reaching new audiences who have been inspired to garden for the first time during this long period of lockdown.

Sue Biggs, RHS Director General says: “With record online visits to our gardening advice pages and more people using our membership advice service than ever before, the RHS is finding alternative ways to achieve its core charitable remit to help people across the whole of the UK to garden and grow plants.

“However, cancelling Chelsea and Hampton and closing our gardens has had a significant impact on our finances and we must protect the RHS, a charity of national importance, to ensure we can survive and thrive in the future.

“Chatsworth and Cardiff were wonderful shows that have been a key part of our charitable remit to promote gardening,” Sue continues, “but as they attract less visitor numbers than Tatton and Hampton and are a significant cost to put on, it is with great sadness we cannot afford to continue to run them in these times. We need to mitigate our financial liabilities wherever possible, whilst trying our hardest to work in the fairest way with all stakeholders, including our partners at Chatsworth House and Cardiff Council, and we will of course continue to support the industry.

Adding that these are “difficult times for everyone,” Sue also points to future projects within the organisation:

“With RHS Garden Bridgewater and the Centre for Horticultural Science and Learning at Wisley opening next year, lots of exciting plans at our other gardens and wonderful content planned for our continuing 2021 Shows there is so much to look forward to.”
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The Horticultural Trades Association (HTA) is asking the UK Government to address the growing need to support UK horticulture and with it, support a green economic revival post-COVID-19. A new HTA industry survey reveals that over half of British ornamental growers (52%) expect a further downturn in sales from June to August as they have not been able to plant crops during lockdown, and this is now resulting in increased imports.

Historically as little as 10% of bedding plants were imported during the peak trading season – when 60% of sales are typically made between March and May in the UK. Due to the pandemic lockdown, the latest HTA survey shows this figure has spiked significantly – 65% of larger retailers surveyed stated they were importing more bedding plants, with almost half of these retailers stating increased imports of hardy nursery stock (HNS) and around 4 in 10 are importing more herbaceous perennials. Plants such as geraniums, osteospermum, petunia, hostas, ferns and clematis have all seen large rises in importation.

The British Garden Centres group, which has the second largest number of stores in the UK, traditionally sources its plants from growers within the UK and, throughout the year, sources less than 20% from overseas. However, to meet demand in the last month, they have had to turn to Europe for nearly 60% of their plants.

There has also been a rise in the number of retailers having to import plants from other countries which typically include the Netherlands, Germany, Italy, Belgium, Denmark, France and Ireland.

Almost three quarters of retailers in the survey (72%) said that they were currently unable to get the stock of bedding plants their business needs from UK growers. While UK-grown supply of HNS and herbaceous perennials presented less of an issue – around 8 in 10 retailers surveyed stated they can get sufficient stock – 51% of garden centres overall said they were importing more bedding plants while 39% indicated they were importing more HNS and 38% said more herbaceous perennials imports.

The industry plays an essential role in safeguarding plant health as well as strengthening the UK’s biosecurity programme. A strong horticultural sector has been identified as vital to delivering the Government’s 25-year Environmental Plan. A weakened industry will result in Britain becoming more reliant on imports, undermining the strong regulatory and industry voluntary approach taken to managing plant health and biosecurity in this country. It risks letting in devastating pests and diseases that the UK has been committed to keeping at bay, such as Xylella fastidiosa, emerald ash borer and Asian long-horn beetle.

No other industry has faced the seasonality and perishability of the plant growers’ sector during the lockdown period, which has resulted in the £1.3bn British nursery market disposing of hundreds of tonnes of plants over the last few months.

While the decision to re-open garden centres last month was welcome, many of these businesses have been left without financial support as they were unable to access government grant schemes. The HTA is
calling for a UK grant aid scheme along the lines of the one put in place by the Dutch government. It is also believed that the current availability of European stock is due to factors such as early intervention by the Dutch government of €600m to support their industry, allowing confidence to continue growing, and the fact that garden centres in the Netherlands and Germany remained open during lockdown.

Over the past decade, the Government, the HTA and others in the industry have been working together to strengthen the UK’s biosecurity, which protects plants that grow in our gardens and in the countryside and is regarded as essential to the conservation of the country’s natural environment as well as our food security.

James Barnes, Chairman of the HTA, comments: “Horticulture is more than just gardening; it resonates throughout nature and the landscape we all have around us. It is essential in supporting half of the policies within the Government’s 25 Year Environment Plan and underwrites many of the nation’s wider ambitions for climate change.

“While imports are always a part of our industry, UK garden centres have a strong track record of sourcing British plants, but the pressures of COVID-19 has forced many to look abroad. Now, more than ever, we need to build domestic production, to provide resilience that comes with a strong UK based horticultural industry. We need the Westminster and devolved governments to support our industry, as the Dutch Government has done for theirs.

“The UK can’t afford to offshore its environmental responsibilities. We have the potential in the UK in a post COVID-19, post-Brexit world to become leaders in this field – to green our economy in science and research, in horticultural production and in environmental control systems – the ornamental horticulture industry is uniquely placed to lead this revival”.

Adam Frost, presenter and garden designer, comments: “I have been doing a great deal of soul searching lately and there has never been a more important or relevant time than now for people to connect with nature. We are asking the Government to recognise the significance of gardening in the natural world and the vital role that those working in the horticulture sector have on our wider environment around us.

“By supporting our UK growers, we are not only nurturing our health and wellbeing over this critical period but we will be safeguarding our plants and protecting the resources that are so essential to our environment for years to come. We also need to protect the valuable experience and knowledge of the people that form the backbone of this industry.”

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Throughout the pandemic, Team GT have continued to provide high quality landscaping supplies and service.
Email marketing – tips for getting more customers

Part of any company’s marketing strategy should include email marketing. But how many businesses, especially in the landscaping industry, do it? To make it easier for anyone looking to start or refine their email marketing, Paula Warman has some tips on using emails to gain more customers:

Best practice for email marketing
1. Always have a goal in mind – Before running any email marketing campaign know why you are doing it. What do you need or want to gain from sending these emails out? For example is it to close quotes that are open, to get more referrals, gain testimonials or to upsell a service such as cleaning or maintenance.

2. Focus on the value you are offering – For every email campaign you should be focusing on the value you are giving the recipients - even if it appears you are not giving or adding value. For example, if you are chasing open quotes with a view to close, you need to focus on adding your value by indicating your limited availability, and so add an expiry date to that particular quote. Or, if you are sending information such as blogs or news, then it needs to offer quality information that is relevant to the readers, such as garden ideas for a small garden or how to add value to a home with a new driveway, which leads the customer back to you as being the solution.

3. Track your success – Tracking success is made easier using an email management or CRM system such as Mail Chimp or Active Campaign or similar. These platforms allow you to track open rate, people who have unsubscribed and much more. If you are sending emails out manually via outlook or Gmail then you will only be able to track responses.

4. Show your personality – Don’t be afraid to show your personality in the emails. Writing the emails that are more personable will help increase the chance of connecting with the reader. Remember you are the face of your business and so fashion your emails so that people buy into you as well as your company.

Email marketing mistakes to avoid
1. Don’t be spammy – So that your emails don’t come across as ‘spammy’ you need to be focused to your goal for sending them. If the goal is unclear and/or you are not adding any value of note, then don’t send the email. Also be aware of how often you are sending the emails out – for example a daily email would be too much for any campaign.

2. Don’t steer away from your brand – Always think about what message you want to communicate to your clients and think about whether it stays in line with your mission and values? Check that all emails follow your branding guidelines, so the recipients know just by the look of the email that it is you and will open it.

3. Don’t assume anything – Remember that you are the one who has expertise and knowledge in the landscaping and design industry, so don’t assume that the reader will always know what you are talking about. Use appropriate language and terms that a reader will understand and connect with. For example, don’t assume that a reader will understand industry specific regulations or acronyms that you’d use everyday.

4. Don’t forget the unsubscribes – If someone unsubscribes from your mailing list or asks to be taken off your database then make sure you remember to do so. In this climate and the focus on GDPR compliance you need to be aware of your duties. For more information on this, visit www.ico.org.uk.

The Landscaper’s Circle is the only online platform exclusively for business owners in the landscaping industry to learn how to market and run their business better. Become part of the #TLCTribe today for training and support. If you need our help please email at info@thelandscaperscircle.co.uk | www.thelandscaperscircle.co.uk
When it comes to woodcare, solvent-based products have historically been the go-to for many. This is because solvent-based woodstains and preservers have previously been considered more durable in comparison to water-based alternatives.

However, advancements in water-based woodcare formulations have changed this. Now, water-based woodcare products are just as durable as traditional solvent-based options and offer a range of additional benefits.

**Common issues with solvent-based woodcare**

Firstly, solvent-based woodcare products can crack and peel more easily when exposed to higher temperatures. In warmer weather, wood can expand – however, solvent-based products do not expand with it, which can lead to it cracking and peeling. This results in landscaping professionals having to re-apply the woodcare regularly, to maintain the desired finish.

Secondly, solvent-based woodstains and preservers tend to have long re-coat times. As a result, landscapers need more time to complete tasks – often having to return to site over a number of days, which impacts on them and the end client.

Finally, the formulation of this type of woodcare can have an impact on the environment, as well as the health and safety of the applier and end client. This is because solvent-based woodcare produces higher levels of volatile organic compounds (VOCs). These are organic chemicals that evaporate from the woodcare and enter into the surrounding air - VOCs can also be released up to one month after the woodcare has dried.

**Benefits of water-based products**

The formulation of water-based products for woodcare has improved significantly over recent years and can offer the durability and quality finish previously associated with solvent-based alternatives.

A change in the resins used in leading water-based woodcare, means that the products of today are tougher and do not damage due to knocks and scuffs. Due to their formulation, water-based woodcare products can also withstand increases in temperature. Unlike solvent-based, they flex with the wood as it expands and resist peeling and cracking. Due to lower alkyd levels within their formulation, water-based woodcare products also retain their colour well. Together, these factors mean that water-based woodstains and preservers offer longer maintenance cycles – a key benefit for the end client.

Preparing the wood

Before using water-based woodcare, to ensure a quality finish appliers should remove any existing woodcare that has peeled or flaked away from the wood. Then sand the wood to key the surface, ready for the new coating. If applying a water-based undercoat or primer, it is important to also use a water-based topcoat so that the undercoat and topcoat will adhere properly and provide a quality, more durable finish.

Water-based woodcare can also help to improve on-site efficiency. This is because water-based products dry much faster, meaning many jobs can be completed in just one day. For example, when applying its Decking Protector, Ronseal Trade suggests that appliers should wait a maximum of two hours between the two coats required. The Decking Protector adds waterproof protection to new or restored decking, stopping it from splitting, swelling and greying.

Finally, water-based products are better for the environment and the health and safety of appliers and end clients as they produce lower VOC levels.

When choosing woodcare products, it is vital to check that the products have been independently tested. This will not only ensure that any product claims made by manufacturers are accurate, but also that the products can deliver the high-quality results promised. Ronseal Trade understands the importance of this type of testing - its Fencing Stain and Decking Protector are both BBA approved, therefore providing assurance that the product claims have been proven.

It is clear that water-based woodcare products can now stand up to the durability of solvent-based alternatives – and offer a number of additional benefits that can ensure high-quality results. By opting for water-based, professional landscapers’ productivity can be significantly improved and disruption and hassle to end clients reduced.

To find out more about Ronseal Trade visit: [www.ronsealtrade.com](http://www.ronsealtrade.com)
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Choosing the right pavers for a commercial project is no small feat; there are a number of factors to consider including surrounding architecture, the existing surface upon which the paving is to be laid and of course, the all-important client brief. Add to this a market saturated with options, each boasting different benefits and qualities over the other and it’s fair to say that the task might feel challenging.

Wienerberger, the leading supplier of wall, roof and paving products, has worked with clay for over 200 years and is well-versed in its properties and the impact it can have on a development. Ultimately, the company has found the paver selection is just as vital a consideration as the bricks and roof tile choice for a project, as they can really transform a space when working alongside other products.

The huge breadth of clay bricks and roof tiles on the market today are testament to the fact that clay is a flexible building material capable of producing an end product that varies enormously in texture, colour and shape and therefore, different styles. This is no different for paving. There’s a range of size formats, finishes and colours available; from vivid reds, contemporary blues and earthy tones of orange, brown and buff. Clay pavers can be instrumental in enhancing all kinds of projects and alongside other benefits, they also stand the test of time.

To best showcase why clay fits the bill for landscaping, we should look to recent projects that used clay pavers in unique and exciting ways to complement the wider development and surrounding areas.

One of clay’s most obvious benefits is its incredible colour and textured appearance which has the ability to bring character to a project. The South Gardens development in Southwark is a community-orientated project of 360 new homes, that consists of low-rise townhouses, mid-rise mansion blocks and a 16-storey tower block located around three...
horticulturally rich courtyards. For the paving, the architects needed something to reflect and complement the communal courtyards that are lined with trees, shrubs and flourishing green spaces, bringing a woodland feel to an urban setting. For this, Wienerberger supplied a number of pavers, including Rosa Waterstruck, Siena and Nero, which were used to create a harmonious blend of hard and soft landscaping throughout the courtyard. The pavers, which have natural earth-tone colours, were laid in a herringbone pattern to match the appeal of a traditional cottage garden and encourage residents to appreciate the greenery as they enjoy the space. The choices by landscape architects here allowed for the pavers to not only guide residents through this urban sanctuary but to enhance it and help create a cohesive space to relax and socialise.

**Piccadilly Place**

Cohesion is especially important in commercial projects because a lot of the time part of the challenge includes creating a space that stands out on its own but looks to fit in with the existing, surrounding architecture. A good example of this being achieved through paver selection is Piccadilly Place in Manchester; architects were tasked with breathing new life into the City district which is currently a mixed-use development and includes high quality public realm areas, a hotel, four office buildings, residential accommodation and retail space.

Paving choice here was all about communicating a regenerated feel for years to come that stuck close to the surrounding structures and echoed the distinctive history of Manchester. This is where the Padova clay paver worked to complete the task. Mirroring the industrial red tones of Manchester’s manufacturing heritage, the rich colours within these clay pavers brought warmth to the main piazza whilst complimenting the use of other materials used throughout the space, such as granite. Due to clay’s colourfast properties, the striking colour will last for decades as the surrounding space matures. The longevity of clay, compared to other materials, is unmatched which is why it makes a fantastic option for landscaping projects with the high footfall associated with a bustling city centre.

**East Kent College**

As well as having a long life, clay is also extremely durable which is vital for landscaping - especially on commercial projects where the ground will have to combat wearing not only from being walked upon but also the impact from vehicles. In these cases, there are only a limited number of options to consider that won't require regular maintenance. East Kent College is one project in which the architects opted to use a clay paver over a concrete one due to the strong performance, high quality finish and unmatched longevity that clay could provide.

The project required the installation of a high performing road extension that would enhance the overall feel of the refurbished school building, making it the focal point of the college campus. The Dortmund Dark Multi and Dragfaced Square Edge Blue pavers were used to complement the character of the building and enhance the appearance of the building to make it a focal point of the campus. Ultimately here, clay met all the requirements the project needed due to its high performance and lasting aesthetic.

When it comes to paving, clay really is unmatched. Providing a vast array of texture, colour and shapes available, minimal maintenance and a long lifespan, clay paving really has the ability to make a lasting difference to your development.

For more project inspiration, information on the benefits of clay or to browse our clay paver range visit [www.wienerberger.co.uk](http://www.wienerberger.co.uk)
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Resin Bound explodes in popularity

Resin Bound surfacing continues to take the landscaping industry by storm and is the fastest growing surfacing application of the past five years. Kiki Tsoulouhopoulos from Derbyshire Specialist Aggregates explains why

A stunning alternative to block paving, macadam concrete or loose gravel, Resin Bound is viewed by many landscape designers and contractors as an integral feature of landscaping and the ideal solution for residential driveways, paths and patios as well as commercial car parks, sports centres and holiday parks.

Resin bound instantly boosts kerb appeal. Its hard-wearing, natural finish combined with a stunning choice of colours creates limitless design opportunities; from geometric patterns to personalised letters; bespoke logos to contrasting colour blocks – there is a colour and design to suit any style and age of property.

As well as its beauty and aesthetic appeal, resin bound also makes an ideal practical choice. It is permeable and able to absorb up to 850 litres of water per m2 per minute. As a SUDS (Sustainable Urban Drainage System) compliant solution, it does not require planning permission (providing a porous sub-base or suitable soakaway exists) thus making it ideal for new builds and renovations. Resin bound is also weed resistant, frost resistant and slip resistant.

When installing a resin bound driveway, the importance of using clean, dried aggregates and high-quality resin cannot be overemphasized.

Derbyshire Specialist Aggregates is the UK manufacturer and home of DALTEX - the UK’s No 1 brand for resin bound systems.

DALTEX dried aggregates are sourced from across Europe and the world. They are meticulously dried and screened to produce a high quality product, which when combined with high quality DALTEX UVR stable resin, deliver a beautifully consistent resin bound finish, suitable for all projects.

The DALTEX UVR resin bound System has been awarded certification by the BBA (the British Board of Agrément) - the highest industry standard available.

The new DALTEX Bespoke range of dried aggregates consists of 46 stunning resin bound colour blends. Colours span the spectrum – from stylish greys and silvers to soft and subtle golds and browns to rich, deep reds and greens. Samples and display cases are available.

The company prides itself on its customer service and offers 100% stock availability with thousands of tonnes of finished product ready for nationwide next day delivery.

For newcomers, there is much to consider when specifying or installing resin bound. To assist with this, Derbyshire Specialist Aggregates runs a specially developed training course from its purpose-built facility in Derbyshire.

For more information, visit www.resinbondedaggregates.com

Resin bound boosts kerb appeal

Resin Bound surfacing continues to take the landscaping industry by storm and is the fastest growing surfacing application of the past five years. Kiki Tsoulouhopoulos from Derbyshire Specialist Aggregates explains why
Managing sports grounds post lockdown

Tom Shinkins, UK Operations Director at GKB Machines, speaks exclusively with The Landscaper Magazine offering advice on managing and maintenance of turf post lockdown.

Sport facilities at clubs, schools and in open spaces were off-limits for a number of weeks due to COVID 19 and during this lockdown period it’s most likely that grass has become over-grown. The key to managing sports grounds now is to have an understanding that the best way to overcome issues is that regular maintenance through means of grass cutting and treatments is key. However, this might not have always been possible during the Covid crisis.

To tackle the long grass operatives may need to consider mowing it in a different way, helping get the grounds back on track by allowing the grass to get back down to a manageable height again. So rather than using a rotary or cylinder mower as one usually would, consider using the cut and collect method – removing the excess grass from the surface through a cut and collection operation will help to prevent a build-up of dead grass. Failing to do this means risking thatch build up in the future.

Abandoned community football pitches and closed sports facilities, especially those managed by local volunteers, have experienced perhaps the most damaging affects of lockdown. Many sports fields and grounds will have suffered due to the abrupt halt on the daily maintenance as facilities were forced to closed.

Top dressing and over-seeding form part of renovations
Those clubs lucky enough to secure funding through a grant scheme set up by the Football Association (FA) (now closed) would be wise to use this money to carry out necessary tasks such as aeration, top dressing and over-seeding as part of their renovations. For those that couldn’t take advantage of this particular FA grant, it is always worth keeping an eye out for other grants schemes, as these can help ensure such renovations can be carried out giving the grounds a larger window for recovering and putting them in good stead for next season.

Golf greens have also had a rough ride over the past few months, open to multiple elements during and before lockdown. Greenkeepers have been dealing with one of the wettest winters on record to one of the driest starts to the season. Added to this is the impact of an increasing
number of people using the greens for their daily walks as part of their permitted exercise, trampling an already stressed turf due to the extraordinary dry weather we have experienced.

During a dry period it is important to raise heights of cuts to ease stress levels. In addition having a good programme of wetting agents in place to assist water from irrigation to get into the surface is critical alongside aeration, top dressing and other thatch management practices.

Hope for a cricket season
And as we hope for some cricket, even if a late season start, we need to keep on top of the pitches now. If the outfield has become overgrown the best process would be using a cut and collect machine to get the grass to a manageable height. And if possible, the process should be followed by some aeration – for example using the GKB Deep Tine Aerator, to go as deep as conditions will allow. Ideally the grass hasn’t got too long on the square during lockdown, and playing surface, so cutting and removing clippings would be beneficial and would prevent a build-up of thatch. If or when the green light is given by the English Cricket Board and the government for the cricket season to commence then normal pre-season routines should be followed by the grounds staff.

However, if continued social distancing results in the 2020 cricket season been cancelled, and the chances are that the pitches won’t be used, simply close them down and put them to bed as per normal end of season work. If no games have been played on the pitches, then this is the ideal time to renovate the square fully, remove the saddles and improve the levels. Often given the short window of time between the end of the season and the poor weather, clubs don’t get the opportunity to get this sort of work done, so to use this time effectively to renovate would be worthwhile.

Artificial turf
Finally, for facilities that use artificial turf, it is just as vital to keep these surfaces cleaned and in condition as it is for natural turf. With facilities being shut, now more than ever, is an ideal time to carry out some decompaction work. By decompacting infill this will allow surface water to drain through, assist fibres in the carpet to stand up rather than lay flat, and assist in improving the levels of Infill. This process in partner with a deep clean and a brush will have the pitch ready to go when it’s required.

For more on GKB Machines and their reliable and robust range of machinery for natural, hybrid and synthetic turf, please visit www.gkbmachines.com or contact Tom Shinkins on 07495 883617.
Keep connected with integrated helmet

STIHL has expanded its head protection range with the introduction of its new ADVANCE Vent BT Helmet, keeping professionals connected while they work.

Offering enhanced levels of safety for professionals and excellent noise-reduction, the new ADVANCE Vent helmet features integrated Bluetooth® headphones, allowing users to easily listen to music or connect to the radio. Using the three control buttons, users can also take hands free calls directly from the headset whilst working.

Providing up to 38 hours of battery run time from a full charge, the integrated Lithium-Ion battery is easily rechargeable thanks to the USB plug. The helmet also features an additional AUX inlet, allowing users to connect further gadgets that can’t be connected via Bluetooth®.

As well as being fully connected, the ADVANCE Vent BT helmet is incredibly comfortable to wear whilst working. With a low weight of around 380g, the helmet also has optimised balance to reduce fatigue. For improved visibility, the helmet also features reflective strips on the top, sides and back.

GreenMech seals the deal for The Living Forest

Arb contractors The Living Forest believe the quality of the machines they use is as important, if not more, than the customer service they receive from suppliers.

And currently the woodchipper of choice for the Kent-based contractors is from the GreenMech range. With three tracked and trailed machines currently on the fleet, their reliability - coupled with the back-up support received - sees further investment on the horizon.

Says Operations Director Michael Lott who purchased his first GreenMech chipper, a 16-23 trailed, 12 years ago: “From the very first contact we had with GreenMech, the approach was different – they let the machine do the talking and were invested in finding what was a perfect fit for us, not just what they wanted to sell.”

With the 16-23 still out every day, tackling a mixture of domestic and commercial jobs, Michael added a sub-750kg Arborist 150 to the fleet three years ago, followed by a 16-23 SAFE-Trak model last year, supplied by David Guy at local dealer Burden Bros Agri Ltd.

“These machines just don’t miss a beat. The nature of the work puts terrific amounts of stress on the inner mechanics, but the GreenMech chippers are built to handle whatever is thrown at them,” explains Michael.

“The Disc-Blade chipping technology for example means that if we’re on-site and debris or stones get fed through accidentally, you can simply turn the blades to the next sharp edge and you’re up and running again.” Michael also purchased the dedicated sharpening unit, reducing the cost and downtime associated with getting blades re-sharpened.

As with any large investment, chippers need to be running at full capacity to maximise their return, and not spend costly time side-lined waiting for spares or repairs. “On one occasion where we needed a replacement bolt for our 16-23 unit, one call to GreenMech and it arrived the very next day – we couldn’t believe it! Having them on the end of the phone and knowing that any queries can be answered so quickly makes it feel like we’ve got an extra man on our team – and that’s invaluable.”
When it comes to the challenge of looking after parks and pitches all year round, STIHL tackles it head on. With a range of tools designed to maintain grounds to the highest and most professional standards. Not only does STIHL set the standard for quality, efficiency and reliability, our tools are also easy to maintain and offer superb parts availability. All of which adds up to minimum downtime and maximum performance.

Ed Mowe, Head Groundsman for Leicester Tigers, with the STIHL RM 655 RS

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Cutting time to topdress

A Rink DS800 from Charterhouse Turf Machinery has dramatically improved the efficiency and results of topdressing the 18 greens at Arbroath Golf Links. A task that used to take the team approximately 24 man-hours can now be completed by Head Greenkeeper Alistair Wylie in just six, since the club took delivery of the disc spreader in early summer 2019.

“We were previously using a drop dresser which had given us 20 years of loyal service, but an upgrade was needed to make the process of topdressing less labour intensive,” explains Alistair, who heads up a team of three greens staff. “Dressing all 18 greens would take the team a whole day to complete so when it came to looking for a new machine, I was clear that we needed a disc spreader to cover wider areas, more evenly and in less time.”

On dealer recommendation Alistair looked into the Rink DS800 trailed model and was confident, without even having a working demonstration, that it was the one for the job.

50 tonnes of sand was applied to the greens in two operations last year, the first shortly after delivery and another in October. “Any initial concerns we had about the DS800 moving and turning on its four wheels quickly faded away – it doesn’t mark the surface at all and because it’s so simple to adjust the spreading thickness, we can conduct light dressings and leave barely any trace that any work has taken place. It has certainly reduced complaints from the members which is another positive!”

With a 0.8m³ hopper capacity, the DS800 model offers variable spreading widths of between 2m and 12m, and at thicknesses of 0.5 to 15mm. Alistair adds, “It was evident from the very first green that we’d made the right choice – this used to take 27 passes to adequately cover with the drop dresser and with the Rink, it took us just three! The labour savings we’re achieving frees up the rest of my team to carry out other tasks which is crucial when you’re looking after a large course with a small team.”

Fungicide costs reduced for Oakridge Golf Club

A successful trial of Headland Amenity’s 20/20/30 tank-mix over the winter of 2019 has seen it become a staple in the nutritional programme at Warwickshire’s Oakridge Golf Club. Having previously fallen victim to costly Fusarium outbreaks on the greens for a number of consecutive years, Head Greenkeeper Ben Copson has been really impressed with both the condition of the greens and reduction in fungicide costs achieved by switching to Headland’s Enhanced Plant Health (EPH) strategy.

“Every autumn Greenkeeper’s always worry - wondering how you’re going to fair with disease over the upcoming winter period and how much it could cost to rectify,” says Ben, who has been at Oakridge for 20 years. “I sat down with our Headland Regional Technical Manager Andy Lane who suggested the 20/20/30 approach and the potential benefits this could bring for the greens.” After hearing how the tank-mix of Liquid Turf Hardener, Turfite® Elite and
Continued from page 29

Seamac® ProTurf Fe, together with Mantle, had worked effectively at other clubs, Ben commenced monthly applications in October.

“We could see after the first couple of applications how strong and healthy the plant was by its colour, and how much better the greens held up when we conducted our mechanical maintenance. We also received some fantastic comments from both our members and pay and play golfers on how great the greens looked and played, especially considering how wet the winter was.” The 20/20/30 also kept disease occurrence in check, with just a single fungicide application required over the whole winter period.

Ben added that the EPH strategy contributed to the smoothest transition from winter to summer, with the greens emerging stronger and healthier than they ever had previously. “With USGA greens, we’re open for year-round play which means the pressure is on my team and I to keep them in good enough condition to cope. We used to secretly hope for a bit of snow to give the greens a breather before the start of the new playing season, but with this 20/20/30 EPH approach keeping the greens stronger than ever, we won’t be hoping for snow anymore!”

INFINICUT® FX pedestrian mower delivers on bowls maintenance contract

Richard Peel Groundcare have taken delivery of an INFINICUT® FX pedestrian mower, complete with an UltraGroomer™ cassette from the TMSystem™ range, to help them deliver on a brand-new bowls maintenance contract.

Undertaking pitch maintenance and renovations for football clubs at all levels, Richard Peel prides himself on using ‘industry leading machinery to deliver the best possible results to each individual customer’. That was why, when the company won a new contract to maintain five bowling greens in the Manchester area, there was only one mower in contention to deliver the desired results. “We’d had always been impressed with the INFINICUT® when we had seen it at industry trade shows,” explains Richard.

After a successful demonstration, Richard took delivery of his new 22” INFINICUT® Fixed Head mower in June 2020, from local dealer Balmers GM. “From an environmental point of view, the battery is major plus - not just as a cleaner source of energy, but the reduction in noise and vibration issues for the operator. HAV is a massive industry-wide issue, causing long-lasting damage to those using machinery on a daily basis. It’s something I’m really passionate about reducing with every piece of equipment I buy.”

The range of interchangeable TMSystem™ cassette options was another influential factor in the purchase of the INFINICUT®, enabling the grounds team to conduct different operations throughout the maintenance calendar. “We also purchased the UltraGroomer™ cassette, which we will use on the greens once a month, to keep on top of any lateral growth and thatch accumulations. This should mean we won’t then have to conduct more invasive removal operations come the end of the season.”

Delighted with his purchase, Richard concludes, “This combination of equipment now puts us in the best position to keep the greens healthy, playing well and looking at their best throughout the year.”
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Congratulations on your new role at Kubota. Tell us how you got to this point in your career and what have been the best bits so far?

I moved into the Business Development Manager role for Kubota’s groundcare division in December 2019. However, I’ve spent the past 20 years at the company. Over this time, I’ve occupied many different roles and obtained a really solid understanding of the UK business and our customer base, alongside the connections and tools often required to make swift decisions and keep business processes fluid.

I’ve had an interest in machinery for many years before joining Kubota. I worked in the plant hire sector at the start of my career – where I helped people and businesses achieve their aims through mechanisation – this fostered my interest and enabled me to start to develop some of the skills which I continue to use in my role today.

My career highlight so far has been the significant sales growth of the Kubota groundcare range, while I was a dealer manager. Another rewarding experience was helping to establish new distribution channels and launching new products in the Nordic and Baltic countries.

Which product in the Kubota groundcare range is the current best seller and why do you think that is?

Our direct cut and collect mowers (G series) continue to be one of our best-selling products across the range. I saw the first Kubota cut and collect model (the G18) in 1999. Its features and performance levels changed the marketplace, offering a new and better solution for cutting grass. Some of these features have stood the test of time and are still seen in our machinery today.

For example, not having a turbine powered grass collector gives the ability to cut and collect grass in challenging mowing conditions. Meanwhile, having a compact machine enables greater manoeuvrability and precision. Today, our range of direct cut and collect machines spans various configurations from 13.5hp up 26hp.

What is your favourite Kubota product and why?

The zero-turn mower market is one that grows each year. These machines make the task of grass cutting quicker, more efficient and more enjoyable. This is why our ZD1211 model is probably my favourite product in the Kubota range. The machine is designed to offer faster, improved cutting performance, whilst ensuring that user ease and comfort are still front of mind, this machine continues to prove popular with our customers.

Each year, more and more people are seeing the benefit of cutting around obstacles in one swift pass, therefore we expect this market to continue to grow moving forward.
Kubota has unveiled prototypes of electric tractors and electric compact construction machinery (mini excavators). Can you tell us more about these developments and when can we expect to see them on the market in the UK?

Earlier this year Kubota showcased three new machinery developments in Kyoto, Japan.

Two of these machines were battery powered; a compact tractor – for the groundcare division – and a mini excavator – for the construction division. Both machines were a response to the global shift towards alternative energy and signified Kubota’s continued investment in meeting the needs of its customers, both now and in the future. Powered by lithium-ion batteries, the compact tractor will operate using the equivalent output of compact tractors with a diesel engine. Although we don’t have a specific launch timeline for these products just yet, testing in Europe will be ongoing from 2020.

The third machine was a concept ‘Dream Tractor’, commemorating the 130th anniversary of the company and designed in response to some of the challenges facing Japan’s agricultural industry. Equipped with artificial intelligence and electrification technology, the “X-Tractor – Cross Tractor” is completely autonomous and gives an insight into the engineering and development work Kubota pioneer as well as the future of farming.

Kubota’s Dream Tractor and excavator

With sustainability and the environment affecting the buying habits of many within the UK industry, how is Kubota keeping pace with changing demands?

From a product perspective, our main focus at the moment is to ensure that our line up meets the Stage V emissions regulations which impact products over 19kw. Being the largest manufacturer in the world of industrial diesel engines under 100hp, Kubota is particularly well placed to meet these new regulations and adopt compliant engines into our groundcare product portfolio.

Currently, we are witnessing a global pandemic never seen before. How is Kubota UK coping with the challenges set by the Corona crisis? How has it affected the supply chain and manufacturing of your products and how have issues been overcome?

Over the past few weeks, COVID-19 has presented many challenges for us all, as businesses and individuals. Resilience and the ability to adapt have become key to survival – regardless of industry or location. We’d like to reassure our customers that we are here to support them during this unprecedented period, offering advice and assistance where possible.

At Kubota, we’ve also had to adapt to better serve our customers during this time. Fortunately, we always aim to store many months’ worth of inventory at our Oxfordshire head office, as well as other storage locations around the country. This network – alongside our other factories in countries around the world and our dealer’s inventories – means that if we do see any delay in obtaining machinery or parts it is isolated to a specific factory or location as opposed to impacting our entire system. This should help us to continue to offer the best machinery and service to our customers during COVID-19 and beyond.

Kubota is celebrating its 130th anniversary this year. What do you feel is the company’s unique selling point that has helped in its success?

At the heart of the Kubota business is engineering. Mix this with the quality and innovation associated with Japanese manufacturing and you get products that speak for themselves. That’s how we have the reputation we have today; as a reliable company that provides affordable, durable products and caters to its customers. This is what sets us apart.

We are also a personable company to deal with. We support our customers through their buying decisions and then provide a high standard of aftercare. Our customers don’t just get quality machines, they also get peace of mind, knowing that our friendly team of Kubota and dealer staff are on hand to support them.

We take time to speak with our customers and understand their needs, challenges and listen to what changes would have a positive impact on their lives. This process brings new ideas to the fore, and means that we can create machines that meet and exceed our customers’ needs; whether that’s today or in the future.

What plans have you got for Kubota’s groundcare division moving forward?

On a product design point of view, we know that the machines of tomorrow are being designed today and we always try to be at the fore-front of this.

On the UK business front, we’re also currently placing an emphasis on customer and machine support. As part of a push around these areas, we’ve launched Kubota Care. This is a fully Kubota-backed extended warranty option, meaning that customers can now fully cover their machines against unforeseen repair costs for 5 years. This can help to ensure that a customer’s machine is maintained to the highest possible standards and serviced by Kubota-trained service engineers. The entire warranty can be wrapped up as part of a maintenance agreement and by utilising it – alongside the Kubota Finance options we offer – customers can get more value for their money than ever before.
When the landscaping arm of St John’s Garden Centre in Devon decided to introduce EGO’s battery-powered outdoor power equipment to its arsenal in 2017, Contract Manager Mark Toon was sceptical about battery life and run time. Three years on, Mark is on a mission to convert fellow colleagues.

With the exception of a short break to study for his degree, Mark Toon has worked for St John’s Garden Centre in Devon for almost 30 years. Having worked there since the age of 14, he has experienced first-hand the use of petrol tools for the business’s landscaping installations and maintenance jobs. With the decreasing reputation of petrol power and developments in cordless battery power being well documented by his local dealer Hayes Garden Machinery, Mark could no longer ignore the shift towards battery power and began his own research on behalf of his team at St John’s.

Perception shift
Like anyone making a commercial investment, Mark wanted to calculate the savings the business could make in comparison with new petrol tools. He calculated the predicted life of a battery in comparison to the amount of fuel that would typically be used over the same period — a figure which he found would equate to around £1000 for each £250 battery the business would use — representing a saving of around 75%.

After doing his homework on the best commercial machinery at SALTEX and testing out the kit at Hayes’ open day demonstrations, Mark opted for EGO as the tools to power the business forward in an ever environmentally conscious world. His shed now combines a mixture of 52cm self-propelled mowers, hedge trimmers, line trimmers and multi-tools.

“When we invested in battery technology, we were going to use it as a backup for our petrol equipment but it’s now actually the other way round. The only time we now use petrol equipment is for larger machinery like stone rakes and box rakes,” explains Mark.

“The team were sceptical of battery power in terms of being able to deliver the power and run time of petrol. Like many in the industry, many of them come from a background that believes that if it’s not screamingly loud then it has no power. They very quickly realised this is not the case.”

Among the reasons that quickly became apparent, the most prevalent were the reduced weight of the...
equipment, the lack of pull start and the fact there is no need to carry or continually replace fuel and oil levels. Apart from the obvious benefits to ease and improved safety of manual handling and having to refuel, Mark noted the surprise improvement in efficiency offered by battery-powered tools.

“Previously, we would often have to send two people to a site to safely load and unload equipment or carry mowers up steps, for example. With EGO, we can fold the mower away and store it sideways on the van which not only saves space but also saves us from worrying about fuel spillages. With just one person required to do these jobs and without the hassle of having to collect fuel or repair broken pull cords, we’ve definitely noticed a reduction in our downtime and an improvement how much work we can get done.”

**Cleaner, quieter and safer**

Mark admits that his decision to switch to battery was partly fuelled by press coverage that highlighted the dangers of petrol equipment. He comments on how battery-powered tools enable the business to easily meet criteria risk assessments. The health benefits of removing dangerous fumes from everyday tasks are difficult to quantify, but the St John’s team have noticed a clear difference.

“I can definitely report that the guys are saying how much better it is in comparison to using petrol. When they have to use petrol now, they comment on how they would rather be using battery instead. From my perspective, it’s nice not to come back from work with your clothes not stinking of fumes. We are often asked by passers-by, ‘Wow, what is that? What would you recommend?’ — the answer to which is battery every time.”

With battery power offering reduced noise and vibration for users, Mark says the business has less to worry about in terms of exposure. He doesn’t need to worry about hand-arm vibration (HAV) and no longer has to think about who is using what equipment or swapping it between users.

“We do have to consider HAV and noise but we still operate with the same Personal Protection Equipment as we would for petrol, but the equipment is lighter and less demanding on the arms, and noise levels are dramatically lower. We don’t have to plan jobs around the noise of our power tools any longer either. If we’re working at a school, for example, we may have previously been asked not to operate equipment in certain areas due to exams or teaching but now we don’t have to think about things like that.”

**Matching the power of petrol**

For the tools used by St John’s team, EGO batteries deliver the same amount of power as their petrol-powered counterparts and offer a wide variety of benefits outside of reduced noise, fumes and vibration.

“EGO tools are definitely worth the money and are on par with decent petrol tools. The little things too, such as blade protectors being included with the hedge trimmer is great. With petrol tools like Stihl, we would have to pay for these add-ons. Outside of the obvious, I think reducing our downtime is the biggest difference for us. There is also very little maintenance involved.

“Anybody who works in the landscaping industry would be crazy not to look at battery power seriously. For me, it’s a no brainer and for some kit, there’s quite frankly no need to be using petrol at all now.”

The EGO fold mower allows for easy storage and also saves from the worry of fuel spillages.
John Deere sells SABO to Mutares

John Deere has announced that it has signed an agreement to sell SABO Maschinenfabrik to Mutares SE & Co. The transaction is contingent on regulatory approval by the Federal Cartel Office Bundeskartellamt, Germany’s national competition regulator.

SABO manufactures lawnmowers and other outdoor power products and markets them to homeowners, municipalities, and gardening and landscaping companies. The Gummersbach, Germany-based company was founded in 1932 and has been a subsidiary of Deere & Company since 1991. SABO has approximately 125 employees.

Mutares, based in Munich, is a private equity firm that currently owns 13 companies in the automotive and mobility, engineering and technology, and goods and services industries.

SABO will maintain ownership of its brand assets and its operations in Gummersbach. The company will continue to produce walk-behind lawnmowers and handheld outdoor power products, marketing those machines through its existing network of more than 1100 specialised dealers in Germany, Austria, Belgium, the Netherlands, Slovakia and Switzerland.

Employees, customers, suppliers, dealers and distributors should notice little change in daily operations, according to Deere and Mutares.

“SABO is a leading brand for high quality walk-behind mowers and handheld power products in Europe, and the company is well positioned for growth with its line of battery-powered machines,” says Tim Merrett, John Deere’s Vice President, Turf and Compact Utility Platform.

“However, Deere is shifting its focus to key production systems that will allow our machine technology to be a differentiator. Further investment in walk-behind lawnmowers was no longer a strategic fit for our global business.

“Deere is not exiting the turf care business. John Deere will continue to produce a wide range of lawn and grounds care equipment for residential, commercial and golf course maintenance use,” explains Merrett.

Iseki fleet for Devon school

ISEKI UK & Ireland, distributors of ISEKI compact tractors and mowers alongside their local dealer MST based in Tiverton, recently sold a fleet of ISEKI machinery into Blundell’s School in Devon.

When head groundsman Graham Cox, started his new role at the Tiverton School, he was tasked with upgrading the groundcare fleet of machinery, with the aim of it being more economical and cost efficient.

Commenting on his decision Graham says: “We knew our two previous 36hp tractors needed an increase in power to 50hp in order to run the specialist sports turf equipment around the site.

The schools overall strategy is to significantly improve its sports pitches and gardens and it fully supports the development of the team and the equipment necessary to do that.

“MST brought the ISEKI TG6495 IQ out to us for a demo,” he continues. “The dual-clutch transmission offers excellent control for when we are aerating, allowing accurate work to be carried out easily no matter who operates the machine. The drive function is great when towing implements around the site or on the roads allowing us to travel quickly from one job to the next.

“The TG6495 IQ tractor’s are
There is no question zero-turn mowers save time. Their ability to turn on the proverbial sixpence and reduce the need for extra manoeuvring is no idle boast. Once at the end of the cutting row, simply make a quick 180-degree turn, align the deck edge with the row and continue without the need to back up before proceeding.

A wide range of deck options available on the market also assists with the speed. For example, mower manufacturer Ariens offers cutting decks from 34 to 60 inches across. The bigger the deck the faster the job is done.

In addition, Ariens zero-turn mowers come with high-back adjustable seats with some also featuring armrests. The controls are positioned in ergonomic and easily accessible locations so the operator with just two to drive, brake and steer. Spinning on the spot forward, eliminating the need for three-point turns at the end of the cutting pass.

Typical speeds of ride-on mowers and garden tractors are 3 to 4 miles per hour. An Ariens zero-turn whisks along at 5 to 8mph with smooth acceleration, into that quick one-eighty spin and back down the line without the furious turning, backing and turning again.

In addition the Ariens zero-turn frame is a fully welded tubular design, which is much stronger than the traditional C-channel frames of ride-on mowers. The options of deep, fully fabricated steel cutting decks offer the durability while promoting maximum airflow and a superior cut. The decks on Ariens zero-turs are aerodynamically designed so the grass is pulled towards the blades and clippings are discharged evenly. Adjustment between different cutting positions is effortless.
Terry Harrison Machinery has recently equipped two of the largest councils in Wales with new fleets of Etesia PRO 46 pedestrian mowers.

After previously working in the groundcare industry for 23 years, Terry Harrison formed his company in 2012. Over the years the company has witnessed continuous growth and is renowned for its excellent aftersales support and customer service. Terry has also worked hard on adding several market leading machinery franchises to its portfolio - one of which is Etesia.

Started in 1995 with only one walk-behind and one ride-on machine, Etesia UK has grown rapidly and now offers a wide range of products that include a variety of walk-behind, ride-on mowers and the widely praised Attila range of brushcutters.

Terry has been an Etesia dealer for the last seven years and predominately distributes the equipment to councils, contractors, and local authorities. Just recently, he sold 34 machines consisting of PRO 46 PHTS3 single speed self-propelled and PRO 46 PHE3 push pedestrian mowers, to two of the largest councils in Wales.

Following the same concept of the PRO 46 range of pedestrian mowers first launched in the early 1990’s, both models feature Xenoy cutting decks for increased strength, shear washer crank protection, individual height of cut adjusters, a new 22mm handlebar design, the latest Honda GCV170 engine and are supplied complete with 80 litre grass box and rear deflector as standard.

The design has been proven over many years and has an unbeatable record of quality and performance unrivalled in its class. It provides outstanding collection performance, even if the grass is long and wet.

One feature of these models is the ‘one cut’ principle - the grass is only cut once before being sent to the grass box. The benefits of this are reduced power consumption from fast deck material ejection and secondly, as it is not multi-chopped, the grass does not stick to the cutting deck in the same way as multi-cut grass does preventing unwanted blockages. The grass box is manufactured for maximum strength and comes complete with a fill indicator.

Commenting on his recent business with the councils, Terry says: “The Etesia brand is hugely popular with our customers. They are comfortable for operators, well balanced and they do the job they are supposed to do.

“Their ability to cut and collect and cut and drop in all weathers is an enormous benefit because there are not too many mowers that can do this. The Etesia machines are incredibly robust and reliable. Users find that they do not break down and they do not need to buy parts or take them to workshops. It is for this reason why they are so good for councils and local authorities, especially with the amount of use they have. In fact, the councils tend to order new fleets of Etesia every year – which shows just how good they are.

“The PRO 46 pedestrian mowers are incredible,” he continues. “They can deal with a wide range of grass areas and verges. They can also be used in small areas where tractors cannot get to.

A round-up of ECHO outdoor power tools introduced this year reflect the move to low and zero pollution solutions for all types of work from forestry to groundcare and gardening, both professional and domestic.

Early in the year saw the introduction of the CS-621SX, the latest chainsaw in the ECHO X Series of ‘Best in Class’ products which aim to be industry-leading in terms of power and performance. The CS-621SX boasts a new 59.8cc low emission, professional-grade 2-stroke ECHO engine, designed and manufactured in Japan. The saw is packed with advanced features to help the commercial operator power through their work. For a heavy-duty saw, it is surprisingly lightweight at only 6.3kg (dry weight) but that doesn’t take anything away from its cutting performance, which exceeds that of many higher capacity machines.

ECHO also launched the world’s first chainsaw with Auto Choke this year, the CS-352AC, an all-round rear handle chainsaw with the patented Auto Choke feature enabling quicker, easier and safer starting. All that’s needed is one pull, regardless of the engine temperature, and the chainsaw starts first time - without the risk of flooding the engine.

Taking low emissions to another level is the ECHO range of three domestic and semi-professional double-sided hedgetrimmers: the HC-2020, the HC-2020R...
Baggleys announced as Pellenc dealer

Baggleys Machinery have recently been appointed as an authorised dealer for the full range of Pellenc professional battery powered equipment.

The Norfolk based family-run business is headed up by Solly Mansfield who runs the dealership with his wife and two sons. Speaking about his business that started in 2001 Solly says:

“It’s one of those stories where you start in the garden shed and work your way up.”

From humble beginnings Baggleys now occupies a six-acre site and has eight members of staff. The success of the company has been based on providing their customers with quality products and a first-class aftersales service.

No stranger to working with leading brands, Solly is particularly pleased after adding the Pellenc range to the company’s extensive portfolio of products.

“I had been interested in Pellenc equipment for quite a while,” he explains. “I actually had a hands-on demonstration a long time ago when Pellenc was first introduced into the country. I was instantly impressed, but unfortunately at that time I didn’t have the customer base that I have now and was not in a position to take it on. So now I’m really pleased to finally be offering Pellenc to our customers.”

Over recent years, Pellenc has gained market recognition by offering a unique range of ‘zero emission’ battery-powered tools, thanks to the development of Lithium-ion ultra-high performance batteries.

This exclusive Pellenc technology allows for a drastic reduction in the production of greenhouse gases and noise pollution. It is also comfortable for users, meets new sustainable development demands and offers excellent economic profitability. With a record capacity of up to one day’s use on a single charge, these quality products are a perfect fit for Baggleys.

“The battery run time on the Pellenc equipment far exceeds anything else on the market,” continues Solly. “The feedback from customers has already been incredible and many of them have commented on the fact that they are now able to start their jobs earlier. They can now start to cut a hedge or strim straight away, whereas with their petrol machines they wouldn’t be able to use it, say at 7am, due to the noise disturbance.

Baggleys Machinery will distributing the complete Pellenc range which includes chainsaws, blowers, hedge cutters, pole saws, road sweepers, grass strimmers and mowers, and Solly has already seen a demand for the products from the likes of local authorities, hospitals, universities and contractors.

It is a sign of the times according to Solly as the industry continues to embrace battery powered equipment. Furthermore, he believes that once people understand just how cost effective they can be, then even more people will be turning to the innovative and environmentally friendly technology.

“The big hurdle for people to get over is the initial cost,” he said. “But what they do not take into consideration is the petrol that is being bought every week to run their two-stroke machines. With the battery powered equipment, you do not have that expense – ever.

“I think I’m right in saying that the break-even point with the Pellenc equipment is 18 months. So, if people can see past that initial cost then they will realise that the Pellenc equipment is far more cost effective long-term – because there are no running costs.”
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