



BAGMA

THE MEMBERSHIP MAGAZINE OF THE BRITISH
AGRICULTURAL AND GARDEN MACHINERY ASSOCIATION
ISSUE 48 | NOVEMBER-DECEMBER 2024

BULLETIN



Top of the Bill!

BAGMA sits down with Carr's Billington to discuss almost two centuries of history and discover how they've become one of the UK's leading performers in the agricultural supplies market

Budget Summary | Thorough Examination Training | LAMMA



Thank you to our Industry Partners for their ongoing support and commitment to the good work BAGMA does. We will continue to provide the best support, services and information to our members to help develop their businesses.



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Out of adversity, comes opportunity?

Dear All,

I trust you are all well and battling on with the current uncertainty of the economic climate.

I personally have had a difficult few months recovering from major surgery. In the past few days I've been updated on all of the excellent, encouraging and positive things BAGMA have been up to over recent weeks.

To mention just a few – a fantastically well supported BAGMA golf day, great successes again for the team attending GroundsFest and SALTEX and a well-rounded and informative BAGMA Connect meeting at Kubota (U.K.) Ltd. A big thank you to our hosts and all of the great speakers.

Nick Darking also attended the annual CLIMMAR event. It is important and always interesting to hear how our European equals are faring.

I am sad to have missed all of the above, but I'd like to thank Nick, the BAGMA team and Peter Arrand for stepping in and chairing the board meeting in my absence.

The recent budget is going to rock our industry. I am particularly concerned about the cost of handing down farms and estates to the next generations. This will either mean the decline in value of our land, or landowners needing to borrow money to pay IHT – limiting potential borrowing for capital investments and the purchasing of new machinery and equipment.



by Peter Heming
BAGMA President

It certainly feels like the Government has attacked our industry.

In my view, the budget should have segregated the large landowners who had only invested in land to avoid IHT, with no interest in farming it themselves. We must now do what we can to support the NFU and industry as a whole to lobby and overturn this disastrous decision. Let's hope the Government will rethink...

While we wait to see how that plays out, I'd like to wish you all the very best for the remainder of 2024. Purely from a personal perspective I will be glad to welcome in 2025!

Have a great Christmas and hopefully see lots of you in the new year.

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BULLETIN BOARD

HAPPY RETIREMENT WILLIE!

Hamilton Brothers recently marked the retirement of their longest serving employee, Willie Bilsland, after over 63 years with the business!

Willie started with Hamilton Brothers on the 21st of November 1960 aged 15 as an apprentice and has remained on the tools ever since, showing an incredible work ethic over the past 6 decades. He has been part of the business through all three generations, providing a wealth of knowledge on the company's history. Everyone at the Hamilton Ross Group and BAGMA would like

to say thank you to Willie and wish him all the best for a long and happy retirement with his family and vintage tractors!



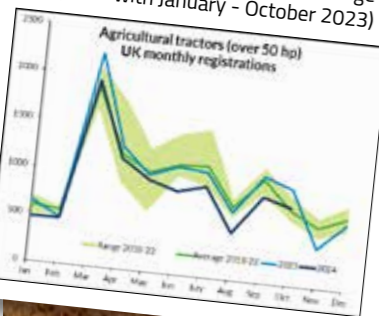
RICKERBYS MARK 25 YEAR MILESTONE



Alistair McRobert, Horticultural and Groundscare Sales Manager from Rickerbys, recently celebrated an incredible 25 years of service. Pictured receiving his 25 Year Service Award from Managing Director Ken Conley and West Area Sales Director Martyn Henderson. Congratulations on your achievement Alistair!

UK AGRICULTURAL TRACTOR REGISTRATIONS – OCTOBER 2024

Month: 818 Units - 18.8% change (compared with October 2023)
Year to Date: 9,042 Units - 15.6% change (compared with January - October 2023)



BAGMA announce more new members

BAGMA are delighted to welcome more new members to the association, signifying their continued growth and expansion across the groundcare, agricultural and garden machinery industries. Joining in recent weeks are Winchester-based dealers Wildwood Machinery and, coming on board as the newest industry partner, Kersten UK Ltd.

Wildwood Machinery was founded by James Bastian, after spending more than 30 years working in the professional turf sector – much of which as the managing director of East Horton Golf Club. In a recent coup, Wildwood secured sole selling rights for INFINICUT products across much of southern England.



"We're delighted to join BAGMA. We know how hard BAGMA work on behalf of independent dealers" says James. "Wildwood Machinery has grown rapidly since we established the business in 2022 so now is a great time to join our industry Association."

He continues, "Initially, we will be carrying out a Health and Safety audit with the support of the Association and as we continue to grow, we know that we'll take advantage of, and benefit from, the increasing range of the services that BAGMA has to offer."

It's an exciting year too for the team at Kersten UK Ltd, for whom 2024 marks the company's 20th anniversary. The family business, run by Chris Faulkner, aim to provide strong dealer support throughout

their operation – with competitive pricing, reliable supply chains and marketing resources to help drive sales to agricultural, groundcare and landscaping professionals.



Kersten UK emphasises the quality and innovation of their products, many of which include advanced technology and an environmentally friendly approach. These products are mainly sourced from small European manufacturers whose niche product ranges knit together to provide coherent solutions to grounds maintenance professionals.

In terms of training and support, Kersten actively promotes not only the product technical attributes but also the understanding of why, when and how these products may be used enabling dealers to confidently sell and service Kersten products. Kersten UK has been at the forefront of developing an Integrated Weed Management strategy to provide a practical, sustainable and tested solution for maintaining amenity areas without the use of chemical pesticides.

Chris comments "The next twenty years promises to see an unprecedented rate of change the likes of which our industry has never witnessed. I believe the active involvement in the industry through associations like BAGMA demonstrates our commitment to the sector and will underpin the close bonds that will be required to navigate these uncharted waters"

Happy Birthday Hannah!



The recent BAGMA Golf Day provided many reasons to celebrate – not least a special landmark birthday of BAGMA's very own admin extraordinaire Hannah Desborough! Wishing you many happy returns from all the BAGMA team.



BAGMA Budget Summary

The new Labour Government has made big changes in their first budget, delivered on the 30th October. With the largest tax rises for over 30 years, the UK's tax burden is set to reach a record high as a share of GDP (outside wartime) of over 38%. By European standards, this is still relatively low and is comparable with the economic challenges seen in other countries given the increasing pressure on public services, not least because of global ageing populations.

Businesses are set to bare the brunt of the Chancellor's tax rises, with the headline grabbing increase in the National Insurance rate for employers just one of a number of announcements set to impact firms and workers. While it is impossible to outline everything here, BAGMA have picked out some of the important changes that may affect you and your business.

- An increase in the rate of employer National Insurance contributions (Secondary Class 1 NIC's) from 13.8% to 15% from April 2025. The threshold at which employers become liable to pay will also be cut from £9,100 to £5,000.
- The Employment Allowance relief on NIC's will be increased from £5,000 to £10,500 and extended to all employers, not just those with NIC bills of £100,000 or less, from April 2025.
- Increases in the National Living Wage will to £12.21 per hour, the National Minimum Wage for 18-20 year olds to £10 per hour and apprentices/under 18's to £7.55 per hour.
- 100% Business Property Relief from Inheritance Tax will be limited to the first £1million of qualifying property. 50% relief above that level, with IHT payable at 20%.
- Resurrection of the proposal to treat double cab pick-ups with a payload of one tonne or more as cars for certain tax purposes. Previously dropped following backlash from farmers and others, this proposal would apply to both corporation and income tax for the purposes of capital allowances, benefits in kind and some deductions from business profits.



- Company Car Tax rates to increase from 2028, which will vary depending on the type of vehicle and will remain much lower for zero emission and electric vehicles.
- Increases to the first-year rate of Vehicle Excise Duty for all ICE vehicles, including hybrids.
- Publication of a 'Corporate Tax Roadmap', setting out the government's plans on Corporation Tax, including commitments to key features of the system and the capping of the rate at 25%.
- Increases to the main rates of Capital Gains Tax to 18% (lower rate) and 24% (higher rate) for disposals made after 30th October 2024.
- A freeze in fuel duty and extension of the 'temporary' 5p cut in duty until 22nd March 2026.
- Statutory 'Fuel Finder' scheme to launch in 2025 (subject to legislation), requiring all filling stations to report price changes or unavailability of fuel within half an hour.
- £4 billion pilot package to encourage technology adoption by SMEs.
- A number of measures to crack down on tax avoidance from April 2026, including ending "contrived car ownership schemes" used to avoid company car tax.
- Abolition of 'non-dom' tax status, to be replaced by a residence-based regime from April 2025.
- Launch of a new 'Office for Value for Money', to scrutinise departmental spending, reduce waste and ensure value for money.
- Increased investment in compliance staff and modernising of IT systems at HMRC to improve the collection of tax.
- Confirming plans to mandate the reporting of benefits in kind via payroll software from April 2026, for both income tax and employer NI contributions.
- Increase in late payment interest rates on unpaid tax liabilities by 1.5 percentage points from April 2025.

Read the full Autumn 2024 budget





by
Nick Darking
BAGMA General
Manager

The highs and lows of 2024

It's hard to believe we're already signing off on the last edition of the Bulletin for 2024. I'd love to say that time flies when you're having fun, but this year has definitely been one of both ups and downs for most. In the immortal words of Ronan Keating, life is a rollercoaster and what can we do but ride it!

You'll have just read BAGMA's budget briefing, summarising some of the key takeaways from the Chancellors autumn statement. The budget will undoubtedly cause problems for businesses of all shapes and sizes, with the increase in employer NIC's adding extra pressure to already challenging economic conditions.

While inflation figures are heading in the right direction, servicing debts remains an expensive business. These factors, combined with dealer stock levels still being alarmingly high, has ultimately seen an unprecedented number of companies close their doors throughout 2024 which is incredibly difficult for us all to see.

On a more positive note, this year BAGMA have been working harder than ever to ensure we can help you and your

business with whatever support you may need. We've welcomed a number of new Service Providers to our bank of approved suppliers and recently launched the new paperless solution to Handover & Installation documentation in conjunction with Culverdocs. This app promises to revolutionise the way dealerships manage their paperwork and, I'm pleased to say we've had overwhelmingly positive feedback from those who are already on-boarded.

We've also enjoyed lots of face to face networking with members, non-members and industry friends at events up and down the country. The three BAGMA Connect meetings were very well received and we're already looking forward to the three we have scheduled in 2025 – AGCO on 13th March, Hartpury College on 2nd July and New Holland on 9th October.

The BAGMA team are also excited to start 2025 in style, catching up with many of you as we make a return to LAMMA and BTME.

It leaves me to thank you all for your support throughout 2024. Wishing you the very best for a Merry Christmas and cheers to a Happy New Year!

Presentation of the CLIMMAR Dealer Satisfaction Index at the EIMA 2024

CLIMMAR, the Association of Dealers and Distributors of Agricultural Machinery and Equipment, recently presented the results of its annual DSI survey at EIMA in Bologna, Italy.

The objective of the Manufacturer-Distributor Relationship Satisfaction Index is to provide distributors with a means of expressing their level of satisfaction with their manufacturer. This is achieved



through a questionnaire comprising 15 headings and 73 questions.

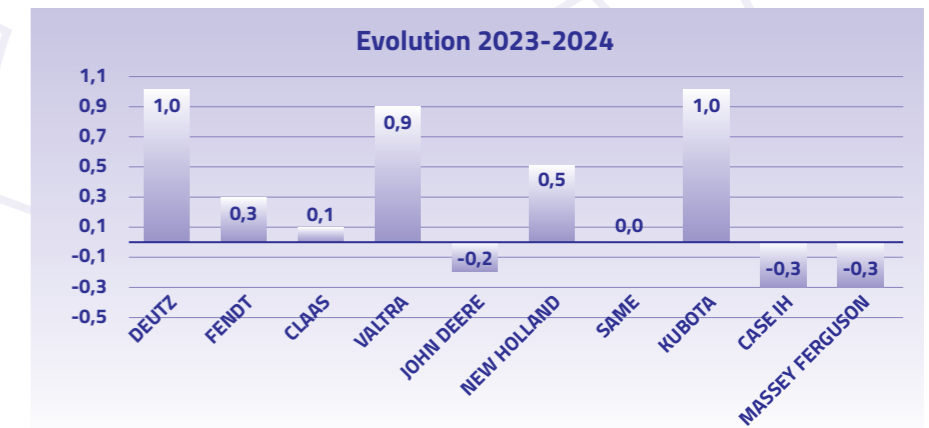
The results of the questionnaire serve as a tool for manufacturers to work with their network to identify and address areas for improvement, which is beneficial for both parties.

To see the results in full, visit www.climmar.com

The Dealers Satisfaction Index survey took place from April to May 2024; and involved 11 countries: Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Poland, United Kingdom and Sweden.

The objective of the survey is not to compare one brand with another, but to provide a foundation for constructive dialogue to address areas of dissatisfaction.

The survey commenced on 4 April 2024 and concluded on 31 May. The response rate for 2024 was 33%. Please note that the survey does not cover products sold by the manufacturer.



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GKB emerge victorious as the BAGMA Golf Day returns

Dealers, manufacturers, members and non-members recently joined forces for the second competitive instalment of the BAGMA Golf Day – hosted on Wednesday 25th September at Nailcote Hall Golf Club. Home to the British Par 3 Championship, the challenging 9-hole course provided the perfect backdrop for a day of networking, tactics and good sporting fun!

Following tea, coffee and bacon rolls in the clubhouse, teams embarked on two rounds of the notoriously-tricky Nailcote course. With the days play complete (and sand emptied from shoes and pockets!) scores were totted up to discover the top-ranking teams and individuals.

Team GKB Machines, led by UK Operations Manager Tom Shinkins, were crowned the winners, with a score of

1st place team:
GKB Machines –
Tom Shinkins, Eddie Jack,
Marc Kerr and Tim Hales

2nd place team:
Redexim UK –
Paul Langford, Allen Whellans,
Paul Thomas and Andy O’Neill

1st place individual:
Paul Marsh from
Safety Aide Ltd

2nd place individual:
Marc Kerr



92 points. They were closely followed in second place by the team from Redexim UK with a score of 89.

The award for the top ranking individual, with a score of 40, went to Paul Marsh, from BAGMA’s longest standing Service Partner Safety Aide Ltd. Marc Kerr, sports turf contractor and part of Team GKB, finished second with 39 points.

Prizes were awarded by BAGMA General Manager, Nick Darking, alongside David Withers from headline sponsor ISEKI UK & Ireland.

▼ Below: 1st place team: GKB Machines
Above right: 1st place individual: Paul Marsh



Reflecting on the day, BAGMA’s Development Manager Richard Jenkins, commented “This event has really built on the success of last year, and it was just brilliant to see everybody networking and enjoying themselves, while also taking the golf incredibly seriously! We’d like to extend a big thank you to everybody who took the time to take part, along with all of our brilliant sponsors – ISEKI UK, Evopos UK Ltd, GKB Machines Ltd, Heming Engineering Ltd, Kubota (UK) Ltd, Lister Wilder Ltd, Novuna Business Finance, Redexim UK, Safety Aide Ltd and Troy (UK) Ltd.”

The next BAGMA Golf Day and Dinner will take place on Wednesday 24th September 2025, with tickets available soon.



We’re pleased to have raised £120 for our charity partner



Helping people in horticulture
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A thorough look at Thorough Examination Training



by
Dave Henshaw
D Henshaw
Training Services



BAGMA are proud to offer a wide range of industry specific training courses - designed, developed and delivered to bring benefit to members and non-members alike working together with industry stakeholders, the Health & Safety Executive, dealers, manufacturers and other training industry bodies.

BAGMA's training is tailored to the needs of agricultural, construction, garden machinery and groundcare businesses.

One of the most popular courses is Thorough Examination, covering procedures including inspection methods, recording inspections, certification and related legislation to enable you to conduct inspections and complete the required reports and risk assessments with confidence.

Each course starts by asking, "What is a Thorough Examination and why is it required?"

The answer is safety - to keep machines in a safe state to prevent accidents and injury.

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) states:

"Thorough examination of industrial lift trucks is required under health and safety law: LOLER 1998, which covers lifting equipment and PUWER 1998, which deals with all other safety-related items, such as brakes, steering and tyres. Your regular inspections as part of a preventive maintenance scheme or scheduled service are not a thorough examination."

Thorough Examination is the name given to the inspection of lifting machines and equipment which covers both Lifting Operations and Lifting Equipment Regulations 1998 (LOLER) and the Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations 1998 (PUWER). Any inspection that covers only LOLER could leave the machine owner liable to HSE enforcement under PUWER regulations and vice versa.

The course is particularly relevant for operators of:

- Counterbalanced Industrial Lift Trucks
- Telescopic Material Handlers
- Rough Terrain Lift Trucks
- Mobile Elevating Work Platforms (MEWPS)
- Construction/Plant machinery/ Equipment
- Fore-end Loaders
- Chains & slings
- Lifting attachments & accessories
- Dumpers/Bulldozers/Loader shovels

The timeline for inspection depends upon the usage of the machine and the environment. Most machines will require an inspection every 12 months but it can be as often as every 6 months if it is used for lifting people or every 4 months if the machine is used for more than 80 hours a week.

The engineer carrying out the examination should be very familiar with the operation of the machine so that they can check all safety aspects thoroughly. If an engineer is not familiar with a particular safety system, can they really inspect it to ensure it is working correctly?

The course covers the requirements by the HSE for the inspection of machinery, the competencies required by an engineer and the requirements for report and checklists which ensure all aspects of each machine are checked.

The inspection checklist is split into sections and sub sections and the course packs contain guidance notes which detail each requirement.

For example, the 'Braking' checklist will include visual checks, cables and linkages, pedals and levers, performance, parking and service brakes.

Looking specifically at the visual checks required, this would include visually inspecting all visible hydraulic or pneumatic hoses, piping or components for leaks, corrosion and signs of potential failure. The security of mountings should also be inspected.

After going through the requirements for inspection, timelines, competencies, documents and other aspects of the Thorough Inspection process, the engineers then operate the machine to check it over using the checklist. As well as the engineers seeing how the process takes place, this allows them to ask advice and seek clarification on real life issues which affect machines in the workplace.

Candidates will be continually assessed to meet the requirements of the scheme through the BAGMA / CFTS accreditation process. Look for the distinctive CFTS (Consolidated Fork Truck Services) mark: it's your guarantee that a Thorough Examination is full and valid under law and will be carried out by a fully trained engineer in accordance with strict quality procedures.

For more information visit:
www.bagma.com/training
or contact Kari Hearn on
info@bagma.com

Meet the new BAGMA Trainer: Geoff Wall - Owner & Director of Powering Hub

What is your industry experience and background?

I did an apprenticeship in lift truck maintenance and repair, spending 6 years maintaining forklifts, access and automated cranes. I then gained my Trainer qualifications and worked for a private training company teaching Level 2, 3 & 4 lift truck maintenance and repair, as well as leading basic and advanced courses in fundamental engineering like hydraulics, electrics and engines. I spent a large portion of my time also teaching the Thorough Examination Course on behalf of CFTS which I did for 2 years. For the past 3 years I have been working for JCB's south-west dealer providing technical support and training for their engineers.



Examination course and the Handover & Installation course when required. I would like to help BAGMA develop their courses and keep striving to be better, possibly even looking at more and new course options for their members in the future.

How would you describe your training style?

I like to think I take a coaching and practical approach to my training, encouraging and motivating engineers to be problem solvers and leave the training room more informed than they were when they arrived.

My two main aims when training are to impart new information and to have fun.

Why, in your view, is technical training so important in our industry?

Without technical training how can we expect to keep pushing forward with a constantly changing industry; new technologies, safer ways of working and legislation changes? It is important that we are always striving to improve

and giving guidance to members so that they have the skills and confidence to keep improving what they know and how they operate. We should be encouraging everyone to be better than they were the day before.

Besides delivering BAGMA training, what do you do to keep busy?

In my spare time I am a Staff Sergeant Instructor in the Oxfordshire Army Cadet Force, part of the British Army's youth organisation, and command a Detachment in the West of Oxfordshire. This role requires me to plan and deliver the training needs of cadets ranging in age from 12 to 18, alongside the development and leadership of my team of instructors.

I am also an Operations and IT volunteer for a charity called Turner Syndrome Support Society (TSSS), where I assist in the running and set up of IT systems for both international and UK based conferences.

In addition, I have a keen interest in sport and play amateur rugby for Hungerford Rugby Club (HRFC).



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by
Toyah Marshall
WorkNest

Social Media in the Workplace

Social media has transformed the way we communicate, allowing individuals to share their thoughts and opinions with a vast audience, regardless of geographical boundaries. However, given the ease at which a private comment or post can be shared with the possibility of it going viral, the damage can be significant and happen swiftly. Toyah Marshall, WorkNest's Head of Team and Solicitor dives into some interesting findings around social media in the workplace and what you should be aware of as an employer.

According to our poll of 507 employers, almost half (45.8%) have taken formal action against an employee due to their social media use or have considered doing so. As social media becomes more ingrained into daily life, the potential for issues in the workplace is escalating. Whether employees are venting about work, posting potentially offensive personal views, or scrolling while on the clock, staff's social media activity can impede productivity, affect workplace dynamics and put your reputation at risk.

Depending on how employees use social media, it can pose several risks to organisations. Potential risks include:

- Reputational damage to organisations or individuals
- Breaches of confidentiality and GDPR
- Vicarious liability
- Unsavoury views vs hate speech
- The context of comments made at home versus at work

There are a number of laws that apply to the use of social media. In an employment context, the three primary pieces of legislation to be aware of are:

- The Employment Rights Act 1996
- The Equality Act 2010
- General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and the Data Protection Act (1998)

In addition to legislation, there is an abundance of case law addressing its use. This body of case law provides valuable insights into circumstances when personal use of social media outside of work can result in a fair or unfair dismissal and what amounts to reputational damage from employee use of social media.

To help you manage this complex topic, we've put together a guide to Social Media in the Workplace, which breaks down the legislation and explores five significant case decisions to help employers tackle common scenarios without falling foul of the law. Plus, it contains some practical steps which can help you to prevent problems in your organisation.

We understand that Employment Law is complex and it can be difficult to manage, so this is just a reminder that WorkNest is here to help BAGMA members with any issues or queries you might have regarding this topic, as well as any other Employment Law, HR or Health & Safety matters.

If you require further support don't hesitate to contact WorkNest on 01244 667 249 or email:

bagmahr@worknest.com for Employment Law and HR advice or bagmahs@worknest.com for Health & Safety support.

Download the guide here



The Big Switch Off

Virgin Media O2 (VMO2) have announced major changes to their 2G and 3G networks. Jane Bates of Utility Options explains what action consumers should take to prevent disruption.

What is happening?

In 2025 VMO2 plan to phase out 3G services, and with recent 3G switch-off trials successfully completed, they remain on track to switch off 3G fully by the end of next year. This is a move that will reduce energy consumption and deliver enhanced speeds and reliability for customers with more efficient 4G and 5G technologies.

VMO2 are now assessing the future of their older 2G network and are progressing with work which will move traffic away from the 2G network.

What is changing?

2G won't be turning off completely as, unlike their 3G network, it will play an important role in carrying emergency calls in areas without 4G coverage and supporting data traffic for Internet of Things (IoT) communications, including smart metering.

Apart from Telefonica Spain, they will also withdraw the 2G and 3G inbound roaming services on the 1st October 2025 for all international partners, redirecting roaming users to their more efficient 4G, 5G and LPWAN (Low Power Wide Area Networks) networks.

What do consumers need to do?

If you think you may be affected by the changes, you should look to upgrade to 4G, 5G or LPWAN capable devices with 4G calling/VoLTE enabled for voice before the 31st December 2025.

Consumers also need to ensure they are not reliant on 3G after the 31st December 2025 and not reliant on 2G/3G inbound roaming services with O2 after the 30th September 2025.

Utility Options are proud to be a BAGMA Service Provider, offering help with the best utility solutions for members. For any queries regarding Virgin Media O2's announcement or help with upgrading your device or SIM, please get in contact via:

mobiles@utility-options.co.uk or **01745 703703**



by
Jane Bates
Utility Options



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Looking forward to an exciting future

Carr's Billington is one of the UK's leading agricultural suppliers, its rich history dating back to the 19th century with the Billington Group being founded in 1858 by Edward Billington and Carr's Group by Johnathan Carr in 1831. After initially joining forces in 1999, the full acquisition by Edward Billington & Son of the Carr's Group Plc interests took place in 2022. We sat down with Tom Jobling (Machinery Director), Dale Shaw (Dealer Principle) and Ian Gate (Machinery Director - retiring) to chat more about the business, its history and some of the challenges they have faced.

Is Carr's Billington a family-owned business?

IG: Under the Billington Group, we remain a family-owned business today and despite being a large company, there is very much a close-knit feeling among the team.

What are the core areas of Carr's Billington, and specifically what types of machinery or equipment do you specialise in?

IG: The business specialises in four key areas; Retail, Feed, Machinery and Fuel. Carr's Billington is all about supporting rural people whether that's through our range of country stores, feed and fuel supply or the latest machinery to get the job done. Our machinery division dates back to the 1980s when we were part of John Deere dealer, Oliver and Snowden. In 1994 we took on Massey Ferguson and remain one of the largest Massey Ferguson-only dealers in the UK

today. Our core brands alongside Massey Ferguson are Krone, Weidemann, BvL, Yamaha, Horsch, Corvus and Can-Am. We also hold the Ferris, Stihl and Segway brands for our groundcare customers.



In which areas of the country does Carr's Billington operate?

DS: Our retail, fuel and feed areas of the business operate all nationwide but specifically in machinery we have 11 depots across Northern England and the Scottish borders. We have one depot that is Groundcare only, another

is ATV only and another is a non-Massey Ferguson franchise. The remaining eight are all Massey Ferguson depots with our complimentary brands supported from these as well.

Our geographical area for machinery runs from Stranraer to Alnwick and down to Whitby and back across to the Cumbrian coast.

Machinery and Technology

Who are your primary customers for ag and groundcare machinery?

IG: Our primary customer base consists of farmers and the agricultural community, but we also serve commercial clients such as local authorities and sports grounds for our groundcare equipment. While our retail stores carry popular brands like

Stihl, we've noticed that most of these purchases are made by individuals within the rural community who are familiar with us as a trusted machinery dealer. They value our after-sales support, the fact we have a dedicated salesperson and the quality of the brands we carry. Although some stores attract a diverse customer base, we've found that homeowners often opt for more affordable option from retailers like B&Q due to their price-focused approach.

What are some of your most popular products?

DS: The Massey Ferguson tractor range is always popular, it's a great brand with a good heritage. But, in general, anything related to grass/silage is hugely popular and a big area for us, whether that's implements or trailers. Another key product line is ATV's, we currently sell around 450 new and used units a year.

What technologies have you implemented to help with the running of the machinery operations and provide good customer service at Carr's Billington?

DS: We've recently introduced the IBCOS Gold app in select workshops to streamline job management. This app allows engineers to record all job-related information and track their working hours, minimising errors and improving efficiency. We plan to implement this app across all our sites. Additionally, we've developed a dedicated sales admin app to manage demonstration information, branch transfers, loans and sales centrally.



Over the past five years, we've invested in a comprehensive CRM system, with the next phase scheduled for company-wide deployment by Christmas. This system has significantly improved quote management and remote management of sales representatives, especially in locations without dedicated machinery managers.

All of these changes are designed to enhance our overall efficiency and streamline processes for our team. We want them to be able to focus on their primary tasks and provide the best



service to our customers. The next step involves integrating our systems with manufacturer platforms to enhance reporting accuracy and provide our sales team with real-time machine pricing information.

IG: This increased transparency will also enable our sales representatives to confidently negotiate deals on-farm, reducing the need for management involvement. This empowers both our team and our customers.

What are some of the biggest challenges facing the machinery industry today, and how is Carr's Billington addressing these challenges?

IG: Machinery imports, particularly from countries like China, are posing a significant challenge across the industry. While we feel we represent high-quality brands, the increasing focus on price over quality is making it difficult to compete. The influx of cheaper imports is saturating the market, we want to continue to grow and sell more but it has felt tough with these additional options for the consumer. However, I believe that this trend will eventually reach a tipping point. There must be a balance between cost and value, and there will always be a compromise somewhere.

DS: Another big challenge that we all face is the cost of everything! Interest rates have been rising and with that we have to be mindful of the stock we carry. We have been actively trying to reduce our machinery stock levels to a manageable value.

IG: Dealers and manufacturers need to work together on stock levels. The burden of carrying excessive inventory is unsustainable for dealers.

What are some of the key trends driving growth in the machinery industry, and how is Carr's Billington positioned to capitalise on these trends?

TJ: Technology is a huge one, and we must keep up with it. We need to stay on top of the latest advancements and offer customers a comprehensive package, including the machine and essential

"We recognise the vital connection between sales and aftersales. Strong sales depend on excellent aftersales support and vice versa."

solutions like guidance systems. I don't feel like anyone has really got the technology bit right yet and it's moving so fast all the time which makes it harder. We've recently created a dedicated role to manage

our technology strategy, recognising its growing importance in the future.

Do you think the buying process in farming has changed?

DS: As much as people are exploring more options based on price, I think there is still a great deal of brand loyalty out there. We find that we have a loyal customer base who love the products we sell but also trust us to provide quality customer service. We've been consistent through a lot of changes, and I think customers appreciate that. They want reliability and dependability at a time when there is a lot of change.

TJ: I would say that the loyalty to the dealership wins hands down, every time, and that comes down to the people. Your service relationship with a customer



“If we can find people with the right attitude and drive, we can teach them everything they need to know about a tractor or a mower!”

is usually down to the whole Aftersales Team and we are really good at keeping up that relationship. We also have the added strength of customers dealing with us through our other divisions too and that makes the relationship strong as we can offer a complete package.

How important is aftersales to you as a business?

IG: For a long time, our primary focus was to ‘sell sell’, and service tagged along behind us, but we have grown so much that we have had to put more of a focus on aftersales.

TJ: Our aftersales business has seen significant growth in recent years. By dedicating more resources, working closely with our teams and expanding our depot network, we’ve doubled our aftersales revenue in just five years. We recognise the vital connection between sales and aftersales. Strong sales depend on excellent aftersales support and vice versa. We aim to achieve a 70/30 split between sales and service revenue, where 70% comes from sales and 30% from service/parts. We believe this balance is key to our long-term success.



How does Carr's Billington address sustainability within its operations?

TJ: Sustainability is a big deal for our whole company. We have a special team just for sustainability in the Billington Group. Since we make food and work with many of the big names in the food industry, sustainability is really important to us. Right now, we’re testing HVO (Hydrotreated Vegetable Oil) fuel in all our HGVs. It’s great to see other manufacturers looking into similar things. Our retail stores are run on green energy as well as many of our offices. We want to be ahead of the curve when it comes to being as sustainable as possible, so this is a project that’s always evolving within our company.

DS: We find that our sustainability practices are becoming more of a topic of conversation with our dairy customers because it is part of their milk contract too.

Company Culture and Values

How many staff do you have in total?

TJ: In total, the Billington Group employs over 1,800 people across the country. Specifically in machinery, we have over 130 people with 30 in sales, 55 across our workshops then parts and management staff as well. We do run fairly lean but everyone works incredibly hard and it works for us.

How do you find recruitment within the industry?

TJ: It can be hard but we have some very loyal team members. Our workshop manager in Carlisle has just celebrated 30 years with us at Carr's Billington but worked 20 years previous to that in County Motors which was acquired by Carr's Agriculture so really he has just celebrated 50 years! The last three new machinery branches we have built have been exciting to recruit for as it has offered people a chance to join the company and build the business with us.



We are huge believers in mindset when it comes to recruitment; we hear it all the time that people cannot find technicians and that is largely true, but we now try and look to other industries to recruit and we have a consistent stream of AGCO apprentices within the company, with seven in total this year. If we can find people with the right attitude and drive, we can teach them everything they need to know about a tractor or a mower!

IG: Progression within the company is also important - we want to retain that experience and knowledge and see members of the team progress further in the company. Take us three for example, we all worked our way up the business, I like to run with the motto; ‘Everyone has got the opportunity to be the boss.’

How do you find the apprenticeship schemes available to young people?

TJ: The AGCO apprenticeship scheme is fantastic and we are very grateful we have access to this. It supports local colleges and is a massive success story when you look at the intake and how that’s built up.

IG: With apprentices in general you really have to be with them the whole way through and ensure you are keeping them on board because naturally only half of the ones that begin will actually

come back and continue once qualified. That is fairly generic across the country, but we invest a lot of time into them and it’s something we are passionate about continuing.

How do you instil a positive company culture at Carr's Billington and how do you manage such a vast team?

DS: Although we are a large company we don't like to run with a big corporate culture. We like each depot to have their own individuality, it's all about people working with people and those relationships they have with our customers.

TJ: The ethos for us is we want one of our customers to go into one of our branches and it feels like a single outlet dealer, with the same familiar faces and the friendly service that they are used to. We have customers who have dealt with us for over 30 years and we want them to receive the personal touch on every occasion.

What's important to you about being a BAGMA member?

TJ: BAGMA is a valuable asset for machinery dealers like us. Having a dedicated support network specifically for the machinery industry is crucial. We all face similar challenges and require specialised assistance, and BAGMA provides an excellent platform for



addressing these needs. As a member of the BAGMA Council, I appreciate the opportunity to get together with other dealers and bring forward issues that BAGMA can help us to resolve.

Have you utilised many BAGMA services?

TJ: We rely on BAGMA's Handover and Installation training across our depots. This training has been invaluable in ensuring our teams are equipped with the knowledge and skills to effectively handle new machinery, from proper installation to efficient operation.

www.carrs-billington.com

Closing comment from Tom Jobling

“I would just like to take this opportunity to thank Ian Gate for his considerable contribution to Carr's Billington over the last 16+ years. He has overseen significant growth and development of the Machinery Division in that time and supported a very loyal and committed team throughout. He has also spent the last few years developing a team to pass the business onto, succession remains a problem for a lot of companies and Ian has had the foresight to grow the business in a way which makes handing over the reigns seamless.

As of September this year, Ian has stepped back from his full time role as Machinery Director and taken a consultancy role to support us for the foreseeable. I have taken over as Machinery Director, closely supported by Dale Shaw as Dealer Principle. A baptism of fire in a lot of ways as we face significant pressures as a network and in Agriculture generally but we are very excited for the future and the various projects ongoing. We are very lucky to have Ian's ongoing support and the backing of a very driven and proactive team throughout the business.”

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LAMMA Show 2025 registration now open

The UK's largest exhibition for agricultural machinery, technology, and equipment innovation is back for 2025.

Farmers, farm managers and agricultural professionals—mark your calendars! Registration for the highly anticipated LAMMA Show 2025 is now officially open. Taking place on 15-16 January 2025 at the NEC Birmingham, LAMMA is the UK's largest and most influential event dedicated to showcasing the latest agricultural machinery, technology and equipment innovations.

Celebrating over four decades of success, LAMMA brings together more than 600 exhibitors from across the globe, offering visitors the opportunity to explore cutting-edge machinery and technology designed to revolutionise farming operations. With 40,000 visitors expected, LAMMA 2025 is an essential destination for farm owners, managers and operators looking to stay ahead of industry trends and drive the future of agriculture.

Why Attend LAMMA 2025?

Discover Innovation: From tractors to combines, arable machinery to grassland

equipment, LAMMA 2025 will feature the very best in agricultural advancements. Visitors will witness exclusive machinery launches, UK debuts and the latest innovations from both global brands and niche manufacturers, all under one roof.

Network with Industry Leaders: LAMMA is a leading platform for networking. Visitors will have the chance to meet like-minded professionals, exchange ideas and forge meaningful connections with industry experts, exhibitors and suppliers.

Gain Knowledge from Experts: Alongside the exhibition, LAMMA will offer a series of seminars and workshops led by industry thought-leaders. These sessions provide invaluable insights and practical advice on the latest industry trends, helping attendees futureproof their farming operations.

Stay Competitive in a Changing Market: In an ever-evolving agricultural landscape, staying informed on the latest technologies and market trends is crucial. LAMMA gives attendees access to the knowledge and tools needed to adapt, ensuring their businesses remain competitive and profitable.



Sarah Whittaker-Smith, Event Director of LAMMA, commented: "LAMMA is the UK's premier platform for agricultural machinery and innovation, and we're excited to open registration for the 2025 event. With more exhibitors and exciting product debuts than ever before, this year's show will be a must-visit for anyone involved in farming. We encourage everyone to register early to secure their place and take advantage of everything LAMMA has to offer."

Register Now: To secure your place at the UK's premier agricultural event, register for your free ticket at www.lammashow.com

High-calibre visitors and innovation at SALTEX 2024

SALTEX has solidified its status as the ultimate event for the entire grounds management industry, putting high-calibre visitors and cutting-edge innovation at the forefront.

This year's exhibition at the NEC Birmingham, the 78th edition, drew

thousands of industry professionals and volunteers, where in-depth conversations led to strengthened relationships.

Visitors were able to see more than 30 new products making their UK debut, underscoring SALTEX as the premier platform for innovation. With over 20% of exhibitors attending for the first time, SALTEX continues to attract fresh talent and businesses eager to connect with influential industry leaders.

The high calibre of visitors this year underlines SALTEX's status as a must-attend event. Almost 80% of attendees were senior decision-makers, with visitors from Premier League football clubs including Liverpool FC, Chelsea FC, Manchester City, Arsenal and Tottenham Hotspur, as well as world-class sports venues from around Europe.

Additionally, SALTEX welcomed representatives from leading educational institutions including Harrow School, Myerscough College, Eton College and Magdalen College School, alongside

prominent universities such as Oxford University and Cambridge University.

Many local authorities were also represented as well as notable estates such as Sandringham and The Royal Parks.

Geoff Webb, Grounds Management Association CEO said: "We're really pleased with the success of SALTEX 2024. Each year, we work closely with the industry to ensure that SALTEX remains relevant, impactful and forward-thinking. Listening to our industry's needs and evolving the event to match those expectations is at the heart of what we do. This year's turnout, the quality of conversations and the level of innovation on display reflect that commitment."

SALTEX 2025 will return to its traditional slot of 12-13 November 2025 and will also see a relocation to Halls 17, 18 and 19 at the NEC, introducing a refreshed layout designed to enhance the experience for both visitors and exhibitors.



BAGMA members invited to attend BTME

The BIGGA Turf Management Exhibition (BTME) represents a fantastic opportunity for members of BAGMA to network, gain insights and stay at the forefront of the turf care industry.

Held in the storied surroundings of the Harrogate Convention Centre, BTME is the well-established trade show and education programme presented by the British & International Golf Greenkeepers Association. Taking place from 21 to 23 January 2025, the event sees leading brands in the sector fill five exhibition halls and is supplemented by a world-renowned educational offering, Continue to Learn.

For BAGMA members, there is a golden opportunity to explore the latest advancements in turf machinery, tools and technology. Whether you're involved in the design, manufacture or sale of equipment, BTME is a fantastic platform to connect with your target audience, discover cutting-edge innovations and strengthen your industry presence.

Over 150 exhibitors will showcase a wide range of products including mowers,

aerators, sprayers and more. BTME offers direct access to the latest machinery and tools that are shaping the future of turf care. BAGMA members can take advantage of exclusive deals, gain first hand demonstrations of new equipment and meet with potential business partners.

Beyond the exhibition floor, BTME's educational seminars and workshops provide an invaluable learning experience. Sessions cover everything from sustainability practices to the latest turf care techniques, ensuring BAGMA members stay informed on trends impacting both the agricultural and garden machinery sectors. The show's extensive networking events also offer the chance to form new business connections and explore collaborative opportunities.

As a BAGMA member, attending BTME is an investment in your professional



growth and business success. It's not just about viewing products – it's about building relationships, staying informed about the industry's future and enhancing your business offerings.

You can find BAGMA at BTME 2025 on stand 648 in Hall 6.



A new era of CropTec

CropTec is the leading forum for the arable sector, paving the way in advancing technology and futureproofing the farming industry. The show delivers key information and innovative practices to help arable farmers plan for future challenges and opportunities. Taking place at NAEK Stoneleigh, Warwickshire from 27-28 November, this show helps farmers discover how the most recent advancements in arable farming are shaping the future of the arable industry.

Shining a light on critical industry topics, from crop protection and production to soil health, sustainable farming and

diversification, this platform brings together arable and mixed farmers from across the UK to share their experiences, best practices and valuable insights. During the show, visitors will delve into industry leading innovations such as gene-editing for crops, AI and robotics, automated weather systems and controlled environmental agriculture, ensuring that attendees are equipped with the knowledge and tools needed to thrive in the future.

Attendees will have an exclusive opportunity to gain valuable insights from esteemed experts in the arable sector. Industry leaders, government bodies and

farmers bring their extensive knowledge and experience in arable farming to our educational hub including conferences and workshops, providing practical advice and invaluable expertise.

This year, three keynote theatres are introduced focused on Innovation, Knowledge and Profit, offering practical advice to help farmers navigate an evolving landscape. CropTec provides actionable advice to futureproof their business.

Visitors can also:

- Explore innovative ideas such as gene-editing for food and crops, the role of AI and robotics in arable, automated weather systems and controlled environment agriculture.
- Hear from arable farmers across the UK, as they share their experiences in adopting different farming systems for their business.
- Visit the Sprayer Showroom to view the latest sprayers on the market.

Claim your free ticket here



Iseki UK & Ireland hosts successful 2024 Dealer Conference

Iseki UK & Ireland welcomed over 120 attendees from across the UK, Ireland and Europe to their 2024 Dealer Conference for a combination of outdoor training, seminars and product announcements.

Sixty dealers representing the UK, Ireland and Iceland were joined by the Managing Director of Iseki Europe, Mr Ota and Mr Suzuki from Iseki Japan at the renowned Forest of Arden Hotel & Country Club for the one-day conference.

The event provided a dynamic platform for dealers to engage in hands-on and practical demonstrations of Iseki's latest machinery, giving attendees the opportunity to see the equipment in action and understand its capabilities in real-world applications.

On either side of the practical demonstrations, attendees also

participated in a series of informative seminars led by Iseki's technical and commercial experts. These sessions covered key industry trends, new product developments and effective strategies for maximising dealer success in an increasingly competitive market.

Speaking about the success of the conference, David Withers, Managing Director of Iseki UK and Ireland, said: "We are thrilled with the level of engagement and enthusiasm from our dealers at this



year's conference. The demonstrations and seminars have hopefully empowered our dealers with the tools and knowledge they



need to better serve their customers and win against our competitors."

"The Forest of Arden have been fantastic hosts, and particularly their Garden and Estates Manager, Rob Rowson, who provided us with a suitable area to demonstrate all of the machinery which really ensured the day was a success."

The Iseki UK and Ireland 2024 Dealer Conference marks a continued commitment to innovation, dealer support and excellence in service, further strengthening the company's presence in the UK, Ireland and Europe.

2024 British Farming Award Winners

For twelve years the British Farming Awards has been shining a light on the best in British Farming. During this annual event Britain's farming industry comes together to celebrate the achievements of its contemporaries. Pioneering farmers and industry professionals across all sectors were highlighted through fifteen categories such as technology, science, food production and sustainability. With a further three special recognition awards being announced during the evening.



This year saw a record number of award entries, painstakingly shortlisted by our team of judges, with winners of each category being crowned during the ceremony held on 17th October at VOX Birmingham.

Agri-tech Innovator of the Year
PES Technologies, Norfolk

Agricultural Student of the Year
Holly Bonner, Bridgwater & Taunton College - University Centre Somerset

Arable Farmer of the Year
Nicholas Watts, Vine House Farm, Spalding

Beef Farmer of the Year
James Herrick, Herrick Partnership, Leicestershire

Content Creator of the Year
William Murray, W&M Brown, Edinburgh

Contractor of the Year
Nigel Harper, ND Harper Limited, Cheshire

Dairy Farmer of the Year
Tom & Karen Halton, Halton Farms Ltd, Cheshire

Diversification of the Year (Small to Medium)
Cheryl Reeves, Agri-cation CIC, Wrexham

Diversification of the Year (Large)
Ed Foster, The Rhynd, JLW Foster, Fife

Family Farming Business of the Year
The Ladds Family, R & E Ladds, Cumbria

Farm Worker of the Year
Andy Lambert, Hellifield Highland Fold, North Yorkshire

Grassland Farmer of the Year
Andy Goodwin, D & P Hollinshead, Cheshire

New Entrant Award
Against the Odds: Sam & Samantha Edwards, Edwards Farming Partnership, Dorset

Sheep Farmer of the Year
Oliver Harrison, Aimshaugh, Cumbria

Sustainable Farmer of the Year
Johnny Wake, Courteenhall Farms, Northamptonshire

Outstanding Contribution to British Agriculture
Andy & Lynda Eadon - Len's Light

Farming Hero
Flying the Flag for British Agriculture: Abi Reader - NFU Cymru Deputy President

Service to the Industry
Raymond Lund



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Update to test requirements

As part of compliance for the whole chain of plant protection product (PPP) use, HSE pesticide enforcement officers (PEO) have the role of checking all official controls are in place. From importers, manufacturers and distributors right through to the operator applying the product.

Visits made to the businesses using and applying PPP's are carried out in all sectors, but it is mainly in the horticulture and amenity sectors where clarification of test requirements of certain types of equipment has been necessary. The term 'pedestrian' equipment falls in this category along with knapsack and handheld where a statutory test is not required, however these still must be inspected on a regular basis. Over time the complexity of a number of these machines has evolved that some are now as sophisticated, and comparable in size, to tractor-mounted equipment that is required to be tested.

Following discussions with CRD terminology has now been added to the guidance, which is explained as follows; equipment that does require an NSTS test now includes manually propelled or self-propelled trolley type equipment with three or more wheels and a motorised pump. These machines fall in the same category as boom sprayers which are 3m and under, slug pellet and micro-granular applicators, seed treating and weed wipers. Equipment that does not require a test are pedestrian sprayers with a maximum of two wheels or with a manually pressurised pump. To assist operators in meeting the requirements of regular inspections NSTS have check sheets available on their website which also includes somewhere to record a calibration.

All other equipment types and timescales of test and re-test remain the same. For clarification on other types not listed please email info@nsts.org.uk and our team will be pleased to help.

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Jim Croxton, CEO of the British and International Golf Greenkeepers Association (BIGGA)

Discussing recognition, recruitment and what attendees can expect from BTME 2025

Jim, thanks for your time. Firstly, please introduce yourself.

You're very welcome. I'm Jim and I have been the chief executive officer of BIGGA for more than 13 years. BIGGA is a member's association for golf greenkeepers predominantly. We are part of the overall governance of golf in the UK and are also well known for organising the BIGGA Turf Management Exhibition (BTME), in Harrogate, each January.

How did you get into your current role? What's your background?

I've been involved with golf pretty much all my life. When I was 6, my parents took over a bankrupt golf business in Northamptonshire and we moved to live on the course. In total, the family ran the club for over 40 years and when I was old enough I did practically every job within the club at one time or another. Following university, I got a job working for the PGA, initially running professional golf tournaments before moving into various other commercial roles. I was there for 16 years until I was presented with the opportunity to become BIGGA's third ever CEO.

What are the biggest changes have you seen in the industry over that time?

There are many! The golf industry struggled in regard to participation from the early part of this century up until the pandemic in 2020. This meant that many facilities were financially unstable leading to poor working conditions and less investment in equipment and infrastructure. Additionally, golf was slower than some sports to tackle safeguarding and equality. Happily, post-pandemic growth remains, and the majority of facilities are far more stable. SafeGolf has also tackled the safeguarding issue superbly and great progress is being made in ED&I.

Now, climate change and the workforce crisis both present existential threats that the sport has to overcome.

What are BIGGA doing to tackle some of the current challenges such as industry recognition and recruitment?

These are our biggest priorities. In terms of recognition, we have two key focusses;

firstly to work with our fellow governing bodies to demonstrate the key role greenkeepers play and positively influence salaries, welfare and governance. We have a concurrent strategy to influence golfers via initiatives like 'Thank a Greenkeeper Day' and our 'Your Course' magazine which goes to every golf club. This we hope will improve retention of staff.

Recruitment is a separate challenge. Our First Green initiative which helps golf clubs engage with schools by hosting careers trips with approved STEM education plans is already bearing fruit and we are also working to become an approved industry for armed forces settlement.

With BTME and Continue to Learn returning to Harrogate Convention Centre in January, what can visitors expect from next year's event?

All the fun that BTME normally provides and then some! We're ahead of our targets in terms of stand sales and conference bookings so it looks to be a great event again. Another unexpected post-pandemic impact seems to be a strong desire for face-to-face business interaction and where better to do that than Harrogate in January? The combination of a superb exhibition, a world-class education programme and the networking opportunities all over the town make it a must-visit event for end users, dealers and manufacturers.

This year we are also introducing some additional initiatives to attract more club general managers and equipment technicians to the event.

In your view, what is the significance of associations like BIGGA and BAGMA in supporting those working within our industries?

I'm a huge believer in the power of co-operation and a collective voice.



Associations like us and BAGMA can take the combined might of all of our respective memberships and have our voices heard in a way that individual members cannot. The key is then that our members walk the walk while we talk the talk. For example, we tell the golf industry loud and clear that greenkeepers are talented, qualified and passionate about their profession and their golf courses. In return we are seeing standards of agronomy and presentation improve every year which improves the golf experience.



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