



Henton and Chattell's Beeston Shop

**After eighty years as a family business Henton and Chattell, the UK's largest garden machinery parts distributor and a major independent grass machinery distributor, continues to follow the tradition of 'putting the customer first'**

"MAKING the customer the number one priority was the great motivator of my grandfather, Leslie Henton, when he started with his business partner, Charles Chattell, in 1931. Today I think it remains one of the key factors that marks us out as being different within the industry," says Peter Chaloner, managing director of Henton and Chattell.

"They started their ironmongery business in Beeston during the Great Depression which was a very brave move. Ironically it was the onset of the war that drove the move into grass machinery," he explained.

"My grandfather won a contract to supply Allen Scythe mowers to keep the grass cut short on the growing number of air-

fields in Nottinghamshire and Lincolnshire. When peace came the business focussed exclusively on the sector."

From its headquarters in Nottingham Peter and his team, which includes his wife Elizabeth who is company secretary, supply more than 1,500 dealers across the UK with parts and machinery. The company offers distinct differences from its competitors, with over 70,000 sq. feet of warehousing and employing a team of 64 people including a dedicated parts technical team

At a time when other parts of the industry are moving away from this service, Henton and Chattell continues to maintain its team.

"Peter designed one of the industry's first electronic ordering systems. It was based on disks and a modem and it revolutionised our business and our dealers," said Elizabeth.

Last year the firm launched its web-based Quickview system which is generally regarded as being one of the most successful in the sector. Again, Peter was at the forefront of the in-house design team.

Today, more than 80% of all orders are received via Quickview and Henton and Chattell's proud boast is that all orders received before 3.00pm on a working day are despatched that night. The concept,

he believes, is a direct benefit to his dealers because it helps them to work more efficiently.

The OE brands they handle read like a Premier League directory of grass machinery companies. Henton and Chattell was one of the first customers of Briggs & Stratton when its 4-stroke petrol engines for lawnmowers and outdoor equipment first began to arrive from the United States more than 40 years ago.

"Briggs and Stratton is our most important parts brand. Their engines are fitted on to more than 70% of the machines we sell and it has always been a key franchise for us," says Peter. "It has been an integral part of the success of our business.

"I firmly believe that petrol powered lawn and garden machinery has a long-term and positive future. Briggs & Stratton



John Chaloner



Ploughing demonstration

**“ I firmly believe that petrol powered lawn and garden machinery has a long term and positive future ”**

**Peter Chaloner, managing director, Henton and Chattell**



are the world’s largest producers of these engines for our market and, like us, they constantly strive to innovate and improve performance. Their latest range of eco-friendly engines meet the increasingly complex international emission demands.”

He adds that working closely with Briggs & Stratton, ensures that their web parts system is always up to date. Peter believes firmly that because Quickview directly links orders and stock levels across more than 65,000 parts held in stock, automatically triggering reordering when levels reach a predestined level, is a major factor in his company’s continued success.

“When a customer orders a part it is a necessity. A business like ours simply cannot afford to be out of stock. It reflects

badly on us and our dealers. This was the mantra of my own father from whom I took over the running of the firm in 2002,” he says.

Henton and Chattell in its 80th year is increasing the number of exclusive brands that it stocks. A key feature in their selection process is ensuring that the products will add value for the dealers with good business margins.

In 2011 exclusive packages were agreed with Brill, Gardencare and Jonsered. The plan is to create a dealer support package for these brands that will help them build their presence in their local markets. The petrol powered ride-on and walk-behind lawnmowers across the three brands are all powered by Briggs and Stratton engines.

“We will continue to innovate our systems. The in-house design team is working on new and improved systems that share one common purpose - to help our dealers to run better, more efficient and more profitable businesses.

“Exclusive distribution agreements with quality brands that offer our dealers good margins will continue to be identified and we will, of course, work even more closely with our loyal suppliers.

“Although my grandfather would not understand the web or the latest technology, he would instantly recognise that his business principle of putting the customer first, remains at the forefront of our thinking,” adds Peter. “He would have liked that.”

# ALLETT

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The new Allett range of quality cylinder mowers will produce a beautiful, rolled striped finish to your lawn at an affordable price.



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