

Midlands-based dealer ET Breakwell is the latest company to join BIGGA's Greenkeeper Education and Development Fund as a member of the Golden Key Circle.

"Like BIGGA, we're committed to education and training," explained managing director Len Breakwell.

"The way things are we're going to have more and more reliance on the golf industry. We can see we've got to get more and more of our business from golf and we believe if we're seen by the greenkeepers to be supporting their association that they in turn will support us. It's a commercial decision, it's not that we give money up willy-nilly.

We've looked at it carefully; we like what the BIGGA do. In the amenity industry there isn't anybody that's doing what BIGGA are doing for their members. So full credit to them and we'd like to be associated with them as we think we're very good at what we do. We're very professional. It's only right that we should be alongside the professional Association."

As with the Association, 1994 promises to be a big year for ET Breakwell Ltd. Well known to most greenkeepers in and around



Breakwell joins the Golden Key Circle

the Birmingham area, the company was appointed one of the main dealers to the new Massey Ferguson grass equipment franchise. At the same time, it announced an expansion of territory for its long running Ransomes franchise.

These moves coincide with the news that Massey Ferguson's grass equipment division has been appointed as the exclusive distributor for Iseki products in

the UK and Ireland. This agreement will add the Iseki branded range of compact tractors to MF's grass equipment portfolio which also includes exclusive distribution rights for the professional grass and grounds maintenance machines made by Swiss manufacturer Bucher.

So, in one swift move, ET Breakwell have added Massey Ferguson, Iseki and Bucher products to its range. But, before they

start stocking the tractors and mowers, they buy in the spare parts.

"We will put the fast moving parts like blades, belts and bearings on the shelf before we get the new machines in the showroom. I believe you sell the next machine by the way you look after the first one," says Mr Breakwell.

As a further sign of Breakwell's growth, mower manufacturer Ransomes has extended the dealer's sales territory from the West Midlands, Warwickshire and Hereford and Worcester to include Oxfordshire, Bucks and Milton Keynes.

"It's been a hectic start to the new year," confesses Mr Breakwell. "These

new sales responsibilities have seen us take on extra staff and complete the construction of a further 14,000 sq ft of warehouse space to accommodate new parts and stock." This takes the total warehouse space up to 40,000 sq ft.

In the parts area, Breakwells have made large investments in computer technology which allows instant ordering and efficient stock updating from manufacturers. More than 27,000 of the fastest moving product lines



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Family-run concern is a one stop shop for grounds care maintenance

(worth about £300,000) are stocked while the computer gives details of a further 300,000 lines that are only a phone call away.

Using its own vehicle fleet, Breakwells makes regular spare parts deliveries in its area (roughly a 70-mile radius from its Shirley headquarters) and parts ordered by 4pm can be with the greenkeeper the next day.

"The turf care equipment market has changed radically over the last five years," comments Mr Breakwell. "Customers are far more discerning. They are looking for a quality product that matches their needs, plus a reliable dealer to provide a high level of support. Money saved on a discounted sale is quickly forgotten when a machine is lying idle and there is work to be done preparing a golf course for an important tournament. With over half a century of experience behind us, Breakwells are well aware of the extra pressures placed on greenkeepers today, but customers can be confident that we will be backing them all the way."

Employing 54 people and with a turnover of £6million, Breakwells is a family-run business – Len's father who founded the business in 1940 is still the chairman. They supply grass maintenance equipment and sports turf treatments to a wide variety of customers including golf courses, local authorities and contractors. Among these are The Belfry and Warwickshire and Oxfordshire golf courses. One of the dealer's first customers for the new MF 1200 compact tractors was Birmingham Botanical Gardens.

The business has been set up as a one stop shop for grounds care maintenance. As well as machinery, Breakwells supplies chemicals

and fertilisers, grass seed and a whole host of ancillary golf course equipment. Brand names include Amazone, Cushman, Hayter, Honda, Sisis, ICI, Fisons, and Rhone-Poulenc.

Machinery is also available for hire. This includes tractors, greens machines, fairway machines, machines for cutting the rough, plus specialist machines – ride-on aerating machines, core harvesters, vertidrains.

"We do this for two reasons: we've got to have demonstration kit and if we sell a club a major piece of equipment then we need to be able to back it up, because when it goes wrong, as any machine may do, we don't want to leave the greenkeeper in the lurch. This way we can loan him something if we can't repair it quickly," explains Mr Breakwell.

If this wasn't enough, the com-

pany is also a wholesaler and retailer for domestic mowers and garden machinery. But whether they're supplying a Qualcast mower to a little old lady or a Ransomes machine to a golf course, they pride themselves on the back-up they give.

"Success in the supply of turf care equipment hinges on the quality of your support services," remarks Mr Breakwell. "Machinery demands substantial investment and in the event of a problem, it has to be back up and running as quickly as possible." The company was the first grass equipment, fertiliser and chemical specialist to achieve ISO 9002:1987 (BS5750) quality standard which assures consistently high levels of customer service.

Eight fully-qualified, factory trained engineers are employed in the purpose-built workshop while

a well equipped mobile service unit – pictured below – is available for on-site repairs. There is also a service vehicle based in Oxfordshire to provide a speedy response to the southern part of its area.

The workshop boasts all the latest equipment and specialist tools together with extensive facilities for grinding.

After hearing about all the care and attention Breakwells give to golf courses it was surprising to hear that Len is not a golfer. "I like to watch the golf but I'm not a player – I don't have time," he says honestly. "And we don't have any members of staff who are keen golfers either."

So, Midlands greenkeepers, the next time a mechanic drops by to mend your machines, do the decent thing and convert him to this royal and ancient game.

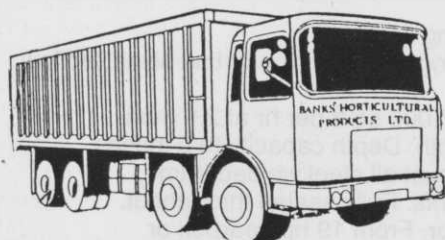


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