

Handheld Power Tools

make life just that much easier

James de Havilland, writes with his regular insight into current machinery

Hand held power tools, from brush cutters to hedge trimmers through to workshop drills and impact wrenches, continue to evolve.

The key issue is to keep an eye on developments as there may be one item of kit that is a solution to a specific problem you may have.

There are occasions when you are trying to solve one problem that you stumble up against the solution to another. This can be the case when looking for a specific item of equipment.

A trawl through the various cordless impact drivers available lead on to the realisation that there are a growing number of other cordless tools that may help get around specific jobs that have proven a hassle in the past.

As an example, a small bow saw or loppers are ideal for removing light overhanging branches, but it is often the case that the job gets complicated by the need to trim the branch back to remove dangerous cut ends. The job gets more involved, and then the removed material needs to be cut up so it can be easily removed. Before you know it, a five minute job has turned into a 60 minute chore.

With a light and easily portable battery powered chainsaw, you have the ideal next step up from a bow saw. These tools can tackle a reasonably sized branch and cut it off cleanly nearer the trunk or



Impact wrenches not only make some nut twirling jobs faster they also can make jobs easier too. A good example is when unwinding the bolts securing a rotary mower blade. The advantage of a battery powered unit is that it can easily be taken to the mower. The Spaldings Truecraft 13mm (1/2") drive 19.2v cordless impact wrench pictured will not have the same power as a pneumatic equivalent, but it is rated as developing 400 Nm (295 lb-ft) of torque.

larger branch. The same saw will quickly reduce the branch to more easily managed 'lumps'. As long as you remember to keep the battery charged, the saw will be ready at the touch of a button.

An enduring problem with all types of hand held equipment, however, is weight. At present battery powered kit still caters for the lighter end of hedge trimming and sawing. So although the future may see a battery powered brushcutter or hedge trimmer rivalling a petrol powered unit in the future, it could be a long wait. Electric power may not resolve another issue, this being the actual weight of the tool.

What may help with making tools less tiring to use are the backpack mounted support systems from Overton (UK) and DJ Turfcare Equipment. These units essentially use a support cord to take some of the weight of a tool, reduce the load carried by the operator's arms and shoulders. They look a bit odd, but they really do work.

RIGHT: Some items of hand-held equipment are pretty tiring or even tricky to operate. The Easy-Lift from Overton (UK) employs a backpack mounted support arm to take some of the weight of the tool being supported. This makes working with a pole saw much easier. The Easy-Lift can also be operated with other tools to include a brushcutter and hedge trimmer.

FAR RIGHT: The elephant's Trunk from DJ Turfcare Equipment is designed to reduce the weight of handheld equipment to the equivalent of 1Kg - the support system taking some of the tool's weight from the operator's arms and passing it to the backpack. Apart from reducing weight, the vibration passing back to the operator is also reduced.





The Makita BUC121Z 14.4v Li-Ion cordless chainsaw has a cutting capacity of 115mm. Weighing a mere 2.4kg and fitted with an automatic chain oiler, this diminutive unit is small light and portable, making it an ideal unit to carry in a vehicle for small pruning the tasks - often needed when mowing close to trees and shrubs. Note bar end guard. This considerably reduces the chance of kickback.



The Makita BGA450 14.4v Li-Ion 115mm cordless angle grinder can share the same battery as the chainsaw. Suitable for cutting, grinding and sanding, this tool could be ideal for those who need to touch up rotary mower blades on site. Not needing a mains cable also makes it easier to get to difficult to access areas, angle grinders often helping to speed repairs by cutting off stubborn fasteners.



The Makita LXT battery powered blower at first seems a little too small to be of much value to professional operators. A blower, however, is one of those tools that can be used in more ways than its job description. As an example, these tools can be used to help clear debris from a mower radiator, gently blow away clippings that have strayed into a bunker or even clear dew. The fact the tool is cordless improves the chances of it finding a useful job. This unit has a volume flow of 2.3m³/min at a pressure of up to 72m/sec. All from a tool that weights well under 2kg.

