

## RIGHT DOWN THE LINE

### *First Class all the way with GreenMech.*

On 18 March GreenMech held a launch of their new Multi-Task 120 unit which features their patented Safe-Trak technology. As launches go, I have been to a few but GreenMech take some beating, as they never fail to put on a well planned and interesting day for their guests, and this one was no exception.

We arrived at the GreenMech factory in Kings Coughton in Warwickshire and had the opportunity to chat with other customers, GreenMech staff from both home and abroad, and distributors from many countries such as Germany, Denmark, Spain, Ireland, Netherlands, Belgium and the Czech Republic. After tea and biscuits Tony Turner gave an introduction to the 80 plus attendees and explained the reason behind the launch.

Tony remarked, "This is a strange concept for the company, in that we have never, prior to this, introduced a machine into a country outside the UK before releasing it on the home market. The Multi-Task 120 was launched at the Bauma show last year, and all machines manufactured so far have gone to Germany, but we are now at the stage, having built up production, to launch the machine in the UK."

Giving a little background on the conception of the Multi-Task, he went on to explain that it all started a couple of years ago with a request from the Deutsche Bahn railway

network in Germany, who between them and their contractors already have over 100 tracked chipper units with the Safe-Trak system.

Deutsche Bahn wanted a machine based on the Safe-Trak system that had a 1.5m heavy-duty mulching head. Once the big material had been removed with chainsaws, and the Safe-Trak chippers had cleared up, they wanted to use this machine to keep their overgrown embankments in check and to control the vegetation on a 3- to 4-year programme. Their original specification asked for a hydraulically-driven power unit that would comfortably work on banks in excess of 35°, cutting and mulching vegetation up to 100mm in thickness, with the operator sitting in the comfort of a cab.

Introduction over, where better to see the machines put through their paces than on railway embankments? The next stage of the day was to travel by coaches to the Gloucestershire Warwickshire Steam Railway station at Toddington. Once at the station we all boarded a wonderful old steam train complete with three first-class dining carriages, a tribute to the volunteers who give their time to maintaining and restoring this heritage railway.

Our trip on the train involved a 20-mile round trip between Toddington and Cheltenham Racecourse to allow us to see where GWSR have been testing the GreenMech pro-



*The Multi-Task 120 clearing the way through neglected embankments.*

totypes since 2006. The original prototype had a 75hp engine, but the decision was made to go to a bigger motor, and the machine is now powered by an 118PS Deutz engine which complies with pollution emission 4.

Whilst enjoying a journey with a taste of the past, we stopped or slowed down at various sites along the way to see GreenMech's machines. Signs along the way explained when particular areas of the embankment had last been cut. At Winchcombe station we all disembarked, and, once equipped with high-visibility vests, walked the track to see the areas that had been cleared, and the Multi-Task working in close up. The weather prior to the day had been very wet, but Tony explained this would be good as it would give us the opportunity to see what the machine can do on wet banks. The banks were in excess

of 35° and very slippery, and in one area they were working through a soakaway. The machines performed very well clearing through the growth and impressing the crowd. Hats off to the operators. I would not have wanted to be up there in those conditions, but they never missed a beat.

The Multi-Task 120 has telescopic, independently adjustable legs for accessing difficult terrain, which enable it to work safely on slopes in excess of 35°, whilst keeping the driver's seat level. The machine has a heavy-duty mulching head for material up to 4" in diameter and stump removal. Other attachments, such as a 300mm chipper, a 2500mm heavy-duty flail head and stump-grinder are also being designed to complement the range.

The machine has been designed with a mounting plate that will accept many of the Bobcat or



*(Left) UK and foreign guests were very taken with the next mode of transport on our trip. (Right) The Foremarke Hall 7903 was built around 1949 for Great Western Railways, ending up at a scrap yard before being restored to its former glory.*

Caterpillar skid-steer loader attachments, allowing tasks that would normally be inaccessible by traditional machinery to be tackled. The cab complies with ROPS and FOPS with the option of having break-proof glass and protection bars. The controls within the machine are fitted on the armrests on the seat to give easy control of the tracks, telescopic legs and front linkage and attachment.

Further along the track was a demonstration of some of the chippers in the GreenMech range – the Safe-Trak 16-23, a 6”-capacity machine, fitted with a 35hp diesel engine, and the Safe-Trak 19-28, a 7½” chipper fitted with a 50hp diesel engine. Both machines were making quick work of the job in hand.

After the excellent time spent watching the machines working amongst a sea of cameras all clicking away, it was back on the train to continue our journey to Cheltenham Racecourse. This afforded us further before-and-after views of the work that was in progress. The machines had worked through brambles and extremely neglected areas to reclaim

the embankments.

GreenMech are very strong in the European market and many other countries, which was evident from the amount of foreign guests who had travelled to see the demonstrations. Representatives were there from the German, Danish and the Czech Republic railways. Considering the machines available on their home markets, it is testimony to GreenMech’s technology that so many machines are being bought to work in these countries.

Throughout the practical demonstrations, members of the GreenMech team were on hand to answer any questions on all the machines. Demonstrations over, we were back on the train where an excellent meal was served as we travelled back to Toddington.

The last part of the day saw us return to the factory to see the full range of GreenMech machines on show. This afforded guests an opportunity to get much closer to the machines and have a tour of the factory.

I think anyone who attended this event could not have failed to be impressed with the machines, the



The Safe-Trak 16-23 and 19-28 being demonstrated by members of the GreenMech team.

GreenMech set up and the place that GreenMech have carved for themselves in the British and foreign markets. Tony Turner was very proud to point out that he is one of a very few British manufacturers to have everything designed and manufactured on site. Despite sto-

ries of doom and gloom regarding British manufacturing, GreenMech are continuing to grow at around 30% a year, with 50% of their business going to the export market. My thanks to the GreenMech team for a ‘first class’ day. *Anne Berry*



(Left) Back at base and an opportunity to get to the guts of the Multi-Task 120. (Right) View of the heavy-duty mulching head and the quick hitch system for mounting a range of tools.

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