



Shelbourne
REYNOLDS

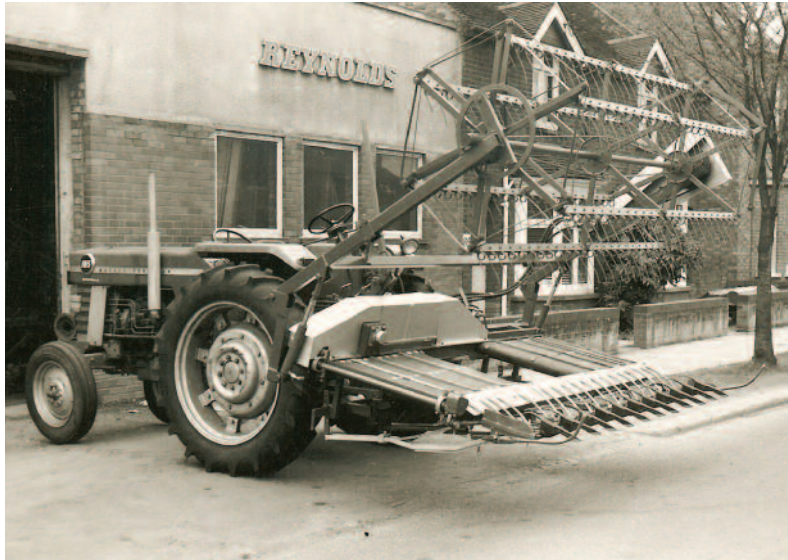
1972 - 2022

SHELBOURNE
REYNOLDS

ENGINEERING

Fifty years of innovation in agriculture





■ FIFTY YEARS OF AGRICULTURAL EQUIPMENT INNOVATION ■

A fiftieth birthday is a milestone for any business. Over five decades, the structure and shape of a company can change out of all recognition. That's certainly true of Shelbourne Reynolds, where we have evolved from a relatively small manufacturer of oilseed rape and pea equipment into a major force in agricultural machinery sectors as diverse as hedge trimmers, diet feeders and stripper headers, supporting the needs of farmers around the world.

This booklet celebrates the key landmarks in our business over the past half-century, from our foundation in 1972 focusing on equipment for crops such as oilseed rape and peas, through the development of new product areas in livestock and grounds care, to expansion overseas and the growth of our UK headquarters in Stanton, Suffolk, as we have invested in new design and production capability.

Over five decades the company has evolved and adapted to the changing face of farming, to the point where today it is well diversified across all sectors of agriculture and has a presence in many other countries as well as its home market. One thing that has remained constant, though, is our commitment to constructing strong, reliable machines, and backing them with strong, reliable support.

Whether you are a customer, a dealer or an employee of Shelbourne Reynolds, this brochure is a small thank you for the support you have shown our business over the years. And if you are considering becoming any of those things, we hope the next few pages encourage you to get in touch and become part of the next half-century in the development of Shelbourne Reynolds.

Claire Bloomfield & Neil Smith
Joint managing directors, Shelbourne Reynolds

■ THE BEGINNINGS OF THE BUSINESS: THE 1970s

As an aspiring engineer, Keith Shelbourne attended Braintree Technology College in Essex, before being taken on in 1960 by nearby sugar beet harvester manufacturer John Salmon Engineering at its Dunmow factory. By 1970, he had been promoted to works manager at the age of 26, but that same year John Salmon passed away, and the business was sold to the Irish Sugar Corporation, latterly trading as Armer Salmon.



The following year, after seeing a sale advert for the business assets of Bedford-based farm machinery maker Reynolds Engineering, Keith made an offer to owner William Reynolds, and an agreement was reached to purchase the business's plant, stock and goodwill. Keith called the new company Shelbourne Reynolds Engineering Ltd. His family were originally from Suffolk, and Keith decided to locate the new business in a rented unit on Shepherds Grove, Stanton, just a short distance from the current factory.



Focused on swathing

Beginning with just four employees, Shelbourne Reynolds' first products were evolved from those which had been manufactured by Reynolds. They included swathing equipment for crops which required cutting before harvest to enable secondary threshing, such as peas, and to hasten plant maturity to ease seed separation, such as oilseed rape, then recently introduced into the UK and rapidly becoming a popular break crop. As the decade progressed, Shelbourne Reynolds developed a full range of such machinery, including pea cutters, combine pick-up heads, draper conversions to allow conventional combine headers to be adapted for picking up windrowed crop, and side knives for use when direct-cutting desiccated oilseed rape.





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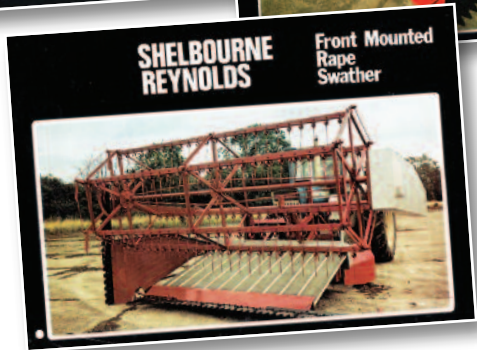
Pick-up
Header

Pick-up
Attachment



**SHELBOURNE
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Combine
Vertical
Knife
Attachment



**SHELBOURNE
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Front Mounted
Rape
Swather





■ NEW ARABLE EQUIPMENT AREAS: THE 1980s

As it entered its second decade, Shelbourne Reynolds was growing rapidly. Annual turnover exceeded £1m in 1981, and the site at Stanton employed 40 staff and had been expanded to 27,000 sq ft, complete with a new design office and factory building. In 1982, the first company computers were installed, and three years later the first press was purchased.

The company had developed a strong presence in products for the two-stage process then commonly practised to harvest oilseed rape, the area of which was expanding as farmers responded to European subsidies to boost domestic production of vegetable oil. Many pea swathing equipment principles were easily adapted for OSR, helping the company quickly gain a foothold in the OSR machinery market.



Her Majesty the Queen visits the Shelbourne Reynolds stand at the 1982 Royal Smithfield Show.





Peas: from cutters to viners

In the pea market, however, demand for swathing equipment was declining, as new self-propelled machines were developed that combined the processes of picking and shelling the crop. With its reputation well-established among pea growers, Shelbourne Reynolds decided to remain committed to the pea sector by entering the harvesting market. Rather than go down the high-cost route of developing a machine from scratch, the company reached an agreement with Manchester firm Mather and Platt, which was already producing self-propelled pea viners, to acquire the rights to its machine design. Production was moved to Stanton, and Shelbourne Reynolds became a significant player in a low-volume but high-value machine market, initially with the rebadged SB8000 model, before developing the new SR9000 for 1985.

The firm's next major diversification of the 1980s was into a completely different crop sector. Entering the potato machinery market further broadened the company's exposure to different areas of agriculture. During 1982 the business firstly acquired the design rights to Wytrac handling equipment from Notts-based Wysall Tractor Company, transferring production to Stanton. To complement these products, Shelbourne Reynolds also agreed a deal with Dutch manufacturer Amac to import its potato harvester range.

Mather+Platt

19, 1982

news · industry · people · background · business scene · news

Jobs boost for depressed Stanton Firm to double workforce

JOB-STRICKEN Stanton, near Bury St. Edmunds, has received a major employment boost from a small family business.

Shelbourne Reynolds Engineering Ltd, of Shepherds Grove industrial estate, Stanton, is expanding and will offer 40 jobs to local people, making it the biggest employer of skilled labour in the village. This comes as welcome relief following the decision two months ago by Shiland Boats in Stanton to suspend production and axe up to 50 jobs.

Shelbourne Reynolds, which makes harvesting equipment, has bought a private line from a much larger, Manchester-based company. To cope with the new work, which will involve the production of a 17-ton, £120,000 self-propelled pea and bean harvester, the firm has successfully applied for a 22,000 sq. ft. extension to its works.

The new product line will double the number of jobs at the

Mr. Shelbourne explained that he would be looking for skilled workers who were the best in their trade. The range of engineering skills needed was tremendous, he said.

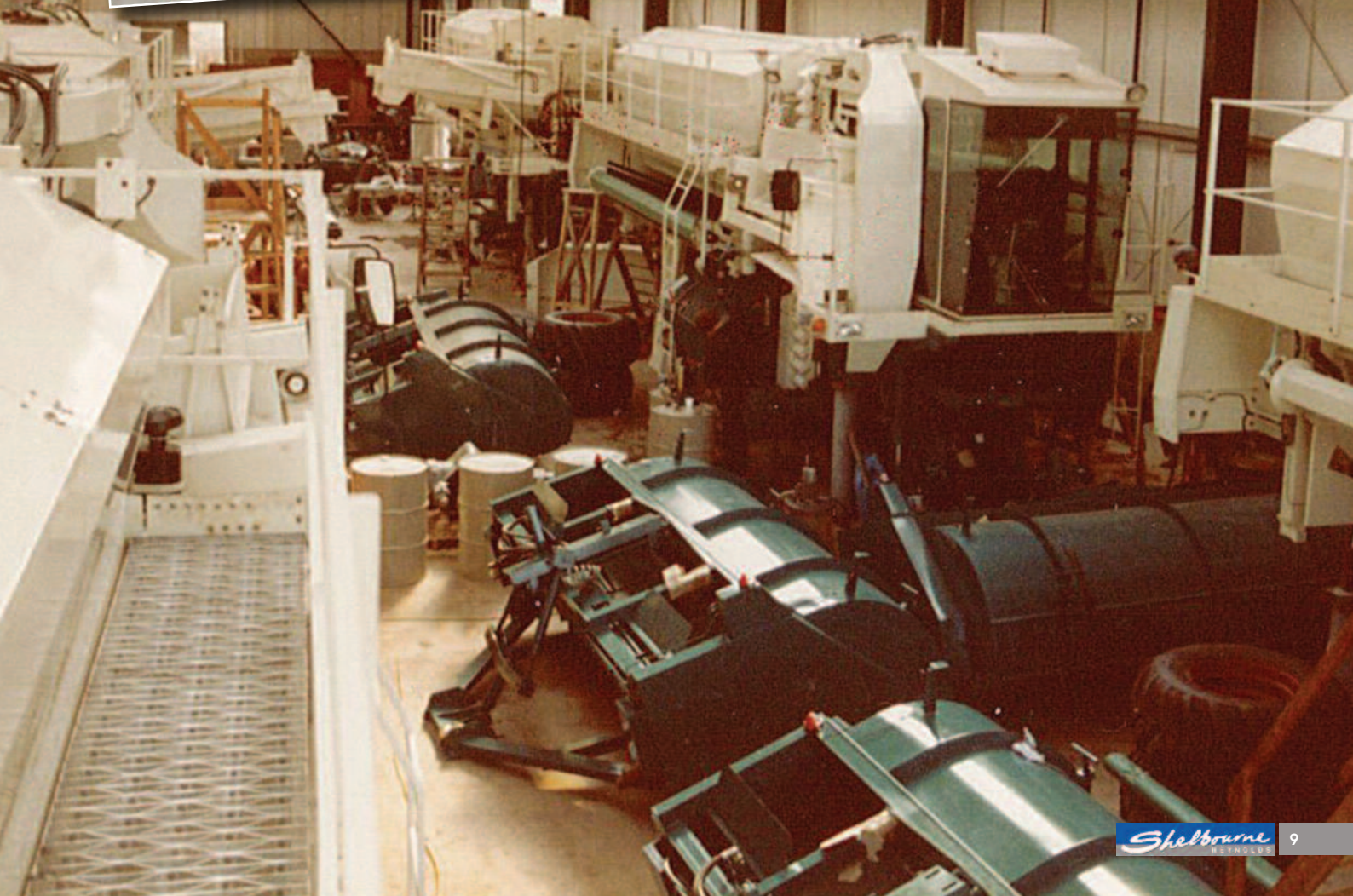
At present, the firm produces harvesting machines retailing at about £18,000. "So you could say we are going from £18,000 to £120,000 in one go," said Mr. Shelbourne, who started up the business ten years ago in a shed about 200 yards from the present site.

Mr. Shelbourne's firm has always been involved in specialised harvesting machinery. "They key to our success is with customers and given good service which has paid off," he said. He hopes to produce the first new harvester by next February.

The new extension will be divided between stores and an assembly shop with a running gantry, and Mr. Shelbourne



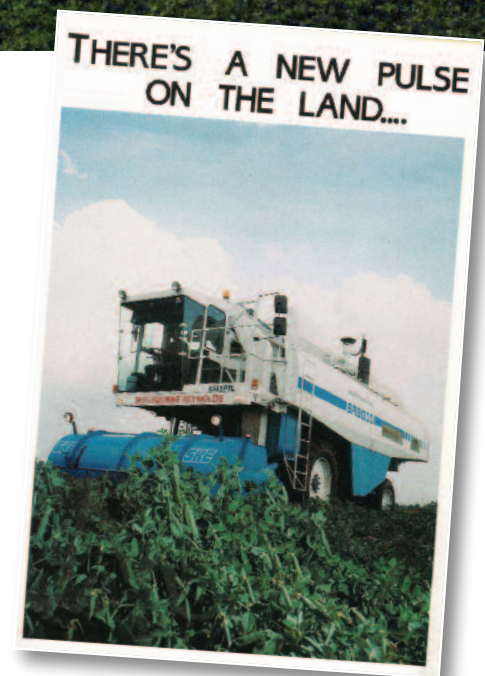
The £120,000 self-propelled harvester for peas and beans which is to be produced at Stanton.





Ultimately, because pea viners' size meant manufacturing required considerable production space, it was decided after a short time to withdraw from the potato machinery market. The company also needed additional manufacturing and engineering space for its oilseed rape equipment. Swathing remained the key way to ripen the crop rapidly once the seeds had become ready for harvest, but bigger areas and larger combines mean a more practical swather design was required. In 1981 a deal was agreed with East German firm Fortschritt to buy the latter's self-propelled swather tractor units, which were shipped to the UK, re-liveried with Shelbourne Reynolds branding and badged as the SR2000, complete with Stanton-designed and built headers. Such was the success of this sector that by 1985 the business employed 180 people, with factory staff working across three daily shifts from Monday to Saturday.

While this element of manufacturing continued to grow, the pea viner side came under severe pressure from changes in pea processors' business approach, with consequent reductions in areas grown and machine numbers purchased by the multi-farmer producer groups which supplied them. As a result, in mid-1987 the viner business was sold to FMC.





An Amac potato harvester, an SR2000 oilseed rape swather and an early stripper header at the 1988 Royal Show.

THE TIMES
 WEDNESDAY AUGUST 3 1988

Farm technology
Britain heads field as crop stripper speeds up harvesting

By David Matthews

... in the early 1980s, the use of crop strippers has become widespread in the United Kingdom. The first crop strippers were developed in the 1960s and 1970s, and since then they have become an essential part of the farming equipment of many large farms. The most recent crop strippers are the SR2000 oilseed rape swather, which is the most advanced and efficient of the range.

... the SR2000 is a major advance in the design of crop strippers. It is the first crop stripper to be designed from the ground up as a swather, and it has a number of features which make it particularly well suited to the task of harvesting oilseed rape. These include a wide cutting width, a high rate of throughput, and a low fuel consumption.

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Putting the stripper header into production

In the meantime, though, Shelbourne Reynolds had become involved in the commercial development of a project that would take it in yet another new direction. Gathering grain by stripping the heads rather than harvesting the whole crop, reducing threshing workload, was not a new idea, but had been largely ignored since the development of the reaper and thresher. Research at the National Institute of Agricultural Engineering had resulted in the development of a stripper header to take the place of a conventional combine cutterbar and reel, with a rotor featuring rows of keyhole-shaped fingers that stripped the heads and propelled them rearwards towards an auger that drew them centrally into the elevator.

Recognising the product's potential, during 1987 Shelbourne Reynolds agreed a deal to put the stripper header into commercial production. Whilst UK and European markets were difficult to crack due to concerns over the standing straw left behind, the stripper soon found favour in regions with short-strawed cereal types, particularly North America and Australia, with the initial 12ft/3.6m models developed into versions of up to 20ft/6.0m, and variants created to suit crops such as rice.

1988 workforce/turnover: 112 / £5,174,165





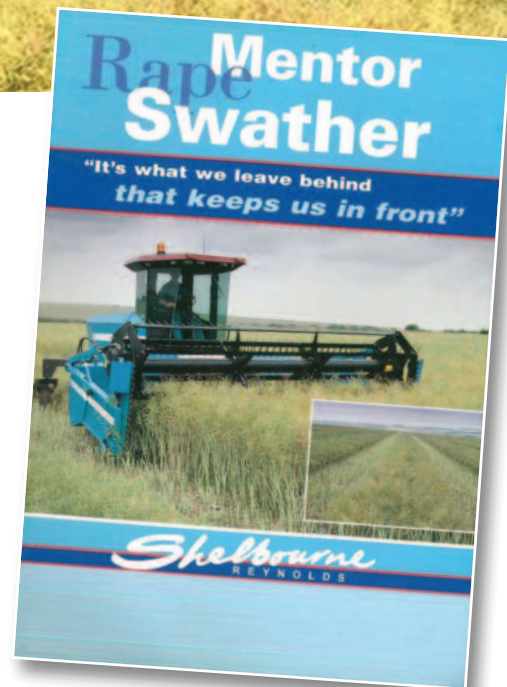
■ DIVERSIFYING INTO THE LIVESTOCK SECTOR: THE 1990s

Always aware of the need to spread business risk and keep its product line diversified, in 1991 Shelbourne Reynolds made its first venture beyond equipment for arable farmers. The company was able to acquire not only the Fertispread range of trailed fertiliser spreaders but also the Powerspread line of side-discharge manure spreaders from Yorkshire-based Econ, which had decided to exit the farm machinery business. With this acquisition, the company again entered new areas of agriculture, helping insulate it against potential downturns in any one area.





Oilseed rape machinery, though, continued to form the backbone of the company's manufacturing, with pick-up and swather headers continuing in production at Stanton, and the tractor unit replaced thanks to a 1991 deal with Canadian manufacturer MacDon, whose machines were imported and badged as the SR2500.



In 1993, the MacDon-built SR2500 tractor unit that powered the Stanton-built oilseed rape swather headers was superseded by a completely new design from the Canadian firm. Among the improvements offered by the Mentor was more spacious operator accommodation, which also provided enhanced visibility and greater comfort. Shelbourne Reynolds also continued to manufacture the combine pick-up headers that enabled the next step in the two-stage harvesting process, allowing the dried plant material to be lifted gently into the combine to minimise seed loss from the pods.



Stripper demand continues to grow

Larger stripper header sizes were developed to suit the high-capacity combines and large fields of North America and Australia, with new CX models up to 28ft/8.5m wide released for harvest 1995. A sales office and parts distribution warehouse were opened and the Shelbourne Reynolds Inc. subsidiary formed in Colby, Kansas, to provide service support for North American stripper header users, while manufacturing capabilities for all products had been enhanced by investment in the Stanton factory's first laser cutter.

Meanwhile, expansion into new areas and the consequent greater need for added manufacturing capacity saw further investment in the Stanton site. Major expenditure included the 1999 installation of a powder coat paint facility to replace traditional wet paint spraying.

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■ STRIPPER HEADER EXPORT SUCCESS

The stripper header has become a global success story for Shelbourne Reynolds, with units now at work across the globe. In addition to finding a home in the shorter-strawed grain-growing areas of the world such as the US and Australia, the stripper has become particularly popular with growers of crops as varied as rice and grass seed, both of which are particularly suited to its combing action. Other crops in which it has been used successfully range from unripe grain for crimping to hemp for medicinal uses, and growing interest in the soil- and fuel-saving benefits of direct drilling, plus a new generation of direct drills able to work in stripped straw, mean cereal farmers in Europe are also taking a closer look at grain stripping.



■ FACTORY INVESTMENTS

From the business's first laser for steel-cutting to its advanced powder coat paint facility, Shelbourne Reynolds has continually invested in advanced manufacturing equipment to provide the best possible products for customers by ensuring what we make and how we make it is more efficient and more effective. And despite the global trend towards sub-contracting, the company is committed to its UK manufacturing base.

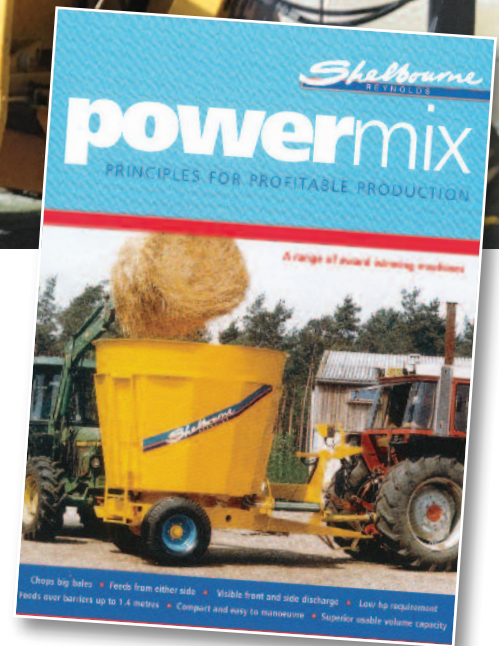
But of more importance than our technology is the team of people that create the company behind it all. From the factory to the service team to the sales department and beyond, each is an expert in their field, blending the training we provide with the experience they have gained to create, sell and support the finest farm equipment. Their efforts behind the stripper header's success were recognised with the 1992 Queen's Award for Export Achievement.





In 1995, the firm entered yet another new product category. Having established itself in the livestock market with the Powerspread, Shelbourne Reynolds made a further commitment to the sector with the launch of the Powermix diet feeder range. An in-house development, the vertical auger feeder models provided further diversity to the product line, while expanding the range dealers could offer to dairy and beef farmers. The vertical auger design meant the machines could handle not only chopped clamp silage, but also round baled material, a key sales point.

1998 workforce/turnover: 115 / £7,818,363





■ DEVELOPMENTS IN A THIRD NEW BUSINESS AREA: THE 2000s

By the turn of the century, oilseed rape swathing was falling out of favour as the primary way to rapidly dry the crop before harvest. With combines having grown rapidly in size, swaths from a typical 16ft/4.8m machine were insufficient to match the 30ft/9m combines becoming commonplace on larger farms, and more chose to use their high-capacity sprayers to desiccate crops instead using glyphosate. Although a new MacDon-based Advantage swather was launched for 2001, with demand for swathers and pick-up headers declining, Shelbourne Reynolds again diversified into new areas.

In demand from both arable and livestock farmers, as well as contractors and those involved in general grounds care, the company chose to develop a range of flail-type hedge/verge trimmers, taking on some long-established names in a competitive market. The new machines were not only made in-house, but had been designed from scratch, offering customers an alternative to existing brands, many of which were built by a single manufacturer.





In line with its policy of having a product range that was diversified yet fully committed to agriculture, Shelbourne Reynolds made two further acquisitions during the early part of the decade to broaden its offering. In 2003, the rights to livestock machinery from Wiltshire-based Parmiter were acquired. The key product in the purchase was the Shear Bucket attachment for materials handlers, which enabled a clean sheared face to be left behind when extracting loader bucketfuls of silage from a clamp, to ensure minimal air ingress and consequent spoilage. A Shelbourne Reynolds-designed cubicle bedder was later added to the loader attachment range, enabling users to easily distribute loose materials for livestock bedding, such as sawdust, shavings, sand and straw.

Also in 2003, Shelbourne Reynolds was offered a further chance to expand and diversify. A specialist in manufacturing trailers for combine cutterbar transport, UK-based Mekanag's product line was acquired, and production transferred to Stanton.





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LIVESTOCK MACHINERY GROWS TO MATCH ENTERPRISES

As dairy and beef enterprises grew fewer in number but larger in size, in response Shelbourne Reynolds developed larger machines to match. New Powermix diet feeders were introduced with twin augers and capacities of up to 22m³, while a long wheelbase Powerspread Pro development introduced a 12,730-litre/2,800-gallon side-discharge spreader flagship.



A profitable growing business achieved through the satisfaction of customer needs while developing a modern environment in which the commitment of individuals to excellence and performance is encouraged, expected and recognised.

Over the period between 2003 and 2006, Keith Shelbourne decided to gradually step back from the day-to-day running of the business, and appointed Claire Bloomfield and Neil Smith as finance and sales directors respectively, and as joint managing directors. At that point, the company adopted the mission statement on which it has since been run, with the aim of operating:

A profitable growing business achieved through the satisfaction of customer needs while developing a modern environment in which the commitment of individuals to excellence and performance is encouraged, expected and recognised.

2008 workforce/turnover: 106 / £13,155,381



■ PRODUCT CONSOLIDATION AND SITE EXPANSION: THE 2010s

The second decade of the 21st Century saw Shelbourne Reynolds consolidate its focus in the product areas that had been developed over the previous ten years. This meant the biggest production volumes for the domestic market were of diet feeders and hedge trimmers, while stripper headers for export took up much of the remainder of manufacturing capacity. Machines such as the Powerspread continued to be popular, though, while the Mekanag product line acquisition had been a valuable addition to the business, with a market developed among many of the key UK combine suppliers and dealers.

The hedge trimmer line was expanded with entry-level 400 series machines to cater for smaller farms and grounds maintenance customers, while a new range of Powerspread Pro spreaders took the products into the large-scale farm and contractor market, and the Powermix diet feeder line was broadened with Compact Plus models designed for high capacity in an easily-manoeuvrable package.





Factory investment

All of this required further investment in manufacturing capacity, and the decade began with the purchase of a new laser for steel cutting, followed soon afterwards with the installation of the first robot welder. In 2012, Shelbourne Reynolds marked its ruby anniversary, holding a celebration for the dedicated team of employees that had helped the firm reach its 40th birthday.

Two years later, the Stanton facilities were enhanced again, with the construction of a new assembly shop, while the site footprint itself was later expanded with adjacent buildings purchased during 2018/2019.





Machines also continued to grow in size, with new XCV stripper header models up to 12.6m/42ft launched in 2013, flagship 800 series hedge trimmers released in 2016, and 23-30 m³ Powermix Wide Body diet feeders unveiled in 2019. Meanwhile, to complement the hedge trimmer range a flail mower designed for front or rear linkage mounting made its debut in 2018.

The first pair of prototype XCV42 (12.6m) stripper headers were shipped to Australia in 2013 and used by a harvesting contractor. After completing the season there, they were shipped to the USA for further evaluation, enabling assessment in both the southern and northern hemisphere harvests in a 12-month period.



2019 workforce/turnover: 146 / £25,776,324



■ BEGINNING THE NEXT HALF-CENTURY: THE 2020s

Adapting existing products for new uses and adopting new technology that benefits both customers and dealers have been among the key developments so far in the 2020s. From the stripper header that is now one of the company's oldest products, to the hedge trimmers that are one of its newest, Shelbourne Reynolds continues to evolve its product line based on customer feedback and demand.

New applications for the stripper header developed during the early part of the decade included a version for harvesting hemp. With uses in industry, food and medicine, the crop lends itself to harvesting via stripping, and a range of 3.6-9.6m (12-32ft) models has been developed specifically for harvesting hemp leaves, flowers and buds, minimising seed damage and leaving behind the fibrous crop material rather than taking it into the harvester. These models are designed for mounting on a tractor front-end loader or linkage and operated hydraulically, working in conjunction with a customer-designed conveyor to discharge the harvested material into a trailer.



New tech for machines and manufacturing

Focused on adopting new technology where there is a tangible benefit, Shelbourne Reynolds also introduced touchscreen controls when launching new 8000 series flagship hedge trimmers during 2021. The new S-Touch system allows users to programme and store settings and configure the functions of the associated joystick.

Increasing product demand has also meant the company has continued to adopt new technology for manufacturing. Factory investments during the early 2020s included a laser cutter with auto sheet feeder, minimising the loading labour required when processing sheet steel and automating the process so it can be carried out whenever required.





Shelbourne Reynolds owes much of its success to the loyalty of its employees and customers past and present. At the time of publication the company's headquarters and factory in Stanton, Suffolk, employs 170 skilled and dedicated staff producing Shelbourne Reynolds machines, while a further three staff manage the business's North American customer support facility in Colby, Kansas. Many of our employees have been with the company long-term, and all go the extra mile on a daily basis. This brochure is not just a celebration of our first fifty years, but also a tribute to all of those who have worked so hard to help us get where we are today.

The other half of the equation, without which none of this would have been possible, is of course our customers and dealers, many of whom have purchased numerous machines from us over the years and have worked closely with us to help develop them. To you, we owe our thanks for your support. Despite the challenging times in which we find ourselves, we are very optimistic for the future and look forward to working with all of you – whether customer, dealer or employee – for many more years to come.

2022 workforce/projected turnover: 173 / £30m+



After 50 years the Shelbourne Reynolds product line and production methods have changed out of almost all recognition. From a specialist in pea and oilseed rape crop equipment, the business is now highly diversified across all major sectors of agriculture. Yet the commitment to manufacturing strong, reliable machines and backing them with strong, reliable support remains.



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