

hire

JOURNAL OF THE HIRE INDUSTRY
VOL. 7, NO. 2



When Qantas hired a dance floor . . .



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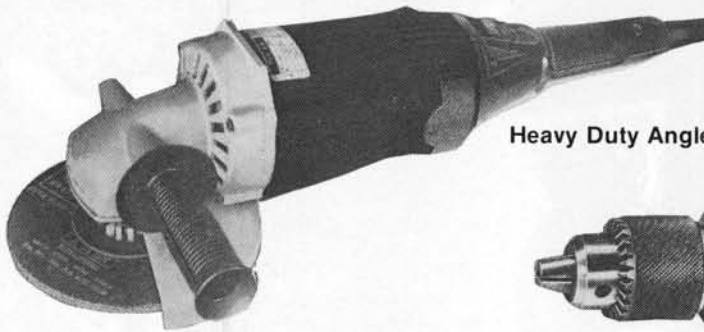


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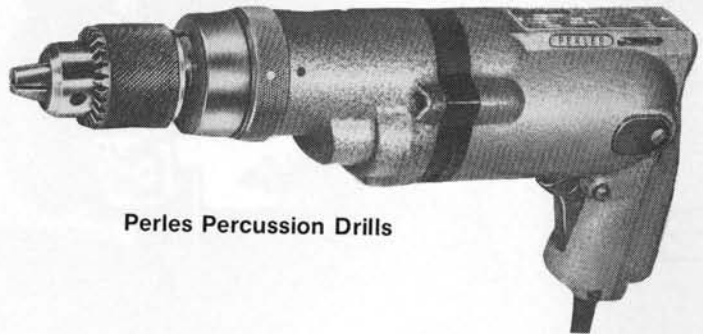


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industry.

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COVER PHOTO

Thai folk dances at Qantas House—
on a hired dance floor. Full story in
this issue. (Photo by courtesy of
Qantas.)

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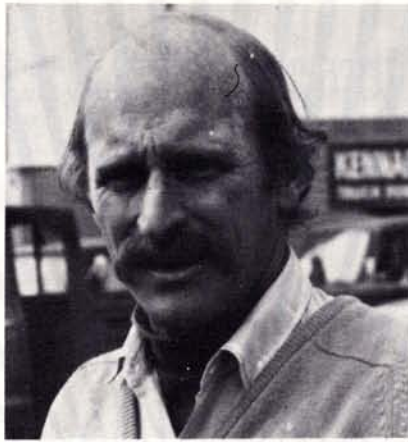
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president's message



Neville Kennard
President H.A.A.

SUPPLIERS TO THE HIRE INDUSTRY.

It is a constant complaint from most of us in the hire industry that some equipment suppliers let us down.

We complain of poor equipment and poor service.

But probably we've never really had a chance to communicate with our suppliers, and our suppliers haven't had a chance to listen and learn and have their say, too.

At the Convention in September, for the first time, suppliers will have the opportunity to display and sell their products. There will also be a seminar devoted to the supplier-hire store relationship.

The hire industry represents a big market for a wide range of products and is eagerly sought by most manufacturers. We need reliable and competent suppliers. It's a two-way deal.

Let's hope we can get together to understand each other.

editorial

WHY DOGS BITE POSTMEN

Our June issue included a par on the problems of producing a nationally distributed publication during a mail strike.

The strike was settled (in the sense that there was a lull in the guerilla warfare the postal unions have been waging on the community all this year.) Mail began to arrive again, some of it bearing ancient postmarks and/or infested with insects, but at least it arrived.

To glean information for our projected feature on Party Hire Around Australia we settled down to write personal letters to party hire people in all States, but we had only posted sixteen of these letters when the strikers struck again. Our June issue could not be distributed. No invoices could be sent out, or cheques received to pay production costs. The Party Hire feature had to be postponed.

Eventually the strike was called off in all States except N.S.W.—where

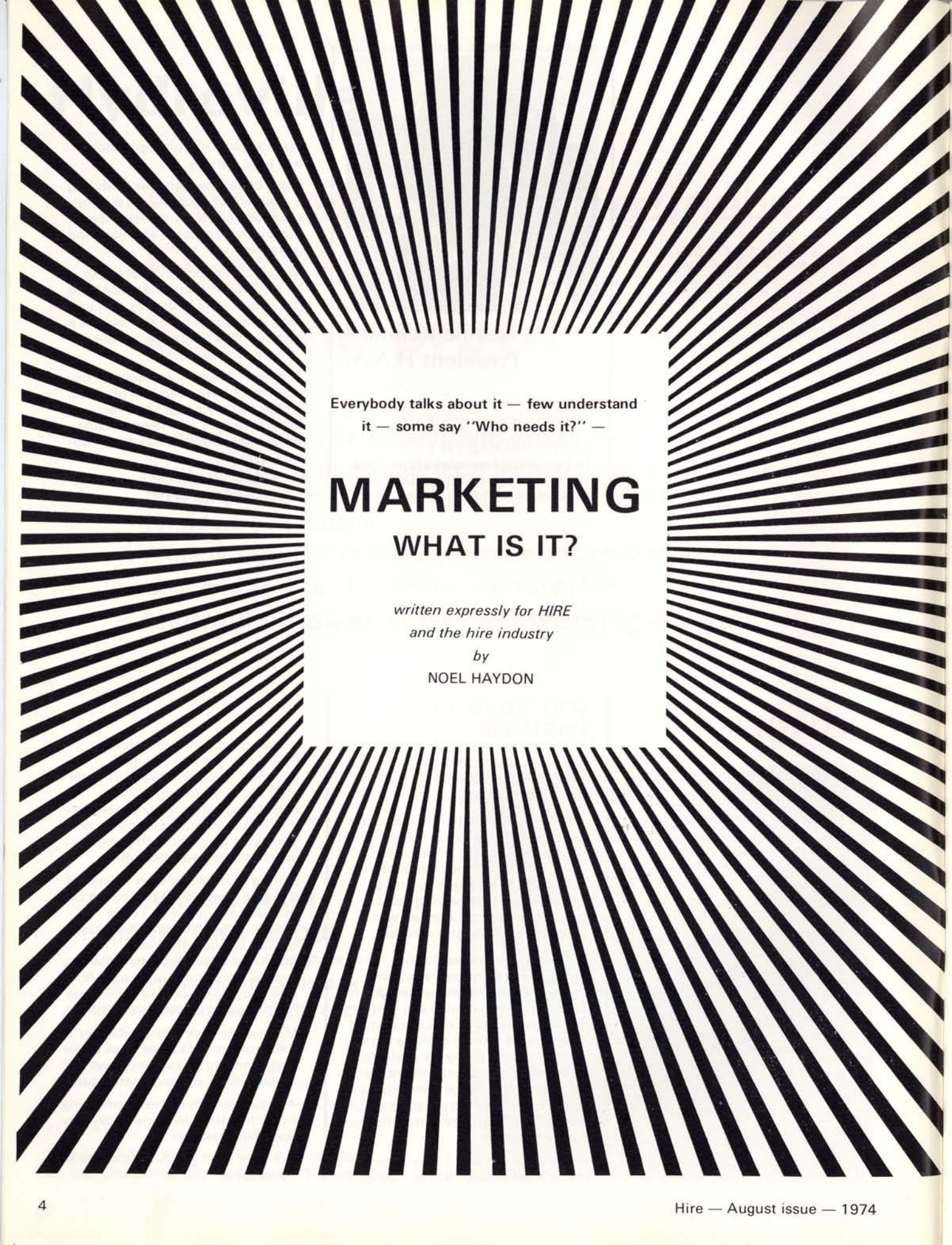
it merely gathered momentum. Everybody got into the act: postmen, sorters, drivers, counter staff. Bans were imposed on everything, while the union leaders made hypocritical statements on television about how their hearts were bleeding for the public.

During June we had an eclipse of the sun. It was well publicised by the media, but it didn't rivet attention like the sight, two days earlier, of our unfriendly neighbourhood postman delivering a modicum of mail during a 24-hour hiatus in the strike. Like the eclipse, his performance was not repeated.

Meanwhile back at the publisher's, HIRE carries on like a fortress under siege, hoping that some day we will all be able to communicate again.

At least we have learned something from the strike. We now know why dogs bite postmen.

Not that they get much chance to nowadays.



Everybody talks about it — few understand
it — some say "Who needs it?" —

MARKETING

WHAT IS IT?

*written expressly for HIRE
and the hire industry*

by
NOEL HAYDON

This summation of modern marketing as it affects and concerns the hire industry is so tightly packed with vital information that we think you will want to read it at least twice. Whether you agree with it or not, it's guaranteed to make you think! *Editor*

It is only since the end of World War II that Marketing has really made its presence felt in Australia. From a very humble beginning indeed it has developed into today's highly sophisticated specialist field. When industry began to return to normal after the War, Sales Managers 'did it all'. But as time went on and Management found a need to promote these bright young Sales Managers in order to keep them happy in the service, they called them Marketing Managers. They still 'did it all', but the era of change had begun. A need for more concentrated effort in certain areas became obvious, and as a result the true Marketing Man began to develop.

Much has been written on the differences between Sales and Marketing, and no one has really come up with a definition acceptable to all. However, most people today believe that Sales is really the operation of getting the goods to the point where the consumer can buy them, and that Marketing is the operation of motivating the consumer to actually buy the goods — (or services) offered. Obviously, then, both manufacturer and retailer must do some marketing individually or on a combined basis — and it was with this in mind that the present bugbear of Co-operative Advertising, sometimes hopefully referred to as 'promotional allowances', was born.

NOEL HAYDON

Noel Haydon is no theoretical exponent on Marketing — he gained his extensive knowledge in the field, working from the grass roots up. From the lowly if historic position of Ampol's first office boy, he moved up the ranks to become Assistant Country Sales Manager before he left the company to enter the food industry. After a lengthy stint with Edgells, where he was Marketing Service Manager for Canned and Frozen Foods, he spent six years with British Tobacco's Associated Products and Distribution. During that period he was appointed Assistant Manager of the Frozen Foods Division, General Sales Manager of the Snack Foods Division, and N.S.W. Manager of the Home Delivery Soft Drinks Division.

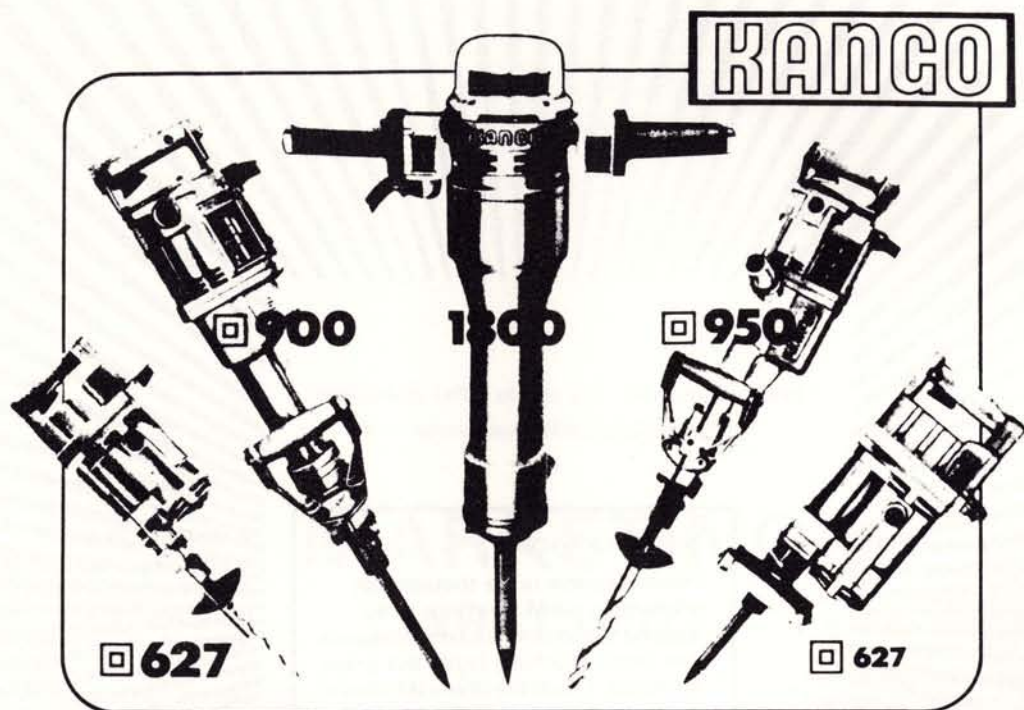
Then — and this accounts for his special insight into the Marketing requirements and shortcomings of the hire industry — he became Silverwater Plant Hire's Marketing Manager.

Today he is the very busy and successful Marketing Manager of Bulmer Australia Limited (internationally renowned for Strongbow and other alcoholic cider products.) But busy as he undoubtedly is, he hasn't forgotten his friends in the hire industry. HIRE feels privileged to be able to bring you this fine article.

A WIDE FIELD

Marketing covers a pretty wide field, the better known aspects being advertising — point of sale material, merchandising aids, public relations and sampling. Lesser considered as part of Marketing, but equally if not more important, are such areas as market research, distribution and new product development. And even less thought of as part of the Marketing Operation are the more sophisticated techniques such as general analytical programmes, break-even analysis, and the use of variable costing for Marketing decisions in pricing, distribution, and the study of Marketing costs as a basis for measuring the profitability of Sales areas or Branches, products and — yes! — even customers themselves.

Firstly let us look at the more usual Marketing activities — advertising, P.R., etc. The Hire industry has some remarkable success stories in certain segments. How about the Car and Truck Hire field? Wasn't it usual not so long ago to hold back after arriving at an Airport until all the other passengers had left the area before rather sheepishly sneaking up to the Rent-a-Car Counter? Sure was! But not today. Just take a look at the lineup waiting for their hire cars. A truly great Marketing effort — and one which has been duplicated pretty well by the TV Rental companies. And how about the clothing hire industry? Remember how one would walk past the hire shop three



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or four times before darting in once the coast was clear? Not today, for this part of the Hire industry has also succeeded in educating the consumer to *think hire*.

Unhappily, this is not the case throughout the Industry. Indeed not so very long ago a friend of mine (who happens to be a senior member of the Management team of a Heavy Equipment Hire Company) found himself with a most unpleasant drainage problem one Saturday morning. We all know how bad blocked sewer and drainage pipes can be, don't we? So what did he do? Well, he did the obvious thing, I guess: he phoned several plumbers and drainers before he located one who was willing to come to his aid — and then only after claiming Weekend Rates, Bad Smell Rates, Travelling Rates and several other Special Rates. The job, which took less than twenty minutes, cost my friend \$48.00 — quite an expensive Mayday call. And all the more so, when he realised afterwards that he could have hired a Drain Snake or an Electric Eel for about \$8.10! Now I ask you — where was the Marketing "feeling"? And if someone engaged full-time in the Hire industry doesn't "THINK HIRE", how can we expect the man in the street to do it?

THINKING 'HIRE'

I have heard it said that the Hire industry can be called a "service" industry, and that it therefore has no need for Marketing, but I believe that the need is just as great in this industry as it is in any other. You have one thing in common whether

you happen to be in the Clothing, Vehicle, Canvas, Television, Crane or Funtime section of the industry, and that one thing is that fact that your customers usually need your articles for a given period — rarely for an undetermined one. You also have the advantage today of being able to play a major part in curbing inflation, and assisting the Government of the day in curbing expenditure. Surely this, more than ever before, is the time to emphasise the advantages of 'THINKING HIRE'.

Perhaps I could elaborate on the lesser known aspects of Marketing — most of which can be covered by one word — PLANNING. Surely planning is where it all begins, because without a plan, where do you go? One lays the tracks before trying to run a train from point to point! Long term plans should be prepared before getting down to the nitty gritty of present time problems, and by long term I mean *five* or even *ten* year plans which should be constantly updated every year. The long term plan should set out the long term objectives, and, in my opinion it should be prepared to show three possibilities: the Best, the Worst — and a Master Plan which would obviously be the middle of the road. This plan then leads naturally to the establishment of priorities and timetables — thus allowing our accounting friends to start their cash flow forecasts etc.

Short term objectives in terms of Men, Money, Material, Machines and Methods follow in detail, and as a natural flow on — training schedules and job specifications, capital expenditure, cash flows and PROFITABILITY (ever heard of that

one?) raw material requirements, warehouse and distribution requirements, branch expansion, inventory requirements and a thousand other things. Marketing is just a little more than Advertising, isn't it?

PROMOTE OR PERISH

From the short term objectives, many things are forthcoming, not the least being the current year sales and expense budgets. Then there will be the need for research, the need to study suitability of current equipment, the need to assess distribution methods. Competitors' tactics must also be taken into consideration before the final allocation of moneys for advertising, promotion, point-of-sale material, etc can be made. For the name of the game is PROFITABILITY, is it not?

So there it is. What I have said, in fact, is that you must have a MARKETING PLAN and a detailed one at that — and then act on it before anything else happens. No more preparing Five Year plans and never looking at them. Update them and ask yourself and your team why it is necessary to do so. It's all part of your Marketing activity.

A final word — PROMOTE OR PERISH. Tell the world what you have to offer — display your equipment or services — but don't fall into the trap which has claimed so many in the past because they hadn't planned their Marketing. It is not much help to want plant or equipment and find that you haven't the funds available at the very time you need them most. Many profitable businesses have gone broke because of lack of cash availability. DON'T LET IT HAPPEN TO YOU!

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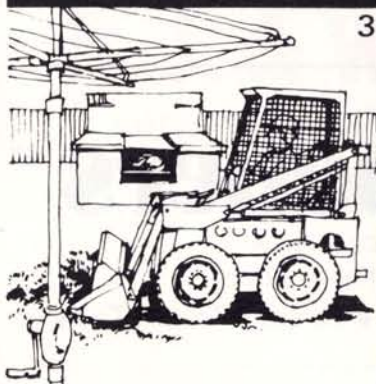
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FROM DRAWING BOARDS TO DANCE FLOORS

To an ever-increasing degree, the pressures of our society are processing people into moulds, but once in a while we hear of somebody who has managed to break the mould and reinstate himself as an individual — via the hire industry. In many respects hiring is a last frontier, one of the few remaining outposts of industry where a man can do his thing and be himself.

Take the case of Gordon Johnstone, for seventeen years a draughtsman with the N.S.W. State Electricity Commission. He had a good job, total security, the prospect of superannuation to cushion his eventual retirement. But one thing was missing, a sense of personal satisfaction.

He found it in building and hiring dance floors. This was far from being an industry first; other people had been making them for quite some time out of materials such as plywood and masonite. But Gordon Johnstone's dance floors were draughtsman-designed and built from durable cypress timber. They were highly-polished and beautiful to look at as well as to dance on.

The decision to make the big break and set up in business, sink or swim, was the most difficult he had ever had to face. Friends advised him against it. Think of the risks, the insecurity, they said, the sacrifice of superannuation! But the hazards, he felt, were worth the risk, and so

his Dancetime Hire Service became a reality eleven years ago.

There was the usual agonisingly slow beginning, some tentative advertising, recommendations from customers and friends. Guests at parties and functions were impressed by his dance floors and later became customers themselves. The business began to grow, but it was not until seven years later that it evolved from a part-time to a full-time operation. The gamble had paid off.

In the early years Gordon was building his dance floors exclusively for hire. He added some general party equipment items to his inventory because he found that it pays to offer people a packaged deal, but basically he was still specialising in dance floor hire.

Then, several years ago, he found that some of his customers wanted to buy floors, not rent them, so he branched into sales to meet this new demand. The cypress floor boards he uses come from the Mount Isa area, so it rather pleases him to reflect that one of his dance floors, purchased in Mount Isa, has returned to the soil from which it sprang.

In developing the sales side of his business after years of hiring he reversed the usual procedure. It is far more common for a manufacturer to establish himself in the wider market and then,

recognising the additional business to be obtained from hiring, to go after the hire market too.

Dancetime is in many respects a perfect example of the successful one-man business. Gordon Johnstone is a specialist. He creates and markets his own product, he is an expert at drawing plans and converting or re-designing rooms for parties and functions. He delivers, installs and collects the dance floors — which break down into sections for transport — single-handed. It is only in periods of peak seasonal demand that he needs to employ casual assistants.

In addition to the home-party trade, he is geared to handle big assignments. Recently, for example, he was awarded the contract to supply dance floors to the new Kingsgate Hotel at Kings Cross. And when Qantas wanted to photograph the Thailand Dance Troupe performing one of their folk dances as part of the publicity for a two-week promotion at Grace Bros., they hired one of Gordon Johnstone's dance floors and installed it in the booking lounge at Qantas House. The spectacle depicted on our August cover was seen by more than 200 Sydney travel agents.

Quite early in the piece, when he was first involved in the hire business, Gordon weighed up the advantages of joining the

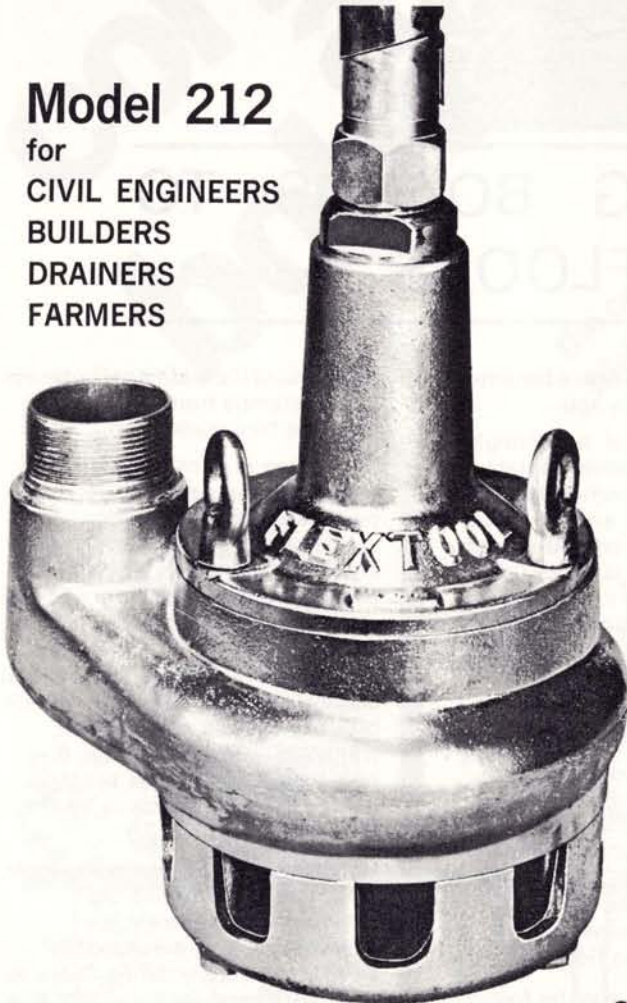


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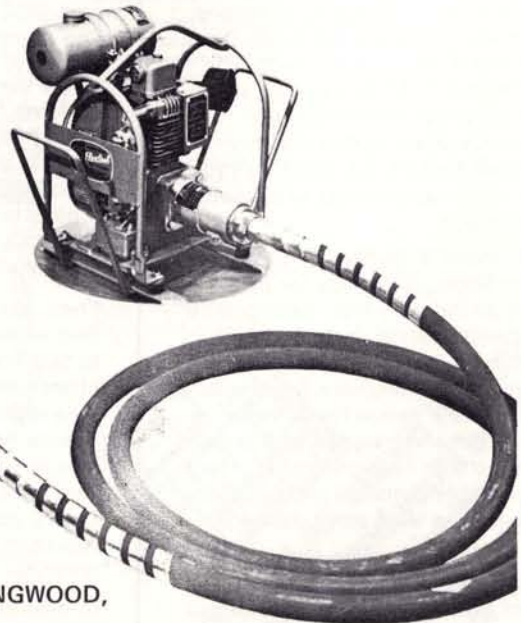


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H.A.N.S.W. He decided against membership because he couldn't see how a small party hire operator specialising in dance floors could derive any real benefit from belonging to an association primarily concerned with the needs and problems of large plant hire companies.

Then, less than a year ago, something happened which made him change his mind. A party hire equipment sub-group was formed within the H.A.N.S.W. He joined the Association so that he could link up with the sub-group, and he is now one of its most enthusiastic members.

Another thing he has thought about is building up his business, and he has come to the conclusion that he doesn't want it to grow any bigger than it is right now. If it were any larger he would have to find new premises. (At present he can store all his equipment under his elevated house.) He would also have the headache of finding and retaining good employees. For the bit of extra income it just wouldn't be worth it, he's decided.

Unlike many people you meet, he will tell you quite frankly that he's enjoying life. He operates his

business from his comfortable, idyllically situated home at Caringbah, and he's making a success of the kind of work he really enjoys. He may never become rich in the material sense, but then he hasn't set his sights on money. It's a bit hard getting away for a holiday when you run a one-man hire business, he admits, but he does manage a few trips to the snow country for his favourite sport, skiing, every winter.

Which about sums up what we said at the beginning about hiring being the last frontier. Gordon Johnstone is a liberated man.

when hearing is believing

"WE CONCENTRATE ON YOU"

What an unexpected pleasure it is to dial Formal Wear Hire Service's number these days and hear a beautifully modulated voice saying softly, "We concentrate on you!" And what a contrast it is to so many telephone attendants, both male and female, who seem to concentrate on anything but the caller and his requirements

After having had the runaround from a few less-than-helpful switchboards, and having been left hanging on interminably for people who did or did not eventually materialise, the FormalWear V.I.P. treatment is very easy to take.

As your call is transferred to the required department, subsequent voices match the first one. Everyone is helpful, concerned. There is a distinct impression of being personally conducted to your destination, an ambience of soft lights and ankle-deep carpets.

Telephone communication, you are delighted to discover, has taken on a new dimension.

No one is suggesting that this precise approach would be the right one for the more hairy-wristed type of operation — although it could be, at that, since no one to our knowledge has tried it. (The ability to project its own style is part of the essential genius of Formal Wear.) But the principle applies, no matter what line of hire you're in. The person who picks up your telephone receiver has one of the most important and responsible jobs in your organisation.

It will never be known how many transactions are lost at point of telephone enquiry, but there can be no doubt that a convincing show of personal interest in the caller puts him — or her — in a receptive mood. Bored, take-it-or-leave-it attitudes rank with unattended telephones and unreturned calls as tried and

tested methods of losing business. So it is encouraging to know that one of the business sessions at the 1974 National Hire Convention will be devoted to the subject of telephone sales.

Footnote In case anyone has the impression that the seductive Formal Wear approach is mere happenstance, we should add that it represents a considerable amount of care and attention on the part of the company's executives. In addition to attracting a great deal of favourable comment, it is paying off — proving a sometimes-overlooked precept that it is good business, as well as good manners, to be nice to people.





James L. Keenan

A.R.A. PRESIDENT ATTENDING H.A.A. CONVENTION . . . ?

We have it from an unimpeachable (American) source that the President of the American Rental Association, James L. Keenan, is making plans to attend the 1974 H.A.A. Convention, accompanied by his wife, Marjorie.

Owing to the prolonged mail shutdown, we have been unable to obtain final confirmation of this.

However, the prospects look good, and we hope to have the opportunity of interviewing the Keenans for HIRE readers. Meanwhile, to introduce our important guest, here is a condensation of a biographical profile which appeared last year in RENTAL AGE . . .

When Jim Keenan started farming in South Dakota in the early Thirties, he could not have conceived the wealth of experiences that lay ahead. He was concerned only with growing enough grain on his half section of land to feed 50 chickens and a dozen pigs.

A severe drought in 1933 and 1934 left him ruined and, with his wife, Marjorie, he moved to Kansas City to further his farm-related knowledge of equipment in a mechanics school. During this same year, however, a bad accident with a blow torch forced Keenan out of school and to Carroll, Iowa, where he worked for the county on road maintenance.

Taking advantage of the construction boom during World War II, Keenan made his third move — this time to Omaha, Neb., where he worked construction jobs and settled in an active, growing city slated to become his permanent home. By the time peace came in 1946, the hard construction work had paid off, and Keenan purchased two tractors for his first private enterprise — custom grading.

Putting it all Together

With thoughts of expansion on his mind, Keenan saw an obvious path to follow. His experience with farm and construction work, coupled with an extensive knowledge of machinery and equipment maintenance, formed the perfect background for a new career in franchise tractor sales. He purchased a franchise to sell the British Ferguson tractor, and the Modern Farm Store opened for business in 1948.

As with most new enterprises, unforeseen problems began to emerge. For one thing, the British tractor was then a new equipment line in the United States, and it was tough to sell to American farmers. But worse than this, Omaha began to develop, and land sales skyrocketed on its western edge. Real estate prices rose sharply. Area farmers, spotting the opportunity to dissolve their operations and sell to eager developers, shied away from equipment investments. Keenan felt the squeeze when many of his customers decided to make do with existing tractors or borrow from others. He was quick to appraise the situation:

"I could see that my trade area was disappearing — taken over by the growth of time. As sales fell, people began asking to rent equipment by verbal contract. And when I began to loan out my new tractors, customers argued about rates and I found I was losing money on repair work."

Keenan knew it was time to re-evaluate his position. "I had too much trouble with verbal contracts. Too many people questioned the agreements when they returned the borrowed equipment. So I had a contract drawn up and called it the 'Modern Farm Store Rental Contract.' I had never seen a rental contract before, but this was an answer to a need. After signing it, people didn't mind paying a fixed amount."

Keenan continued with his franchise sales and the contractual "borrowing" he had been forced to improvise. Then, in 1957, he took a

vacation that was to alter his entire business career. While touring the country by automobile, he stumbled onto the rental industry.

"I was driving through Wichita, and I noticed a store with tractors lined up in the yard. When I stopped to visit what I assumed to be a sales facility similar to mine, I discovered it was a rental store.

"I talked with the owner quite a while, and he said he was making a living from rentals large enough to support three families. This convinced me that, with the experience I'd had, this would be the thing for me to do."

Everything changed at once. Keenan divided his building into two sections, the Modern Farm Store and the Modern Farm Store Rental Service. When his tractor inventory proved insufficient to meet the growing demand for rental items, Keenan expanded by "adding what the customer asked for." Soon after, he dropped his franchise business altogether and expanded deeper into farm and contractor rentals. Today, Keenan and his three sons serve the entire Omaha area with Keenan's Rental Service, an impressive facility specializing in general and construction equipment, and a related sales outlet, Keenan's Industrial Equipment Sales.

In 1959, Keenan joined the American Rental Association after reading some A.R.A. literature offered him (on another vacation) by a rental man in Oklahoma City. He has since moved through its ranks, serving as director of Region Six, second vice president, vice president, and now, president.

Extensive Travels

President Keenan is no "whiz kid." He quit school following the eighth grade to help his parents farm. His work record, through related, left him relatively inexperienced for the business responsibilities required to manage a modern rental facility. But Keenan, like so many other A.R.A. members, has embraced the rental concept with a "get-up-and-go" attitude through years of self-education.

Since the Denver convention in 1971, he has traveled through 45 of the 50 states and several Canadian provinces, visiting an average of three stores in each. He has dealt first-hand with a host of varying personalities and rental facilities. His travels have furthered his

knowledge of the ways and means of rentals, and he now possesses a degree of circumspection necessary for his job as president.

"I have enjoyed my travels and will continue them. I have always been well-received. People seem honored that an Association officer took the time to call on them.

"It is my hope that the regional directors can communicate more with members on a personal basis to report on the activities of the national office and the general progress in their regional areas. Then, if they have been willing listeners, they can return to sit at a Board of Directors' meeting as better informed representatives of their areas.

"Of course, I have been in the fortunate position of having three sons at my store every day for consultation and to oversee the direction our business is taking."

Image is Essential

From his travels, Keenan has found the rental store image considerably improved in the last two years, but he feels there is room for further refinement: "We need and can have a good image — there is no reason not to. New facilities are not mandatory to accomplish this. What is important is recognizing the need for a better job of housekeeping."

As president, Keenan will stress three images he feels are easily obtainable: 1) Service Image — having the facilities and personnel available to provide the customer with what he wants, needs and is willing to pay for; 2) Inventory Image — proving that the rental is operational, can live up to claims made and fully serve the customer's purpose; 3) Public Image — convincing the customer that this is the right place to do business, by operating a pleasant and inviting rental facility.

"We're going to try to spread this image concept in 1973. We hope that members will strive for image on their own and encourage neighbors and local groups to make it a common goal.

"The know-how is already there, but we must see the need and devote the time. We sometimes fail to set a priority on image until we know a visitor or important person is dropping by. Many of us clean up only for special occasions. But my thinking is this: Who is more important than the customer?"

Spare-Time Work Paid Off

Only a few years ago the two Christie brothers, Robert and Geoff, were both public servants.

They were not the only young men in the Public Service who were talking about getting out of the rut and setting up in business for themselves. What distinguished them from the other talkers was the fact that they did something about it.

They were attracted to the hire industry, saw a need for air compressors and decided to specialise. Of course it wasn't quite as simple as it sounds. They still had to eat while they were building up a business from scratch, and this meant working every night and at weekends. Even the servicing and maintenance of their equipment had to be done at night — under floodlights.

It wasn't easy holding down two jobs, but their wives backed them up and eventually the time came when they could resign from the Public Service and work for themselves full time.

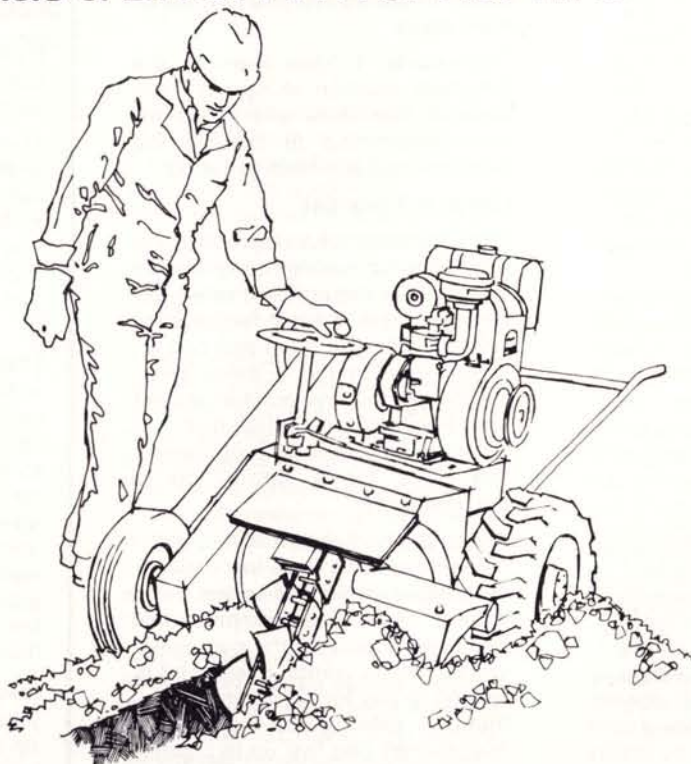
Today Christies' Hire Service at Brookvale, N.S.W., is very much a going concern. The future looks good to Geoff Christie, who believes that the present recessionary trend must benefit the hire industry.

They still like to specialise in equipment that other companies tend not to carry — things like air saws and power wheelbarrows — and they have built up a good range of building and handyman equipment.

Clearly on its way, Christies' Hire Service recently joined the H.A.N.S.W.

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PROGRESS REPORT

from
CONVENTION SUB-COMMITTEES

An important step in the initial planning for the 1974 National Hire Convention in Sydney was the appointment of two sub-committees to take responsibility for the organisational detail. One of them, chaired by Andrew Kennard, undertook the allocation of space for exhibits and equipment displays. The other, chaired by Warwick Levy, was concerned with Convention themes and topics and the choice of speakers for the business sessions. In the intervening months both sub-committees have been working hard behind the scenes, so HIRE contacted the two chairmen for a progress report. As it is still early days (or was when we spoke to them), it must be appreciated that some of the arrangements have not yet been finalised, and changes could occur. But here, substantially, is the picture . . .



WARWICK LEVY:

"People go to a Convention to learn."

THEMES OF NATION-WIDE IMPORTANCE TO THE HIRE INDUSTRY

Warwick Levy contends that everyone who attends a Convention is motivated by the desire to learn something — or, hopefully, a number of things — that will assist him in the operation of his business. For this reason the accent is on practical, topical information in the 1974 programme, with discussion (which will probably run hot in any case) relegated to after business hours.

However, in some instances both sides of a question will be forcibly presented to stimulate thought.

There will be two business sessions on each of the three days of the Convention. The first topic on the Friday, WHAT BUSINESS MACHINES CAN DO, will be covered in detail by an expert — and debated by at least one unconverted member of the H.A. Committee who has equally committed views.

The second Friday subject — MOTIVATE OR DOMINATE? — is also considered ground for contention, with the case against motivation to be put by the President of the H.A.N.S.W.

At the opening session on the Saturday a panel of hire practitioners will describe THE PERFECT HIRE YARD. In this instance provision has been made for delegate discussion. The other Saturday topic will be controversial: MAKERS AND HIRERS — FRIENDS OR FOES?

Sunday morning will get off to a promising start with a down-to-earth talk on TELEPHONE SALES, followed by POLLUTION — WATCH YOUR STEP!, an expert's rundown on legislation covering disposal, noise and other forms of pollution relevant to the hire industry.

After lunch on the Friday and Saturday the Convention will virtually become a trade fair. Delegates will have ample time to visit the exhibitions and displays, and to discuss equipment with the suppliers' representatives who will be in full-time attendance.



ANDREW KENNARD:

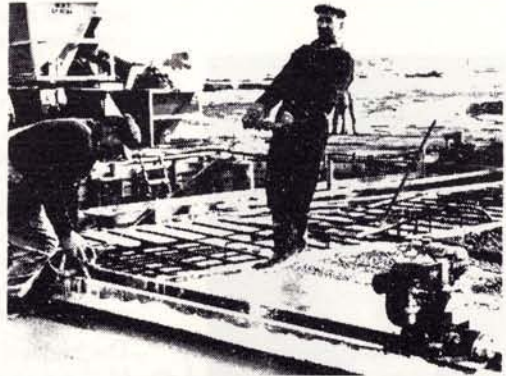
"Bring your order book with you!"

DISCOUNTS FOR DELEGATES? SPECIAL OFFERS LIKELY AT CONVENTION

Andrew Kennard advises delegates to bring their order books to the National Hire Convention at the Sydney Chevron. He predicts (and who would be more likely to have inside information?) that some of the exhibitors will be offering Convention specials, discounts, extras and sundry goodies that you won't want to miss.

About 70 booths have been made available to manufacturers and suppliers throughout Australia, 45

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of them in the ballroom of the hotel itself and a further 25-30 directly adjacent to it in the 'hole in the ground.' These will be accommodated in a marquee, but some of them will extend beyond the perimeter of the marquee and will therefore be ideally suited to displays of very large equipment.

At our last check space was going fast on a first-come-first-served basis, following the issue of a brochure through the mails. Suppliers from all States, including party and 'soft' hire companies, are being well represented.

Anyone who has missed out on reserving space and would still like to exhibit should waste no time in contacting H.A. Secretary Rolf Schufft, whose telephone number is (Sydney) 255401. Even if all the space has been taken there could just possibly be a cancellation!

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The Hire Industry has been quick to appreciate the investment value in Ezi-lift Ladders together with the fast after-sales service provided.

Bradley Bros. have recently released the Aldek mobile aluminium work platform, built in rugged two inch aluminium tubing. This unit can be quickly assembled and easily stored and used with add on sections, extra platform working height is provided for those difficult maintenance and construction jobs. Bradley Bros. Limited first introduced aluminium ladders to the Australian market in 1958 under the registered brand name Ezi-lift, as manufacturing licensees to R.D. Werner Co. Inc., U.S.A.

This link with a major aluminium extruder and ladder stage and scaffold manufacturer afforded Bradley Bros. the benefits of Werner's long experience as a pioneer in the industry overseas.

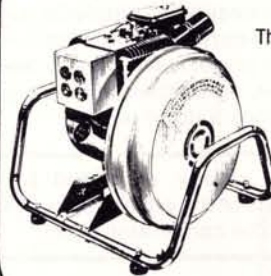
Calling all Party Hirers

It was our intention to play the full spotlight on the party equipment hire section of the industry and run a comprehensive feature, 'Party Hire Around Australia', in this present issue. However, as explained in our editorial, our plans were sabotaged by the postal non-workers. We *could*, even so, have confined the feature to N.S.W. but we decided against this compromise because we wanted it to be a significant and genuinely national survey. Whether we are able to achieve this objective depends very largely on you. If you are engaged in any type of party equipment hire anywhere in Australia, we would appreciate it

very much indeed if you would send us some information about your company. Even if it's only in the form of rough notes, we'd like to have your company story. We would also welcome your estimate of the party hire situation in your State and your views on how it could be improved. And we would rejoice to receive photographs (preferably black-and-white prints) of personnel, premises, special events or whatever seems relevant. Send your material as soon as possible to: The Editor, HIRE, 23 King Street, Waverton, N.S.W. 2060, and help us to make it a really outstanding feature. Whether it's a dazzler or a damp squib is up to you!

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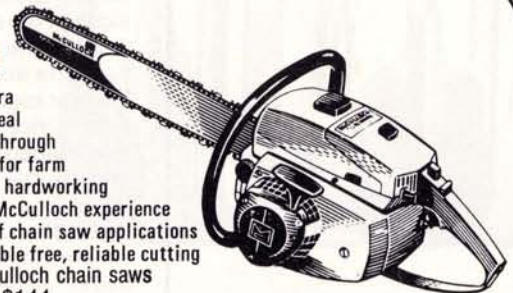
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Three models ranging from 1250 watts at 250 volts AC to 2400 watts at 240/115 volts AC. Each one a lightweight portable powerhouse for continuous or standby duty. 4-cycle engines. Weights range from only 63 lbs. to 129 lbs. Generators are designed on axial principle with rotating barium ferrite permanent magnets, eliminating brushes, slip rings, commutator. No arcing, sparking or electrical maintenance problems—and the prices are right.

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ONE AMERICAN'S POINT OF VIEW

by
Roger S. Smith
Publisher, RENTAL AGE

"One of the first things an editor/publisher must do is buy a complete set of armor and wear it constantly . . ."

In its seventh year of publication, this journal has received a singular honour: an article especially written for its readers by Roger S. Smith, publisher of RENTAL AGE, the official journal of the American Rental Association. When, sympathetic to our problems, he offered us an article, we accepted the offer with delight. In no time at all the manuscript was airmailed to us. We present the article with pride and enthusiasm but without further comment. Good wine needs no bush.

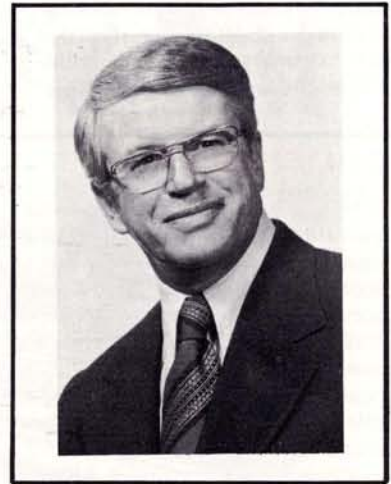
The February issue of HIRE Magazine featured an editorial that immediately attracted my attention. "Should HIRE Expire?" pointed out quite vividly the problems facing any publisher in a youthful, vigorous industry. As I understand it, the problems illustrated in the editorial have been resolved but it would be naive to think they may never crop up again.

One of the first things an editor/publisher must do is buy a complete set of armor and wear it constantly. Darts, arrows and pot shots must be expected when one produces a form of communication that is circulated widely throughout the industry. Without the protection of the armor, and the resolve to go with it, an editor/publisher soon becomes a mere pawn.

"The energy expended by both sides is of the adversary type rather than the cooperator type."

The extreme youth of the hire industry creates many understandable problems on both sides of the communications fence. On the one hand, the industry is happy to accept a publication that binds it together communications-wise. Once the vehicle is established, the industry starts to analyze the content. The readers know what they like to see and read and if they don't get a reasonable facsimile thereof, the snipers begin.

The editor/publisher who establishes the magazine breathes a sigh of relief after the first year or so of publication and tends to sit back and wait for things to happen. The communicator has been under such a strain of getting the



Roger S. Smith

magazine launched, and has expended much hard-earned money or hard-loaned money to do so. Therefore a period of slackening off sets in whilst he or she catches their respective breath.

Where the difficulty comes in is between the reader/contributor and the editor/publisher not realizing the importance of understanding the other bloke's point of view.

The editor/publisher wonders where his material is coming from for the next issue, and the reader wonders why the magazine is so slim or so full of articles that are perhaps not news to him.

The energy expended by both sides is of the adversary type rather than the cooperator type and not too much gets done until the reader and the publisher know what is expected of each other.

Here are a few thoughts running around my mind that might be brought to the surface for whatever value they might have.

For the reader — if you are asked to contribute an article, please observe the deadline established by the editor/publisher. If, for some reason, the deadline is not acceptable to you, don't ignore it. Contact the editor/publisher immediately and let him or her know that an article will not be forthcoming until a certain time. This allows the editor to plan something else in its stead.

Don't worry about being expected to write the great hire novel of all time. The editor will smooth out the rough spots, punctuate, spell and insert the proper grammar where needed.

If you have promised photos with your article, be sure to follow through with this. Glossy photos, please — not something torn out of another magazine or newspaper that already has tones in it.

"Be a bird dog for your industry... let the editor know."

Be a bird dog for your industry. If you hear about a circumstance, a new business opening or remodeling, a new piece of equipment that has just been introduced . . . anything that is newsworthy to the industry . . . let the editor know. They can't possibly cover all the bases they are expected to.

It is only the large consumer magazines that can afford to send reporters out on a moment's notice to cover a fast-breaking story. Industry and trade publications just don't have the budget to enable them to pursue the will-o-the-wisp story. Let them know what is happening in their area. They are experts in journalism. You are the expert in the hire industry.

For the editor — don't forget that the hire people have their own livelihood to take care of first. After that comes the association work and the magazine articles. So when someone approaches you, or you approach them, give them a realistic deadline making sure they understand your needs and that you understand theirs.

At conventions and meetings — look around for the liveliest people

you can find. They are usually the motivators. If they are unable to supply material they would know of someone who can.

Some of your readers have been through the mill, so to speak, and have experienced most of the problems that beset the industry. Therefore, anything you write will probably be "old hat" and you must expect to hear it from the old timers. There really is nothing new under the sun, only variations of the old. The people who will appreciate your efforts the most are the ones who are new in the industry, those who are so grateful for even the smallest piece of information that will help smooth out the rough spots for them. You can expect praise from these folks.

Cultivate both the old timer and the first timer. Both have a great deal to offer any editor/publisher, any trade magazine, any association. The garden path is sometimes beset with thorns, but they are removable.

"Your motto should be 'Will HIRE Inspire?' I think it has and it will."

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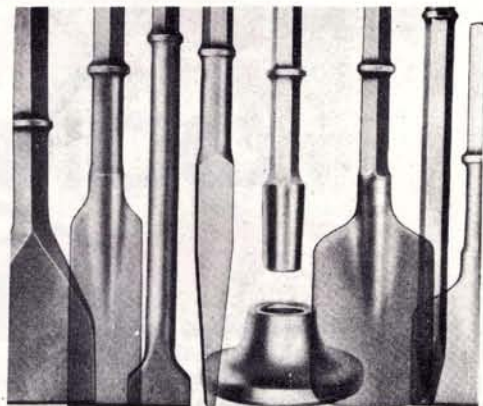
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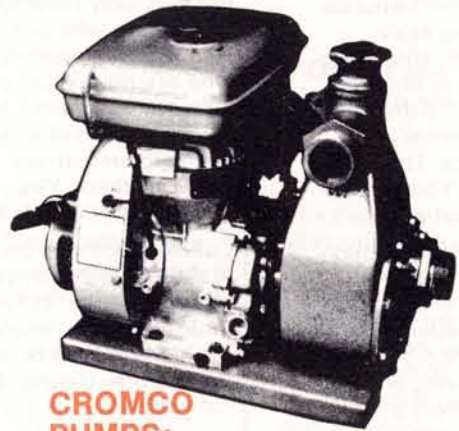
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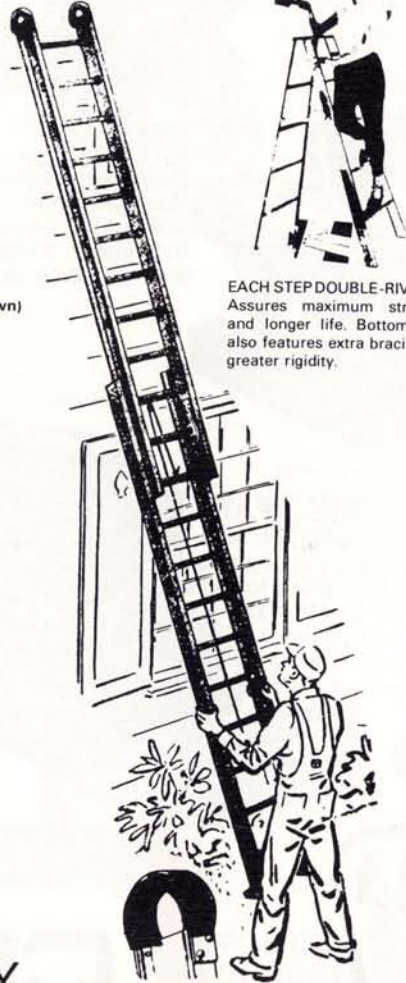
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VIEWPOINT

To discuss the pros and cons of sub-groups within the Hire Association, we approached Harry Ford because he is the Secretary of the Party Equipment Hirers' sub-group in the H.A.N.S.W. . . . and Warwick Levy because he is strongly opposed to 'splinter groups'. Both are Hire Association Committee members in their first term of office. Where do YOU stand on this controversial issue? We would like to publish your viewpoint, too.



WHY I BELIEVE IN SUB-GROUPS

by
HARRY FORD

Ador Hiring Service

Within an organisation whose members are as widely diversified as those of the Hire Association, I believe that sub-groups are not only desirable but necessary. People engaged in — say — my own category, party hire, have a completely different set of problems from those of the numerically dominant plant hire companies.

We cannot even benefit from delinquent debtors lists because we don't share their clientele. We have packaging and transportation problems peculiar to ourselves, and money-saving projects (such as group buying) that apply to us alone.

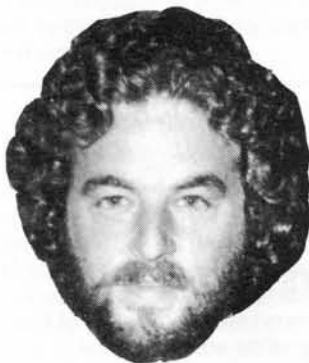
Far from splitting a Hire Association, a sub-group reinforces its weak areas. In recent months five party hire companies which had been functioning outside the Association have joined the H.A.N.S.W. in order to benefit from sub-group membership. Others

who had been little more than nominal members for years have become re-enthused and activated.

What hope does a minority group have of discussing and resolving its domestic issues unless it consolidates and holds its own meetings?

Party hire inventories are long and complex, and the related problems very complex. For instance, at our last meeting we spent a long time examining 3 different work studies on the unit cost of washing glasses. Imagine holding up the business of the H.A.N.S.W. with an in-depth discussion on glass-washing!

Without our own sub-group we would be fringe dwellers in the Association, geographically separated and functioning in isolation. Our common aims and needs have drawn us together. As a result we are better friends, better hire people — and better members of the Hire Association.



WHY I DON'T BELIEVE IN SUB-GROUPS

by
WARWICK LEVY

Formal Wear Hire Service

Why was the Hire Association formed? The simple reason was that certain far-sighted proprietors of hire services recognised that they were involved in an industry which had no corporate representation. They similarly recognised that all hire businesses were components of one industry, regardless of what segment of hire they dealt in.

Nothing has changed to alter this concept. The Association is only valid as long as it highlights common points, solves common problems and welds common bonds for all members.

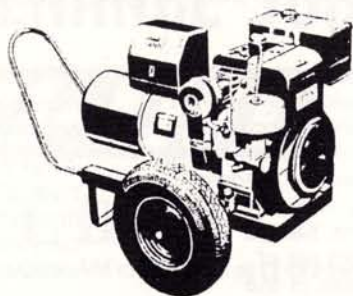
The real value of our industry Association lies in its intrinsic togetherness, and therefore its ability to exert unified pressure when required and finally to put before the public a viable alternative to ownership.

All hire companies are in business to achieve profit by extending the concept of hire, and by maximising the efficiency of the hire operation. It does not matter a damn what is hired — we are all members of one growing industry and the problems, benefits and opportunities are common to us all.

If we sectionalise, we deny our reason for being an association — we are saying we do not have sufficient in common to justify our existence. Why then have an Association at all?

Furthermore, we sap our own strength, which is unity. We lose our ability to be an effective pressure group. Most serious of all, we frustrate the ebb and flow of information and the interchange of ideas between hirers, which is the very lifeblood of the Association.

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HIRESCOPE



HAROLD JOHNSTONE

DEATH OF FORMER H.A.N.S.W. SECRETARY

It is with regret that we record the death on June the 5th of Harold Johnstone, following a long illness. Members of the N.A.N.S.W. will recall that he occupied the position of Secretary and served the Association well for the best part of two years between 1970 and 1972. His death brought to a close a long career with the N.S.W. Chamber of Manufacturers.

H.A.V. APPOINTS NEW SECRETARY

Following the recent resignation of Association Secretary John Klemmer, the H.A.V. has appointed Ian Haskell to the vacant position. We are waiting on a photograph and profile of the new Secretary, but it is in the lap of the striking postal workers whether they reach us in time for this issue.

STOP PRESS! BOOST FOR H.A.S.A.

We hear on the grapevine that the venue for the 1975 National Hire Convention will be Adelaide. The first to be held in the State, it should strengthen the H.A.S.A. and,

hopefully, increase membership. (According to the last figures we received, there are still only eleven members in the South Australian Hire Association, although the industry appears to be going ahead rapidly in South Australia.) Indeed the *Adelaide News* recently carried a well-supported supplement surveying what it calls, rather quaintly, 'the *Hiring Association*'.

DAVLECO FOUNDER RETIRES

Mr W.G. (Bill) Davies retired as Managing Director of Davleco Industries on 30 June, 1974. Mr Davies who, together with his father, founded Davleco in the mid-1940s, will remain as a consultant to Davleco Industries. He was a pioneer in the field of builders' hoistowers and a leader in the field of manufacturers of vibrating rollers.

FAIR WEATHER WAS FOUL

Party equipment hire people have always participated in the N.S.W. Catering Trade Fair, if more indirectly than directly. This year, due to the impending move, Patti's Hire Service — the company which distinguished itself at so many previous Fairs — was unable to take part, but hire companies contributed party equipment and decor to most of the exhibits and displays. Held from the 27th to the 31st of May, the Fair had to contend with cyclonic storms and torrential rain. There were numerous minor casualties. A beautiful piece of craftsmanship, a Spanish galleon fashioned out of chocolate, was wrecked when the wind caught its sail and smashed it to pieces. An exhibitor from Canberra met disaster when he skidded off the road. But in spite of many such mishaps the Fair was voted an outstanding success. And once again hire companies demonstrated their ability to come to the rescue anywhere, any time, that need arises.

WHO IS 'MADAME X'?

Who is the mystery woman rumoured to be coming to the H.A.A. Convention in September? Is she the Nepalese lady who rents bikes in Katmandu? Or the belly-dancer from beautiful downtown Redwood City, California? Or a happy hooker from Kings Cross to talk about the world's oldest (rental) profession? Speculation is rife, and your guess is as good as ours. All we can tell you is that Madame X — or should we move with the times and call her Ms. X? — will be identified, if not unveiled, at the Chevron Hotel, Sydney in September.

MOVING DAY COMING SOON?

If you are changing your business address (or opening a new branch) don't forget to let HIRE know. As well as ensuring that you continue to receive your journal, this will enable us to advise the whole industry. Every time we send out an issue of HIRE a number of copies are eventually returned to us marked 'Left address' or 'Address unknown' or 'Redirection fee expired.'

PARTY HIRE INTERSTATE TAKEOVER

Just before this issue went to press John Kroeger rang HIRE from Adelaide to report what is surely the first interstate partyhire takeover in the history of the Australian hire industry. His company, Renniks Hire, Kings Park, South Australia, has taken over Ellis Hire Service, Kensington, Victoria, and will henceforth be operating in both States. John was putting a full account into the mail that day, but — P.M.G. 'service' being what it is — there was still no sign of it five days later. So we will be bringing it to you, together with other information about this most interesting company, in our next issue.



Before some H.A. dignitary takes umbrage at the question, we hasten to explain that we are asking it with constructive, not destructive, intent. We don't know the answer but we would like to know it — and we believe that the State Hire Associations would like to know it also, if only because the small operators of the industry are the key to a healthy across-the-board increase in membership, and to the numerical strength that would enable the Associations to flex more muscle.

What, for instance, is being done to attract the small hire company? Most of the big boys are members already, members of long standing. The future potential is to be found in the smaller businesses — and you have only to check the pink pages of your telephone directory to see that they are staying away in droves. Perhaps some of them don't believe in togetherness. Or perhaps they're still outside because nobody has ever taken the trouble to say to them: "Come on in and feel welcome!" Certainly many of them, on their own admission, haven't joined because they believe that the Hire Associations, as presently constituted, are geared to look after the interests of the big operator — specifically the big plant hire operator.

ASSOCIATIONS — WHO NEEDS THEM?

The answer is that everybody needs them — provided they serve everybody's interests. Let's take a look at the Helpful Hire Service which has one more-or-less full

time employee and some casual assistance from the owner's wife, who is mainly concerned with the books. Its big line is probably something a bit off the beaten track — like gardening tools, or fancy costumes, or stuffed baby crocodiles.

Comes the day when Howard Helpful, having made the big decision to join the Hire Association, attends his first meeting. There is some discussion on rate-fixing, but it applies to construction plant, and the only plant Howard owns is a philodendron. Reference is made to a delinquent debtors list and he pricks up his ears because he *has* got quite a few of those. But it turns out that delinquent debtors come in many categories, and that the people who knock off power tools and compressors have no connection with the non-returners of fancy costumes and stuffed baby crocodiles. There are questions he would like to ask but he hesitates to open his mouth because it is all too obvious that he represents a minority group and no one will be interested.

The following week he runs into a problem about — say — an import licence for funny hats. Now that he belongs to the Hire Association he is virtually a member of a union — and unions help their members, don't they? The President seemed a pretty good bloke, so he tries to contact him. And tries. And tries. (HIRE knows from frustrating experience that it would be easier to set up dialogue with the White House or the Vatican than with the President of the H.A.N.S.W. This is probably a local situation which doesn't apply at all in other States.

Howard would have done better if he had contacted the President of the H.A.A., who is approachable and helpful, as well as punctilious in returning phone calls, but how was a new boy to know?)

Eventually Howard gets onto the Association Secretary, but import licences for funny hats are a bit out of the Secretary's line of country, so nothing comes of it. He begins to feel like the odd man out. He can't relate to the Association, and the Association doesn't seem to be interested in relating to him.

In spite of his disappointment, he goes along to two more meetings. There are probably some kindred souls among his fellow members, but if so he doesn't get to meet them. He has been thinking about doing some promotion, so he is interested when the subject comes up — but once again he's in the wrong league. When he asks for advice he's told to find himself a good advertising agency. Howard's wife had once worked in the Accounts Department of an advertising agency (that's why she now keeps his books) so he knows quite a bit about agency commissions, and agency attitudes to low-budget clients like the Helpful Hire Service.

When, eventually, he resigns from the Association, his exit goes even more unnoticed than his advent — which at least had been recorded in the minutes.

A pity, because Howard had been prepared to pull his weight. And if there's one thing that everyone agrees on, it's the need for more members.

Continued on page 39



**DO HIRE ASSOCIATIONS
REALLY RELATE TO
SMALL HIRE COMPANIES**

FEEDBACK

Frank, constructive answers to HIRE's reader survey

Among the more obvious problems involved in producing a magazine for such a diversified group of people as the members of the hire industry is the one of ascertaining what those members want to read. H.A.A. President Neville Kennard suggested it might be an idea to send out a questionnaire requesting information, and that was what we did, enclosing it in HIRE's April issue.

The best response came from Victoria, where almost as many forms were completed and returned as in all the other States put together. **(Up the H.A.V.! In recent weeks we have been cheered by the increasing Victorian participation in HIRE, credit for which is surely due not only to the members but also to H.A.V. President Ern Turner.)**

The replies to questions were thought-provoking and constructive. Here is a summation of what readers had to say about the industry, the associations and the journal . . .

THE INDUSTRY

In general, readers appear to be pretty happy with the Australian hire industry as it now stands, and with the State Associations to which they belong. However, many underlined the need for increased membership and more active participation. Some suggested that rank-and-file members should be given the opportunity to assist in Committee projects, thus distributing the work load and increasing their own interest and involvement. Spokesmen for some of the small companies, particularly those outside the building equipment field, told us that there is little place or benefit for them in the present big hire company setup. Other non-members admitted that

they had never joined a Hire Association because no one had ever approached them and suggested that they should. (We got the impression, perhaps inaccurately, that H.A. recruiting appears to be less active in South Australia than in some other States.)

Hoped-for improvements and innovations included: standardisation of rates, deposits and equipment . . . 'friendly opposition' leading to closer unity and co-operation between the members of some State Associations . . . abolition of the 1½% stamp duty on hire companies' turnover in Western Australia . . . an increase in the incidence of workshop meetings in New South Wales . . . buying groups to assist members everywhere.

THE JOURNAL

The biggest vote was for hire company stories — with some specific requests for stories about *small* companies. (We have, in fact, been giving more space to small companies in recent issues, and will continue this policy to an increasing degree, given the necessary co-operation. If yours is a small operation, how about sending us your company story?)

Autobiographies are popular with some readers, and so are 'general stories of happenings, and solutions to problems that arise.'

There were requests for information about insurance against theft and damage, both accidental and malicious, including the rates charged and the extent of cover available. Also requested were regular, expert-contributed articles on such subjects as taxation, depreciation and awards.

A request for more articles and stories from overseas countries — the U.S., the U.K. and Canada — surprised us a little, because in the past we have sometimes come under fire for incorporating overseas material in the Australian hire industry journal. Perhaps the real test is the relevance of such stories to the local scene.

There was a big demand for expertise . . . time and labour saving tricks and techniques . . . new and improved methods of operation . . . hints on how to do things . . . ways to increase efficiency in the smaller hire business. Information was also sought on methods of promotion, booking office procedures, handling and packaging, marketing, raising finance, detailed service routines.

"The journal should cater for the whole hire industry," concluded one reader, "not just the area covered."

We couldn't agree with him more.

THE FUTURE

This seems an appropriate place to thank everyone who took the trouble to think about the survey, complete it and mail it back to us. The suggestions relating to the journal are not going to be pigeonholed: we intend to implement as many of them as possible as quickly as possible, on a continuing basis. Probably you can help us in one way or another. If, for example, you have knowledge and experience relating to any of the listed topics we would be delighted to hear from you. If you know some expert who might be persuaded to contribute an article, tell us his name so that we can approach him. Just as hiring is a service industry, HIRE is a service journal. Help us to build it up and it will serve not only your own business but the entire hire industry.

THE HIRE BUSINESS IS TOUGH SO HIRE OUT TOUGH EQUIPMENT- STIHL

You have probably found that there are people who sometimes treat hired equipment a little roughly. This makes the hire business tough . . . both on the equipment and on profits.

So you need to hire out gear that's tough.

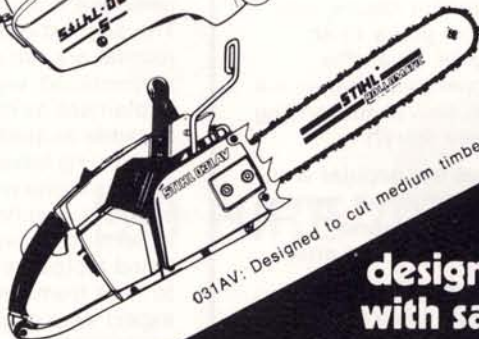
Stihl equipment can be man-handled and still come back for more. Stihl is designed for safe and trouble-free operation which keeps the hirer happy. To keep you happy, low initial outlay and low maintenance costs. Stihl is a profit maker in every way.

And if you think Stihl is only quality chain saws ask your dealer to show you the range of attachments. The two man earth drill, the fence post borer, the brush cutter, the hedge trimmer, the mister or the Cutquik.

Add Stihl to your hire equipment and you'll find the hire business isn't so tough after all.



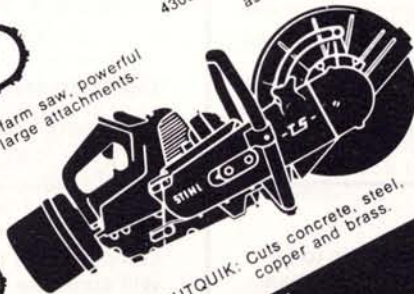
08S: Rugged forest or farm saw. Powerful enough to drive large attachments.



031AV: Designed to cut medium timber.



4309 FENCE POST BORER.
Can also be used as an earth auger.



TS08 CUTQUIK: Cuts concrete, steel, copper and brass.

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with safety in mind.**



LEN BOOTH, Manager of Builders' Equipment Pty. Ltd., Victorian Plant Hire Contractors with depots at Richmond, Surry Hills and Springvale, found this RENTAL EQUIPMENT REGISTER article so relevant to the Australian situation that he cut it out and sent it to HIRE with the following comment:

"The examples given of the multitude of different answers obtained from hire companies to a circulated questionnaire would be so similar to those that would be obtained from a questionnaire in the Australian hire industry that I am sure you would think it appropriate to republish this article in HIRE."

We agree with him, thank him for his interest, and republish it herewith . . .

PROBLEM:

You have rented a compressor to a regular contractor customer. The contractor picks up the compressor and takes it to a jobsite 25 miles from your store. The following morning the job superintendent calls you and complains that the machine won't start. You attempt to diagnose the problem over the phone, but since the job superintendent is not running the machine he is unable to give you adequate information. He says, "The damned thing won't run," and demands that you either send a man out to repair it or replace the compressor.

Since you have no available replacement, you send one of your shop mechanics by truck with necessary testing equipment, fuel and replacement parts. It takes an hour for you to discuss the problem with the mechanic, load the truck and get to the jobsite.

Upon arrival, your mechanic first checks fuel level and finds the tank dry. In addition, the battery has been flattened and the starter has been damaged due to repeated attempts to start the machine. The mechanic pulls the battery and starter and replaces both of them. He refuels the compressor and it starts immediately.

Your mechanic informs the operator that the battery and starter were damaged due to over-attempts at starting, whereas the only genuine problem was that the compressor was out of fuel.

SERVICE CALL PROCEDURES

Reprinted by courtesy of R.E.R.

The mechanic returns to the yard. Three hours of his time was consumed by this service call. There also were the basic costs of a new battery and new starter.

What policy do you use to recover your direct and indirect costs on this service call?

The replies to this and to most of the questions regarding the incident of the compressor and its breakdown almost consistently involved the rental firm's *relationship* to the customer. That is, who was the customer, what amount of volume his firm generated in rentals, etc. Nevertheless, a good deal more than 50 per cent would either attempt to collect "cost" (both materials and labor) or would charge the customer total expenses (materials, time and labor), and stated that they would do so because it was the customer's fault.

One respondent felt that, regardless of who was right or wrong, the primary objective of the rental firm is to get the job going again, do whatever is necessary, and work out the charges at a later date.

Answers ranged from a down-to-earth assertion that "If it's the customer's fault, he pays!" to the extremely lenient, "No charge at all."

A relative few mentioned Damage Waiver insurance as perhaps partially helping a situation such as this, and, as such, if the customer had taken advantage of the Damage Waiver, there would be no charges up to the deductible. Without Damage Waiver, these same rental operators said, there would be complete charge for damages.

One suggestion was made that in cases such as this it would be best to inform the superintendent of the mechanic's findings and if possible have him sign the service call form. Lastly, if the service call results in charges, a dealer advised making out a separate regular "Shop Work Order" and billing the customer *separately*, that is, not included on the rental invoice.

Is this policy which you use in this situation one which you would use on all similar service calls?

Overwhelmingly, "yes." At least, consistency is evident in whatever policy a rental firm has decided upon in situations cited above.

Do you vary this policy in accordance with the relationship to your customer?

One reply stated, "Are you kidding?" Surprisingly enough, although the pendulum swung more to the "yes" reply, a considerable number of rentalmen replied with a flat "no" to the question.

Quite naturally, the policy would vary according to value and reputation of the customer. No one, however, with but a couple of exceptions, was willing to entirely forgive all costs on this service call. Even to good customers there were statements such as, "We'd negotiate," or "We might adjust the bill for a better customer, say 25 to 50 per cent."

On the other hand, one stated, "We won't be bullied into not charging!"

Reasonableness was reflected by many — "We'd usually give the customer the benefit of the doubt" or "We vary, but really shouldn't, for policy should be the same for all customers" or "The overlying rule is to be fair."

If charges are made, a rental dealer suggested that those charges be placed on the rental invoice and if there is an adjustment to so indicate on the invoice. This will serve as a reminder of the situation with this particular customer should it come up again.

One man sized it up with, "Normally we'd vary, but not in this example!"

Do you feel this policy is adequate, equitable and accepted by your contractor customers?

There is a bit of inconsistency between the replies to this question

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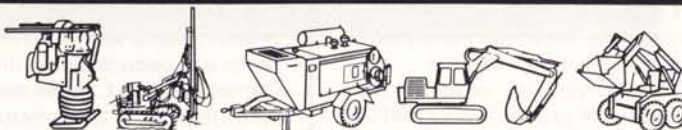
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TB.866

and the tabulation of replies to the question that follows. For instance, the overwhelming majority of respondents answered "yes" to this question. As will be seen later, this didn't seem to bear out percentage-wise.

Those that felt a "no" answer was more appropriate stated, "Customers feel rental yards should pay all costs" and "Our customers should not dictate our policies."

One concluded, "Accepted, yes. Equitable, NO!"

In what percentage of your service calls (where there is a direct expense factor) does the contractor argue his responsibility?

The inconsistency described above is shown in this question. Whereas it was stated above that in most cases the contractor apparently was not in conflict or argued those charges, one-third of our respondents stated that 50 per cent or more of the time there was an argument regarding the charges. There was quite a number who stated there was an argument over 90 per cent of the time!

"Although we take the attitude that if treating the matter fairly is not satisfactory to this customer, then he had best look for service from some other rental outlet."

"If we are not positive that it is his fault, we do not charge. But we are rather firm when we feel we are right."

"We do not argue. If he refuses to pay it, we let it drop and we drop him!"

Obviously, the rental dealer wishes to be fair but will also be firm if necessary.

Is this policy made known to all of your contractor customers in advance of rental?

This actually was a hard question to answer, for it is obvious that a busy counterman cannot possibly recite a policy for the numerous "situations" that could come up in a rental. Consensus tended toward the admission that "no," it was not generally made known to the customer.

There is, perhaps, some validity in one man's comment that, "It is bad business to threaten a customer and we'd put this in the threatening category." Still another rentalman felt that, although the policy isn't now stated by his countermen, it should be — and especially if the customer is new or is from out of town.

One rental dealer stated that their firm's basic policy is explained to the principals of each account either when the account is opened, or when equipment is rented. It is not done on each individual rental, and in some cases is missed completely since their contact may be only with lower echelon personnel, such as laborers, etc.

If "yes" to the above question, in what way is it made known?

Most rental contracts have statements in them which disclose the responsibilities of the rentee; however, as a practical matter probably not one percent of the rental customers actually stop and read the fine print of a contract. Therefore, if, as stated here, the major method of revealing policy is through the contract, it apparently is not sufficient. One exception might be found in one man's reply, which stated that there is a message in bold face on the contract which explains, "If anything goes wrong, call in at once!"

It would appear that those rental firms currently using the Damage Waiver find it easier, and perhaps necessary, to explain in a bit more detail the responsibility of the customer. Other methods mentioned are by store signs, by actually starting up the equipment and by explaining policies to the new or out-of-town customer.

Do you know if your competitors use similar service policies?

Where most replies were "don't know," one rentalman had the stopper of, "They follow the same wishy-washy policies!" The number of "don't know" replies, however, do point up the fact that there is a tremendous inconsistency in policies in the

rental business. For instance, in one city a customer could conceivably run into four or five policies relative to a single rental handling.

Do you have a minimum rate established for service calls? If so, how much?

Believe it or not, by just the slimmest of margins, more rental dealers *do not* have a minimum rate for service calls than *do* have. Of those who have a minimum, the lowest is \$3.50 to \$5.00 and the highest reported was \$16.00 (without any qualifications.) One reported \$15 per hour, plus mileage at 15 cents per mile; another, \$9.00 per hour plus repair charges and fuel. For whatever it is worth, the greatest number have charges of between \$10.00 to \$12.50 minimum.

Do you believe service calls should be charged according to distance of call or time consumed?

It would appear that calls should be charged according to either time consumed or both, for in no instance was "distance of call" mentioned separately.

Most men felt time consumed plus cost of materials to be equitable. One believed that it is wisest to try and get the equipment back to the rental store as quickly as possible because delivery labor is cheaper than service calls.

Do you believe that "all" service calls should be charged to the customer regardless of the responsibility of the customer or the rental store?

If you've never heard of a "loaded" question then here is one for your study! The funny part of it is that, although the majority by far stated that "no," they would never follow such a policy, quite a few stated that they sure would charge if it was the customer's fault!

Reasonableness, again, evident in the majority of responses. For instance, "We find that the odds are highly in favor of the customer being at fault due to the careless attitude of the majority of job workmen." Yet, this same firm will be willing to accept in many cases a

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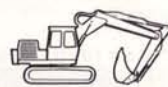
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TB.864

compromise settlement on the charges. Again and again, the words "normal wear and tear" popped up in reasons for the rental firm using judgment in deciding the responsibility for breakdowns and amount of repair charges. One man stated that it's just part of the cost of doing business and another pointed out that by charging for all calls you would eliminate one of the biggest reasons for renting.

One of the respondents who stated "yes" — that is, that all service calls should be charged — gave as his reason, "If only to discourage calls such as this!" Another comment and possible suggestion comes from a firm that states they try to educate their customers to return any equipment that fails to their yard for exchange.

Overall, the question was answered primarily with an apparent belief that service calls

are part of the business and must be handled with care if a problem arises.

Conclusion and Recommendation

Can there be such a thing as a defined policy in situations such as this one in the rental industry? If this industry is to continue to mature and grow, it must become firm where firmness is based upon fairness and by the same token it must be flexible where there is a reasonable doubt.

Being fair is a two-way street, and, although there will always be those individuals who will take advantage of a situation, by and large the majority of people are honest. So for that huge majority of people who are aware of their responsibility, they might possibly complain about being charged in this situation but after they think it over they can understand the position of the rental firm in

charging for obvious disuse of equipment.

Our recommendation, therefore, is that in all instances where there is no reasonable doubt that the equipment was damaged due to negligence, then it would be fair and reasonable to charge the customer for all expenses incurred in restoring the equipment to usage.

Our opinion is based upon the fact that only "marginal" customers would complain, anyway. Any reputable contractor, and especially one with whom a firm has been doing business, would never knowingly permit an employee to misuse equipment. However, if the employee did, then the contractor must be responsible for his actions.

(This is an open forum. If anyone disagrees with this conclusion, your comments are invited. Editor).

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WORKSHOP

a service feature
by Jock Mitchell



Jock
Mitchell

NO. 1. STREAMLINING THE LUBE AREA

One of the biggest headaches in the maintenance of hire equipment is the fact that nearly every manual/ requires a different type or grade of lubricant. Manufacturers specify certain types or brands, stating that the machine will not work properly or give long service unless these specific lubricants are used.

If we followed the manufacturers' specifications, our lubrication area would have to stock many brands and varieties. And lube areas, I'm sure we would all agree, are the messiest places in our stores.

MANUFACTURERS' CAN HELP

I have found lubricant manufacturers a great help in reducing the number of types and brands we used to carry. I buy all our lubricants from one company now, and they have helped us to reduce our greases down to one main type, and our oils down to four main types — with just a few exceptions.

We find that one engine oil will cover all engines, petrol and diesel, and that one gearbox oil covers all gearboxes, diffs and worm drives.

We also find that one transmission fluid covers all types of transmissions, as well as some hydraulic equipment; and one oil that covers all compressors also serves as chain oil and is suitable for hydraulic equipment.

We do carry some small quantities of graphite grease, water pump grease and 2-stroke oil, but these are so small that they are not even kept in the lube area.

TIDY AND EFFICIENT

With a reduction in the types of oil you carry, plus the installation of good dispensing equipment, you and your employees will be able to take a pride in your tidy and efficient lube area.

IN OUR NEXT ISSUE Jock Mitchell will give you some valuable advice on ways to organise your mechanics for maximum benefit to your company. And after that — well, how about suggesting a subject yourself that would interest you and other readers? Send your ideas, problems and questions concerning equipment maintenance to Jock Mitchell, C/- HIRE, 23 King Street, Waverton, N.S.W. 2060.

INTRODUCING A NEW SERVICE FEATURE — AND A NEW CONTRIBUTOR TO HIRE

We believe that this new regular feature will fill a genuine need by enabling hire companies to seek and obtain expert advice on a wide range of topics concerned with the maintenance of equipment.

The author, Jock Mitchell, is a Scot who came to Australia ten years ago. After working for two years in Queensland, he joined Kennard's Hire Service, Sydney, as a driver/mechanic. Eighteen months later he went to the United States for six months, then returned to Kennard's Hire where, for the past four years, he has been Workshop Manager at the St. Leonards branch. He is also in charge of purchasing.

The success and effectiveness of this feature will depend on how well you support it with questions and problems. Let's really get behind it and make it a valuable addition to your journal.

Why you must see STAND 27 AT THE H.A.A. CONVENTION

WHY YOU MUST SEE STAND 27 AT THE H.A.A. CONVENTION

Delegates to the 1974 Hire Convention at the Chevron Hotel, Sydney, next month would do well to put Stand 27 at the top of their list of stands to visit. For Stand 27 is the place to see the Spate — the high-capacity, lightweight sludge pump which has a range of uses unchallenged by any other pump on the market.

One of the outstanding advantages of this pump's application in the hire and construction industries is the fact that it requires no general maintenance or site calls. Another is that it is extremely light on spares. The complete pumping unit can be serviced in 15-20 minutes, using nothing more complicated than a ½" spanner and a screwdriver!

The unit is unharmed by sea water, just as it is impervious to a wide range of chemicals. It is ideal for pumping heavy oils and sludges.

There are other big advantages, too. The Spate will move sludge and grout containing up to 75% weight of solids. It will self prime from dry to 29 ft. with a total head up to 180 ft., and handle 7000 G.P.H. of oil, water, sludge, etc. It will compress air — 8 CFM to 70 PSI.

The Spate can also be used as a small well pointing pump, or as a pressure-jetting fire fighting unit. Indeed there appears to be no end to its long list of applications. These, coupled with its maintenance-free performance on site, have made it the logical choice for contractors and hire companies.

It is estimated that the pump will run at least 3000 hours before minor replacements could be necessary — at a cost of approximately \$12.00, plus half an hour's labour.

Spate pumps need no introduction to many major hire companies around Australia. Their exceptional versatility, endurance and ease of maintenance have earned them a proud position in a competitive market.

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victorian hire company raises ill-fated straitsman in twenty minutes

LINK INDUSTRIES 'MAGNIFICENT JOB'

We, at Link Industries, were interested to read of Silverwater Hire's emergency dash to save the trawler *Buccaneer* from sinking.

Unfortunately, we didn't get the chance to save a ship from sinking, but had our hands full raising a ship which had already sunk. Readers will all have heard of the 1000ton Bass Strait Ship *Straitsman* which went down in the Yarra River, Melbourne, on March 23rd last.

United Salvage Co. was in charge of operations to raise the vessel and United's chairman, Sir John Williams, sent for Link Industries as the day for raising the stricken vessel approached.

Finally, Monday April 29th dawned and Link's were on the job with

three pumps giving a total output of nearly 750,000 gallons per hour. A coffer dam built on the ship prevented any serious inrush of water as the pumps fired up, throwing water all over the river. Sir John Williams' estate was four hours to have the ship sufficiently buoyant for towing down river. With Link Industries' two ten-inch self priming pumps and one eight-inch submersible working at full bore, the ship was off the bottom in twenty minutes and moving to a position on a dredged-out ledge downstream.

Sir John's comment later was "my personal thanks to the Link Industries team for a magnificent job."

hire company in rescue drama as trawler sinks in heavy seas



Flashback to HIRE's April issue: the rescue of *Buccaneer* by Silverwater Hire which sparked this dramatic story. It was contributed by Link Industries, South Melbourne, Victoria.



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 - ANY QUANTITY
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ADVERTISING

AND THE SMALL HIRE COMPANY

When Jeff Marsh considered that he — and possibly other hire companies as well as his own — had been led, albeit gently, up the garden path, he took the logical course of action — he wrote a letter to the Editor of his industry magazine.

The circumstance he described in his letter was one of those let-the-buyer-beware situations where the advertiser has to watch out for his own interests. Two ways he can do this are (1) insist on seeing a proof of his advertisement, and (2) make his participation in the supplement conditional on getting some editorial support. Hire companies which were featured editorially in the *Daily Telegraph* supplement — such as Abalon Hirings and Kennard's — probably got excellent mileage from the exercise, in contrast to those companies which merely supported it with advertising.

We agree, in a general sense, with the final suggestion, but advertising agency charges can be quite unrealistic for the small company. HIRE has always believed — and suggested at least once — that the Hire Association should have its own promotional panel to advise and help members — especially the smaller companies which need promotion but can't afford to retain advertising agencies and public relations consultants.

A number of hire companies have mounted successful low-budget promotions of various kinds — and their willingness to be represented on such a panel would, as well as

Dear Wyn,

Usually I manage to upset someone, so here goes — once again on advertising. Unfortunately I was away when the (Sydney) *Daily Telegraph* produced a special 4-page supplement. Date was 13 May 1974. Perhaps you have a copy?

Anyway, to complete the story, I was approached by a representative who quoted space costs, etc. When I had agreed to a size to suit our small business, I went into details of the insertion and layout. Returning to Sydney, I found that the layout I had requested had not been inserted, so lesson one is to put things in writing, and get written confirmation.

More important, though, is that the feature was poorly supported. Was this through bad sales attempts on the part of *Daily Telegraph*, or sales resistance?

Also, I feel that to have a supplement headed "Leasing and Hire" is very wrong — very wrong! We should not be linked with the Lease people, for although long hires are very creamy in some respects, am I right in assuming that most members of the H.A. are interested in hiring as against leasing?

Thirdly, this sort of punch, or promotion, would be better left to a good advertising agent?

Jeff Marsh
Toongabbie Hire Service Pty. Ltd.



Jeff Marsh

testing their brotherly love, benefit the whole industry.

We put it to the State Associations that if they are concerned for their small member companies they should take steps to institute such a service. Indeed — as evidence of HIRE's sincerity — the Editor (who has had considerable experience in advertising and promotion) would volunteer to serve on such a panel in the journal's home State!

LIGHTBURN

has the name for the toughest, most reliable

MIXERS & JACKS

(famous not only throughout Australia, but in 70 other countries)



2 & 3 c.ft. models

Mobile models with stout tubular steel frames, heavy gauge steel bowls, cast crownwheels, long life bearings, enclosed power units. Driven by either a petrol or electric motor.

1 3/4 c.ft. all purpose farm mixer

Can be driven by flat belt from either a tractor or truck P.T.O. or stationary engine. Alternatively fitted with electric or petrol motor.



1 3/4 c.ft. "special electric"

A light, but ruggedly built mixer with a heavy-duty one-third H.P. electric motor. Ideal for jobs around the farm or home where there is 240 V power.

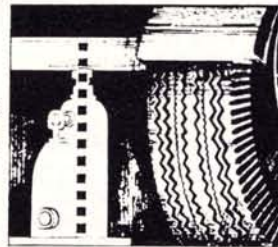


15 models 1-12 ton capacity

There's a Lightburn hydraulic jack to suit every vehicle, tractor and implement. All have a solid steel welded casing integral with the steel sled base . . . virtually indestructible!

Safe and positive lift

A hardened steel grooved headcap and large base ensures that the load is taken directly through the centre of the jack for greatest strength, stability, safety.



Easy one-point control

Lightburn jacks can be positioned, raised, lowered and withdrawn without crawling under the vehicle.

6 months warranty (double that of most jacks). Original equipment in leading makes of trucks.

LIGHTBURN

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59 Smith Street, Kensington,
Melbourne. Phone 330791

Morphett Road, Novar Gardens,
Adelaide. Phone 2954193

30 King Edward Road, Osbourne Park,
Perth. Phone 465022



THE LIGHTER SIDE OF HIRING

an occasional column
by
Bruce D. Whitfield

One customer, embarrassed at his revealed laziness, blushed furiously and took the bike for another month!

★ ★ ★ ★

LOUNGE CHAIRS FROM GREG PAGE, special tables from Patti's, public address system from A.W.A., and the rest of the gear from Abalon. All this to satisfy a very particular customer of Abalon's who was holding a special Exhibition in the city. A good example of the inter-trading which must often occur. No matter how big you get, there's always *something* you don't have — and your mates might. It's well worth the phone calls and co-ordinating to keep 'em happy.

★ ★ ★ ★

HEARTS STOPPED BEATING at Double Bay. There was to be a *very* fashionable Fashion Parade, organised by a beautiful lady well-known on T.V. and in the fashion world, but anonymous here. They had hired the glassware and mannequin catwalk from Abalon, and Bruce Whitefield and his wife, Donetta, were putting the catwalk together. Not the old style which needs two strong men and a truck — the Constructa type which anybody can carry and assemble, so all was completed when the organising lady appeared. She is what might be termed Junoesque. "Is that thing strong enough?" she boomed — and was assured that an eleven stone man had just stood on it to adjust the lights. "I weigh more than eleven stone" came the answer — and she proceeded to stomp down the catwalk. For a paralysing moment we expected to see her up to her knees in catwalk. But it held, and hearts resumed beating — a little faster than before.

★ ★ ★ ★

A BUXOM, RED-FACED YOUNG LADY stormed into Abalon Hirings at Rushcutter Bay the other day, puffing and carrying a Vibrator-Massager which she had been hiring for the past month.

"Hell," she muttered, "I've lost more bloody weight carrying it back than I did using it!"

★ ★ ★ ★

MOST OF THE EXECUTIVE STAFF of Abalon Hirings are members of the Kings Cross Lions Club, and the other week the Lions were running a Games Night to raise money for a widowed policeman's wife and kids. The Club was using the gambling tables belonging to Abalon, and the crowd was composed mainly of policemen. At one heated moment, when Roger Sherrington, Abalon's Display Manager, had thrown about seven consecutive "overs" on the Unders & Overs table, there was a friendly murmur in Roger's ear to the effect that the dice were loaded and there might be trouble. Roger looked around at his crowd of large, burly men clutching notes in their hands — Vice Squad, 21 Division, Darlinghurst detectives, etc etc etc. "I think I've got police protection" he said.

★ ★ ★ ★

IT'S A STANDING JOKE NOW at Abalon Hirings. Every time anybody hires out an Exercise Bike (those one-wheel contraptions) they secretly note down the mileage shown on the Odometer — the thing that tells how many miles you would have gone if it were a real bike. Then, when the customer returns the Bike (and if he seems to have a sense of humour) there's much discussion on just how much work was done during the hiring.

continued from page 26

THE COMMUNICATION GAP

Is there a place for small companies in the Hire Associations? If there isn't there could be and should be. Viewed from the sidelines, at least, the problem would seem to be partly one of integration — and of establishing sufficient common ground to make integration easy.

Are more sub-groups within the Association structure the answer? They could be — one of the answers. Should there be a committee to look after new members until they settle in? Or, alternatively, should an 'old' member take responsibility for each new member, and look out for his interests in the first twelve months? Should there be advisory services to help people with specific difficulties unrelated to plant hire and big-company procedures?

Questions, questions, questions. Questions to which *you* have the answers. Whether you belong or don't belong to your State Hire Association, if you own or manage a small hire business, HIRE would like to hear from you. Tell us how — in your view — the Association could relate more effectively to the smaller operator. Tell us what you would like to get out of Association membership. We won't publish your name, but we're very keen to publish your opinion. It might even help the Associations to re-evaluate the whole situation.

Because they need you just as surely as you need them.

The world's our stage. And TAA can pull the right strings for you. Anywhere.

All travel bookings. Not just by air either. But sea, rail, coach, or even camel. To anywhere in this world of ours.

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right strings for you. And arrange all accommodation, sight-seeing, entertainment. And for not a cent extra. Call any Accredited Travel Agent or your TAA International Travel Adviser now. And you're on stage.



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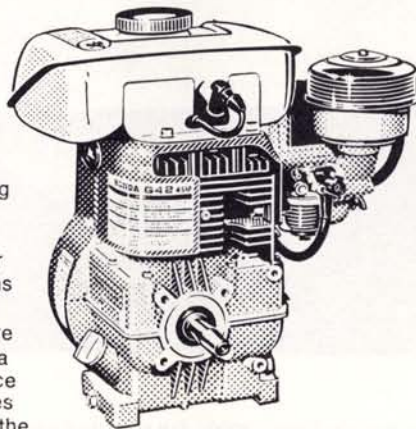
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HONDA POWER for everything...

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TROWELS...you name it!

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Illustrated: Model G42 4.5 H.P. Weight 39.6 lb (18 kg)



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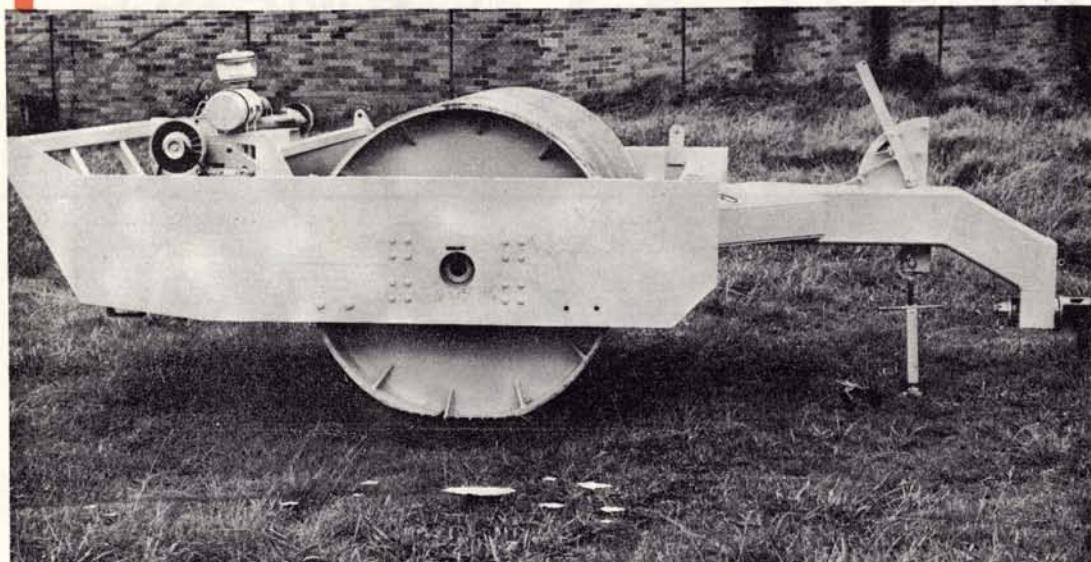
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