



SMOOTH OPERATOR: The DR Professional 825 trimmer /mower is lightweight and easy to wield in tight spaces

The Rochford files

On the face of it, the brief was simple – browse through the latest Rochford Garden Machinery catalogue to find a machine that fitted-in with this month's theme of reducing fatigue and speeding up the whole business of keeping brush and other unwanted green growth at bay. It took a while because as a nationwide supplier of several leading brands of equipment, the Rochford catalogue does list rather a lot of equipment!

But what we're looking for this month is a piece of kit that will make a tough job easier – by both reducing fatigue and increasing productivity. If the Overton Easy-Lift Harness enables you to achieve that with existing hand-held machines, what we need to find here is the next level up. There's a considerable gap in the brushcutter market between professional hand-held machines like say the 53cc Husqvarna 355RX (at around £825 ex-VAT) and ride-on units such as the Etesia AK85 Attila at £4,990 ex-VAT. True, there are also a number of professional pedestrian-operated powered two-wheeled rotary and/or flail machines available, but they're neither 'cheap', nor always easy to operate – especially over rough ground.

So on the face of it, the wheeled DR

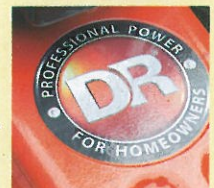
Professional 825 Trimmer/Mower fits that gap perfectly. It's easy to operate because it has self-propelled capability and can be used on steep slopes without fatigue. And because it doesn't feature lots of heavy metal – in the form of a flail or heavy-duty head – it's light and easy to wield in tight spaces too. And thanks to the 8.25hp Briggs & Stratton four-stroke engine, it's also much more powerful than a handheld unit, so it should be able to tackle anything from overgrown grass to serious brush without protest. And work for longer without refuelling too.

So can it? Well, yes and no. The DR Commercial 825 model tested comes with electric start and a really clever system of threading the trimmer cords through the head. Several grades are available and with the thickest fitted, the machine would chomp its way through an impenetrable wall of brush until.... well, either until the operator became entangled – stout clothes are essential on this job – or when the cord got mangled or used up. Obviously in really heavy going a metal blade is more resilient, but even then, it was no big deal – it just takes five minutes to thread a couple of new cords in and you're back in business.

- The DR trimmer/Mower range (six 'cord' models are available as well as a range of heavy duty metal-bladed brushcutters and mowers) is distributed in the UK by Rochford Garden Machinery, Wincanton, Somerset. List prices start at £365 ex-VAT. The top-of-the-range electric start DR Commercial self-propelled unit, as tested, costs £714. For more information, delivery and dealer information call 01963 828000.

FACTFILE

- A 8.25hp, four-stroke powered, pedestrian operated 'trimmer/mower'.
- Comes with electric start and self-propelled option for ease-of-use.
- Simple hand throttle and 'paddle' grips for trimmer drive and forward motion.



STRONG POINTS

- Six position cutting height adjustment from 1.5 to 4 inches. No tools needed.
- Anti-clog/anti-stall head design. Over 3000rpm operational speed. Cuts the lawn well, too!
- Electric start a real bonus. Ideal for those who hate recoil starters.