

IMReview 2024 25



12

GREAT THINGS AHEAD FOR
INTERNATIONAL MOTORS

20

MISSION TO RE-FIRE
EV MARKET

30

LAND FOR
OUR FUTURES

"You don't get to choose
what happens to you,
only what you do about it."



Last year I wrote about being in a defensive frame of mind but also preparing the company to take opportunities that we know will arise. So much has happened this year, yet I could say the same words today. This year has seen the company work hard to make the necessary adjustments that will continue to allow us to do well in the future. The business has been profitable and is moving forwards, yet we are not in any way near to kicking our shoes off, sitting back and putting our feet up, content in a 'job well done'!

It is always quite a task to keep IM Review to a manageable size. This year is certainly no different. There is so much activity happening across the group. Activity designed to move us forward with the plans and strategies we have made but have not yet fully delivered.

But despite so much activity, so much is still to be done. The problems we are tackling are interesting, challenging and not the occupation of a few weeks. There has been a change in the times more profound than the change in the (UK) government we saw this year.

It feels like there has never been a time when government regulation and policy has been more influential over all our businesses.

Both the UK and Europe are trying to move to a position where internal combustion engine vehicles are a thing of the past or, if not, at least that CO2 emitting vehicles can no longer be seen in our showrooms.



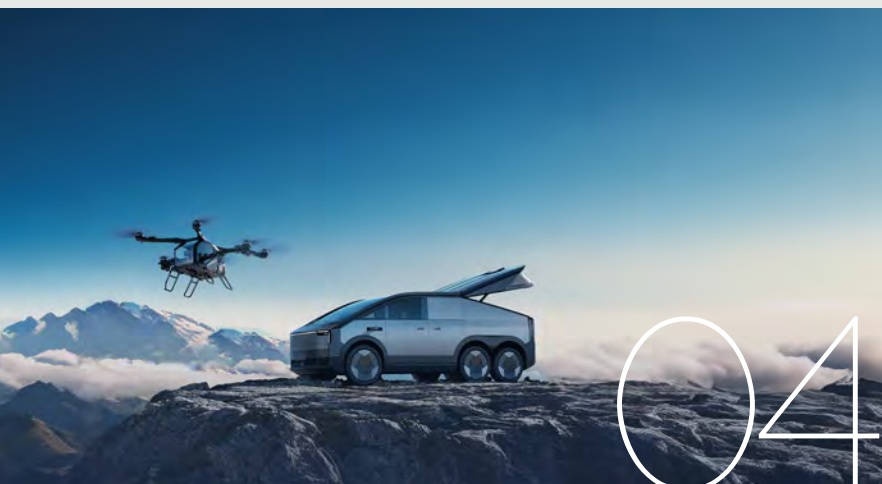
The movement to reduce emissions touches our residential and commercial property businesses too. As last year, interest rates are still having a major impact on our property business, and both our car and finance businesses continue to be heavily influenced by government and FCA regulation.

I heard a great quote. "You don't get to choose what happens to you, only what you do about it." I have always loved the idea of an overcoming spirit. I think it is one of the things we are made for. I also think one of our company's 'superpowers' is the agility to respond quickly to the way the environment is changing. There is no doubt this is still true. What is taking a little time is that the change itself is quite protracted. The move from ICE-vehicles to EVs is taking place over a number of years. Interest rates seem set to be at similar levels for a long period more and it will take a while for market rents to adjust, freeing

up our ability to continue growing. The work we are doing with Spitfire to turn it into an even more important business to the group than it has been; moving to the 'next level' so-to-speak is - like anything worth doing - worth taking the time to do well.

Despite a year that seems to have been full of activity, twists and turns, endeavour and forward-movement, the obvious summary for what this year has been is 'steady as she goes!' But that doesn't really describe the amount of work and effort, new initiatives and new opportunities happening at IM. See for yourself. There is a lot going on and, as always, we are so grateful to our team for going about this work in an effective, competent and enthusiastic way.

Andrew Edmiston



04
FLYING CARS COMING TO BRITAIN?

Is it a car? Is it a plane? No, it's a flying super car!

06
QUALITY FLIES FOR SPITFIRE

Our homebuyers' guardian angels are always on hand for guidance.

08
STRIVE TO THRIVE IN MOST AMBITIOUS BUSINESS PARK YET

Discover the place for businesses to start, grow and thrive.

10
POWERED BY NORDIC KNOW-HOW

Don't just power your car... power your home!

12
GREAT THINGS AHEAD FOR INTERNATIONAL MOTORS

Expanding operations to give customers greater choices.

14
GETTING THE DETAILS RIGHT
Dotting the 'i's and crossing the 't's.

15
CHINA EXPERT'S VIEW

Martin shares over 20 years' worth of knowledge with us.

16
GETTING THE MESSAGE ACROSS

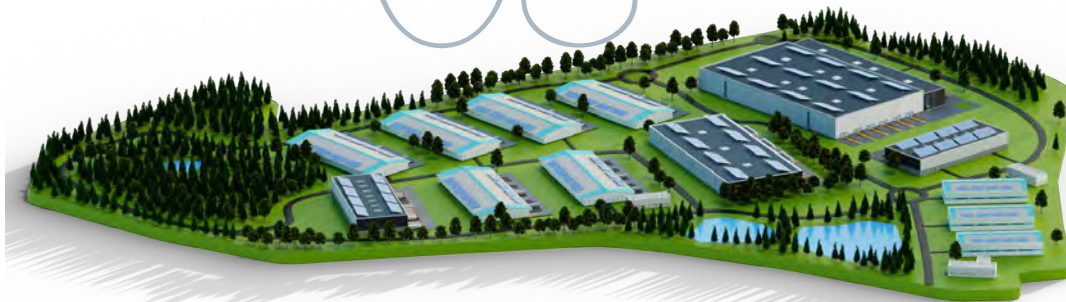
Alison is spearheading our GWM rebrand to dealers and customers alike!

17
OPPORTUNITY KNOCKS FOR GWM

Get ready for the Jolion Pro Hybrid – coming soon!



08



26





18
SUBARU UK'S HUMANITARIAN HELP
Helping provide aid where needed.

20
MISSION TO RE-FIRE EV RETAIL CAR SALES
We're on a mission to get motorists excited for EVs!

22
DRIVING SUBARU FORWARD
Lorraine Bishton's Mission – celebrating her first year at the helm, Lorraine is powering forward on her journey.

24
SALES SURGE FOR SUBARU
With an increase of 30.2 percent - the only way is up.

25
OCTOPUS TAKES A GRIP
Hinckley gets a new occupier

26
ISUZU GOES ELECTRIC
Meet the all-electric D-Max.

28
HELPING YOUNGSTERS EXCEL
Grace Foundation's vision continues to drive success.

30
LAND FOR OUR FUTURES
Going further than before to create new communities, jobs and homes.

32
LIFE ADDS UP FOR JAMES
Get to know James Pearson, Head of Finance and Operations for IM Motors.

34
IAN'S AMAZING PEDDLE-POWER
Be inspired by Ian's quest to raise money and keep fit.

35
EXCITING TIMES FOR CHRISTIAN VISION
2024 saw Christian Vision launch their new strategic plan for the future.

36
NOVA IS JUST PERFECT
The first building of its kind to achieve BREEAM 100%.

38
SURF'S UP!
Grab your surf board and catch waves at Coleshill.

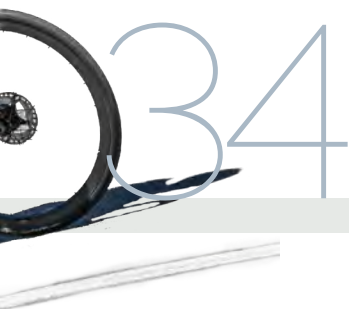
40
ROLLIN' ROLLIN' ROLLIN' ON THE RIVER!
Ain't no party like an IM party!

42
IM WELL IS REALLY WORKING
Wellbeing for all

43
NO HOLDING NORDIC BACK
You can't hold IM Nordic back, especially in Latvia!

44
NEWS IN BRIEF
A round-up of news from across the Group in 2024

52
FUTURE IN FOCUS
A look ahead for IM.



FLYING CARS COMING TO BRITAIN?



Xpeng X3 Flying Car

Is it a car, is it a plane – no it's a flying super car! And International Motors is working with the company that wants to bring them to Britain.

If that sounds like science fiction it's not. XPENG, a Chinese company founded just 11 years ago, has already developed and launched flying cars that have clocked up thousands of flying hours.

The first prototype made a manned flight in 2018, a two-seater version took off for its maiden flight in 2020 and a truly fantastic four-seater was flown in Dubai in 2022. This year it was the star at a key advanced-technology show in Las Vegas.

Stunning hardly describes the XPENG eVTOL vertical take-off flying car. Wings concealed in the streamlined roof of the car can be deployed at the touch of a button. Powerful electric motors drive rotors, which lift the two-ton car to the skies. It takes just minutes to convert from a car to a plane. It's a thing of amazing technical beauty.

XPENG has also developed an electric six-wheeled vehicle which is the size of a large SUV but can fit into a standard parking bay. It has just two seats up front. But out of the huge boot comes a two-seater vertical take-off aircraft! The firm says 200 will be flying in China by the end of the year.



From left: Martin Dalton, Director of Business Development; Andrew Edmiston, Managing Director IM Group; Alex Tang, Head of XPENG International and Deniz Mai, UK Country Manager for XPENG.

"XPENG is an exciting brand – can you imagine the crowd the flying car would draw if we get it to some of our shows and events."

Alongside these wonder machines, XPENG has developed a range of advanced all-electric cars. The latest, the P7+, debuted at the Paris Motor Show in October. Two other models, the G9 flagship SUV and the G6, are also being sold in 11 European countries.

International Motors and XPENG have signed an agreement to bring the brand to Britain. Managing Director, William Brown, said: "XPENG is an exciting brand – can you imagine the crowd the flying car would draw if we get it to some of our shows and events."

William added: "We are delighted to announce a distributor partnership with XPENG who we have been working with for some time. This was highlighted with the UK debut of the XPENG G6 at the world-famous Goodwood Festival of Speed this year."

"This new long-term agreement demonstrates IML's ambition to seek alliances with forward-thinking partners who share the company's values. Both parties look forward to launching the impressive G6 to UK customers in early 2025." 📸

SPITFIRE
Ronald Mattin

QUALITY FLIES FOR SPITFIRE

Spitfire Homes sell on quality of design and build. However, people still need help before deciding to buy.

That's where sales consultants Emily Plevey and Lauren Hudd become homebuyers' guardian angels answering

myriad questions, from first-time buyers to people downsizing.

The duo currently work at Spitfire Homes Bespoke Collection's Ellenbrook development in Morton-in-Marsh, Gloucestershire – the largest site to-date where 250 premium homes are being constructed in warm, honey-coloured Cotswold stone and red brickwork in a beautiful 38-acre setting.





From left: Lauren Hudd, Sales Consultant and Emiley Plevy, Sales Consultant

Every home is outstanding, with high-quality fittings, designer kitchens and the wonderful setting plus the latest efficiency levels that balance style with practicality. But all these attractions still mean homes are not sold until all the legal paperwork is signed and sealed. Again, Emily and Lauren are on hand to give guidance.

"There isn't a typical Spitfire buyer," says Emily. "We've had wealthy downsizers as well as some unusual customers – even people who come along and want to go-ahead immediately having just seen the house. A few customers offer to pay cash as they are so keen to secure their home."


Emily's a people-person and spends as much time with customers as they need to make sure they have all the answers to any questions. As a result, many purchasers become friends.

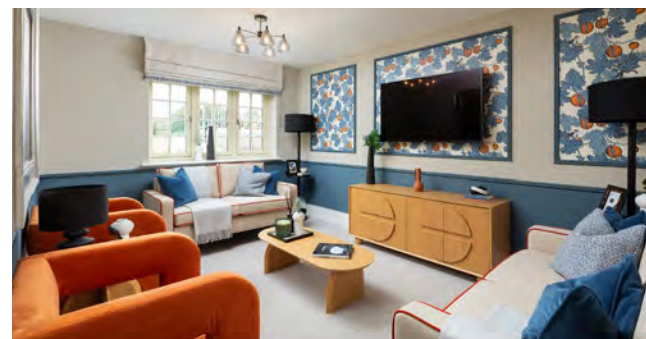
The feedback from proud new home-owners is something Emily always enjoys hearing. "Yes, people contact us quite a bit to tell us how much they love their new homes! It's really nice to hear so many people compliment Spitfire.

"Once they see a Spitfire home it often makes potential purchasers raise their standards of expectation of what they really want to purchase. Seeing people finally move into their new home is always exciting. It's nice to see them so happy – it's the best part of my job."

Lauren has had people burst into tears of happiness when they sign-up to buy. "Meeting people and helping them navigate what can be a really stressful process is the best part of my job," she says.

"Our homes are beautiful and ooze quality, so it's easy to set ourselves apart from competitors. However, I believe that people buy into people. Their first impressions of Spitfire are usually myself and Emily. We ensure we have full knowledge of the homes and the development and try to be as friendly and helpful as possible.

"This helps customer feel they are in safe hands when making such a large purchase. We take a genuine interest in their lives and their story. It really is the most fulfilling part of the job." 



STRIVE TO THRIVE IN MOST AMBITIOUS BUSINESS PARK YET



Thrive is exactly the word to describe IM Properties' plans for its most ambitious employment park to date.

But it is so much more than just a collection of buildings. It will be a 304-acre strategic-employment park with class-leading environmentally-friendly buildings within an extensive landscape of green spaces, amenity land and wetlands in North Warwickshire.

"It's designed as a place for people and businesses to thrive, not just to work.

"It will be a place for businesses to start, grow and thrive providing space for home-grown start-ups through to international investors," said Matthew Fox, Planning Director at IM Properties.

A planning application for Thrive, off Junction 9 of the M42 near Curdworth, will be submitted in early 2025. If successful it will support several

thousand new jobs including highly-skilled ones in emerging sectors such as advanced automotive, aerospace, rail, low-carbon and digital technology. Approximately 150 full-time jobs will be created during construction. The project will have an investment value of £500 million.

Thrive will be one of the largest employment parks to be built by IM Properties – equal in size to nearby

Everything about Thrive will exceed even the already highly-successful developments IM has brought to market in recent years.



Peddimore and larger than Mercia Park. It sits on the borders of Birmingham and Solihull in the Green Belt, an area with an acute shortage of land available for strategic employment.

Everything about Thrive will exceed even the already highly-successful developments IM has brought to market in recent years.

The green and quality environment will see development zones in a parkland


setting with opportunities for logistics development plus a dedicated area called Thrive Start – more than 17 acres set aside for small- and medium-size businesses focussed on R&D and high-technology. A second, 39-acre-plus zone – Thrive Advance – will target advanced manufacturing and low-carbon and other advanced technologies.

The ground-breaking design of the buildings will set new benchmarks for sustainable development – one of the hallmarks of IM Properties Sustainable Futures strategy of social responsibility.

With nearly half the site dedicated to green infrastructure, sustainability is incorporated into every aspect. A central green corridor will lead to a mobility hub offering eco-friendly active travel options such as buses, bicycles, e-scooters, and smart EV charging stations.

Matthew added: "These green areas will be accessible to the local community and we are targeting a 15-percent Biodiversity Net Gain across the site. We've undertaken extensive consultations with local people and organisations to explore how Thrive can help meet local community needs. For the first time we engaged with a youth panel to understand the aspirations of younger generations from the local area."

Thrive will thoughtfully integrate premium buildings into the landscape, maximising screening of the development with trees and hedgerows.

A West Midlands Strategic Employment Sites Study in 2021 concluded that the M42 corridor had less than one year's supply of strategic employment land available, making Thrive best placed to deliver new jobs and investment to North Warwickshire and the West Midlands. 

POWERED BY NORDIC KNOW-HOW

When Martin Jönsson's partner suggested he find a hobby she never imagined their house would be powered by a car battery!

But that's what Martin, IM Nordic's Service Manager for GWM, did in his spare time, using a battery from an early GWM ORA training car that was no longer needed.

Now the battery delivers around 45 kWh of electric power to their home in Mellbystrand, a village by the sea north of IM Nordic's head office in Malmo where Martin works. He explains: "It can be charged with my PV solar panels or from the grid.

"In summer it can easily be charged on a sunny day to 100 percent and the surplus I sell to the grid. In winter, when the sun's energy is not strong enough, I can charge the battery from the grid when the price is low and use the power for myself when electricity prices are high.

"In summer it can easily be charged on a sunny day to 100 percent and the surplus I sell to the grid. In winter, when the sun's energy is not strong enough, I can charge the battery from the grid."

"I have, for sure, lowered my bills but never really calculated by how much. I did it for a hobby but will probably develop it further. It should be profitable."

Martin says IM Nordic benefitted too. "I developed a lot of knowledge by working on the battery and now understand much more about EV technology."

He has worked for IM Nordic for 14-years, starting as a technical trainer for Subaru then became Service Manager for Isuzu. Now he's Service Manager for all GWM brands in Sweden, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania.

Emilie's prod for Martin to find a hobby resulted in the highly-unusual home

power plant installation in the house they built for themselves in 2018. She is a Marketing Project Manager at IM Nordic.

Martin explains: "I had to learn what to do first. In my mind it was a fairly simple thing to implement. But it turned out there was a little more to it than I initially thought...!"

Just how difficult was it? "At the time it was a learning process and I would say it took the whole winter. If I did it again it wouldn't take more than a few weeks."

When winters are cold, Martin, Emilie and children Samuel (16), Mary (5) and 18-month-old Lilly will stay warm in their GWM ORA battery-powered home. 🏠



GREAT THINGS AHEAD FOR INTERNATIONAL MOTORS



Further new brands and cars could be on the way as International Motors expands its operations.

This would introduce new brands to Britain, give customers greater choices and build on dealerships' range of business opportunities.

Part of this expansion is due to relationships forged decades ago by IM Group staff inspired by Chairman, Lord Edmiston, with China's Great Wall Motors – one of the largest automotive groups in the world.

Lord Edmiston built strong links to China, many years before it became fashionable, when he saw the strength of companies such as Great Wall – owners of GWM ORA – which IM has been selling in the UK, the Republic of Ireland and Nordic markets for three years. But Great Wall has a number of other brands under its umbrella. One of them is Haval which, in turn, has several individual models.

William Brown, Managing Director of International Motors, explains: "Great Wall now plans to change how it presents itself. Individual brands will become model names and

"This could be really good for us. GWM sells 1.3-million cars a year. Pulling all the brands under one banner will give increased efficiency and a route to a larger market."

all will sit under the GWM parent brand name – GWM.

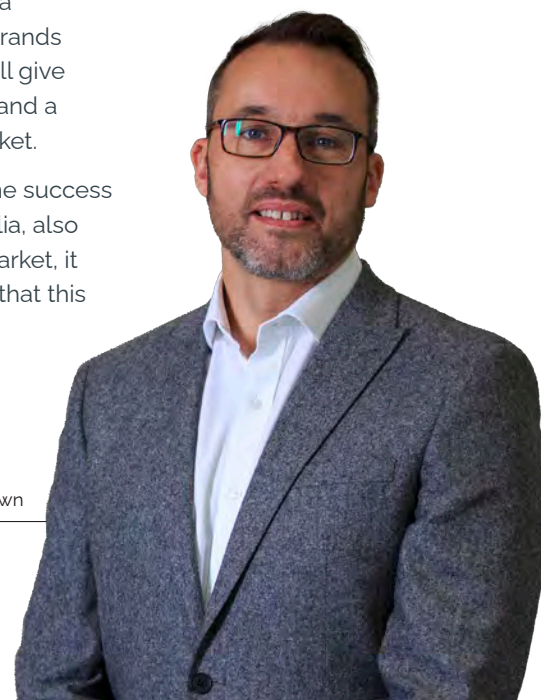
"For example, Haval has until now been freestanding. But to build on the corporate and public face, they will be sold as GWM Haval cars and we have the opportunity to sell them through our GWM dealer network."

He added: "This could be really good for us. GWM sells 1.3-million cars a year. Pulling all the brands under one banner will give increased efficiency and a route to a larger market.

"When you look at the success GWM have in Australia, also a right-hand drive market, it gives us confidence that this

approach will be successful in the UK. GWM Australia currently sell eight GWM brands – including some in the ORA and Haval ranges.

"We are continuing dialogue with GWM to assess which models will be most suitable for the UK market – discussions remain very positive" 📷



William Brown

GETTING THE DETAILS RIGHT

Changing brand names and launching new ones is far more complicated than it first appears.

Phil Evans, IM's Group Aftersales & Technical Director, is tasked with looking at all the minute details so that everything is seamlessly integrated. He explains: "My main involvement is with contracts. I need to ensure that any name-change is reflected in each one and

that our dealers, suppliers, systems and all relevant Government departments are aware of the change."

Critical to the process is making sure bodies such as the Vehicle Certification Agency – the UK's type-approval authority – and the Driver Vehicle Licensing Agency are provided with all documentation they need.

Phil has worked for the IM Group for 47-years and

has vast experience in this specialised area. He sees the re-branding by Great Wall Motors as a common sense approach. "For me it's far simpler if all brands sit under one banner. I believe it will be easier for customers to understand that all of these brands are models under the GWM umbrella.

"We are a very tight team at IM and, on most projects, departments work collaboratively. Any change

– regardless of whether it has a direct or indirect impact on our areas of responsibility – we always approach as a team.

"This ensures we manage changes in the best possible way for each individual area and, more importantly, for the business as a whole. We are more than capable and adaptable to handle this without any significant impact on business," he adds. 📷



Phil Evans

CHINA EXPERT'S VIEW



From left: Phil Evans, Martin Dalton, Toby Marshall, Alison Aldridge

Martin Dalton, IM's Director of Business Development, first made contact with GWM in 1999 and has more experience working with Chinese automotive firms than anyone else at IM.

He joined the IM Group two years earlier as an engineer in what was then the company's truck division. At that time GWM only built pick-ups at a small factory in Baoding. Martin went there looking for products for IM's then Zimbabwe truck operation.

Martin fully understands the re-branding of GWM brands and products. "Originally

GWM were only going to launch ORA electric vehicles in Europe, but electrification has been slower than they anticipated. So they are now launching internal combustion, hybrid-electric and plug-in electric vehicles – and these are only sold under its other brands hence the necessity to rebrand.

"Although the rebrand has been discussed for some time, the decision to launch GWM Haval Jolion really accelerated the need for that to happen. Given that ORA is known only as a battery electric brand it's extremely important that we

get the message out that GWM can provide high-tech, very fuel-efficient petrol-hybrid electric vehicles."

Martin spends six weeks of the year in China at IM's office in Beijing and visiting automotive factories. He added: "All of the major Chinese auto makers have sub-brands. This is quite normal in China – a little like Stellantis in Europe owning Citroen, Peugeot, Vauxhall/ Opel, Alfa Romeo and so on." 🇬🇧



GETTING THE MESSAGE ACROSS

Alison Aldridge is at the sharp end of the complex story of rebranding GWM products. As Head of Brand Marketing (Passenger Cars) she is constantly spinning plates.

A professional marketer, Alison doesn't underestimate the scale or importance of the task ahead and of getting her messages across to customers, dealers, business partners and the Press.

Previously she was GWM ORA Head of Marketing. But her new role sees Alison covering all GWM brands that International Motors currently sells as well as those that may be added. She covers Subaru too – so long hours and being ultra-flexible are parts of her job.

It's been a baptism of fire for Alison who joined IM in 2021. But she relishes the challenges: "My role has always been very fluid with a small team and small budget. Agile commercial conditions means we've all had to roll our sleeves up.

"For me it means I could swing wildly from working on Trademark License Agreements to million-pound media campaigns, answering customer queries and giving retailers access to our asset bank all in a day," said Alison.

She fully understands and supports the need for rebranding. "One of the biggest misconceptions of the rebrand to GWM is that it can be interchanged with 'Great Wall'. While 'GWM' does stand for Great Wall Motor, 'Great Wall' is a brand in its own right with the historic Steed models.

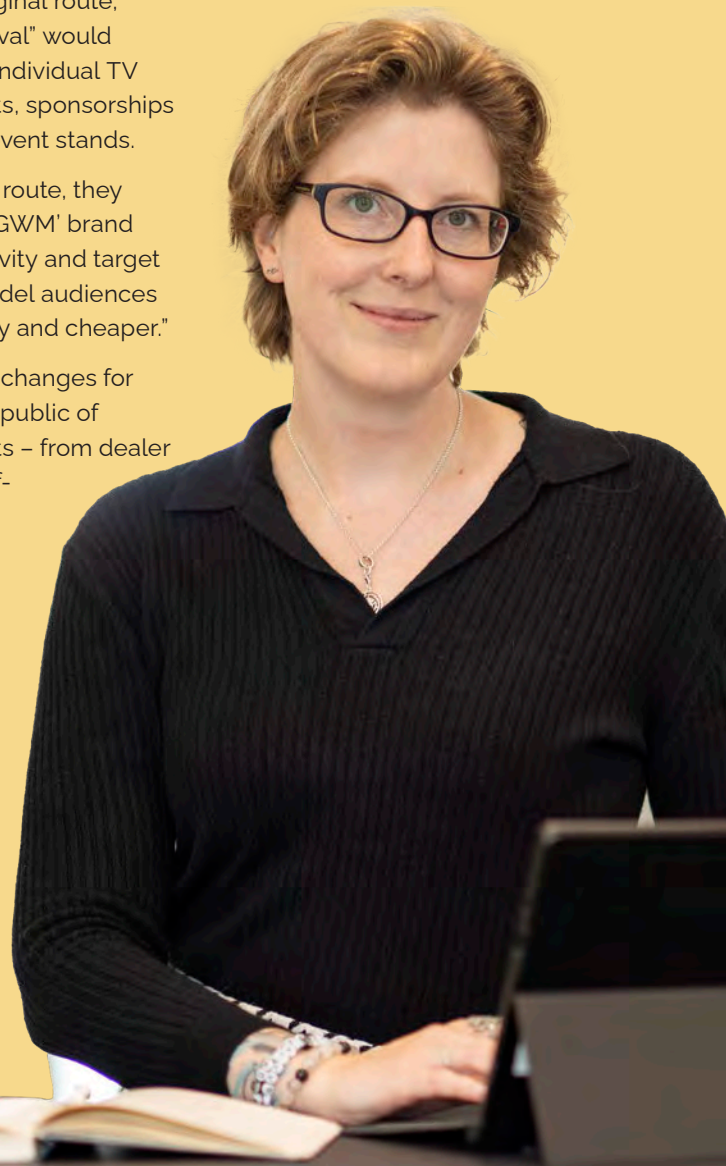
"Great Wall Motor's decision to amalgamate their brands into one 'house of brands' makes perfect sense."

And the reason for the name change? "Economies of scale," says Alison. "Establishing a brand name is not cheap. Think how many millions have

been spent by established, or upcoming, brands in the UK. If GWM had continued down their original route, "ORA" and "Haval" would have needed individual TV advertisements, sponsorships and different event stands.

"With the new route, they can focus on 'GWM' brand marketing activity and target respective model audiences more efficiently and cheaper."

So everything changes for the UK and Republic of Ireland markets – from dealer logos, point-of-sale materials, brochures, pop-up displays and the like. So Alison can hardly pause for coffee! ☕



OPPORTUNITY KNOCKS FOR GWM

New GWM models are on their way, joining the GWM ORA 03, says Toby Marshall, Managing Director of GWM UK & Ireland.

He sees this as really exciting for International Motors, its retailers and their increasing number of customers.

Toby said: "Our next model, the Jolion Pro Hybrid will be launched in the UK in early 2025. It's a small-to-mid-size SUV, which is one of the most popular segments of the market - and shows no sign of slowing down.

"The market sector shows a growing appetite for self-charging hybrid electric-powered cars. So the Jolion hits this sweet spot."

The Jolion self-charges by recouping energy while it is being driven making it highly-efficient. And because the car does not need to be plugged in, it is ideal for drivers without access to home charging.

Other, equally exciting, GWM models will follow. Toby believes four new vehicles will come to market by the end of 2026, predominately SUVs and with a variety of powertrains. 🚗



Toby Marshall,
Managing Director,
GWM UK & Ireland



SUBARU UK
Toni-Lee Mields



SUBARU UK'S HUMANITARIAN HELP



Dnipro, Ukraine

Four Subaru Foresters from the UK are bringing vital aid to civilians in Ukraine.

They are evacuating civilians facing imminent danger and taking urgently-needed humanitarian aid to some of Ukraine's most devastated cities.

In a joint initiative by Subaru Cars UK and the Christian Vision charity the rugged AWD cars are being operated by local churches helping to save hundreds of lives, bringing hope to people in four key cities.

In Dnipro – 242 miles southwest of Ukraine's capital, Kyiv – one of the Subarus is being used just 60

miles from the border. Sitting on the Dnipro river, the city has an important humanitarian logistics base.

Further south on the river in Zaporizhia another Forester is seeing daily emergency action.

Vitalii Marchenko, one of the leaders of the Emmanuel Church, said: "It's in use serving in evangelism and helping to overcome the consequences of the war. We are truly grateful."

Vyshneve, a key city south-west of Kyiv, sits on a vital railway link. Max Zherdetskiy, one of the chaplains from the Salvation Church, said: "We work in the dangerous zones where we

help civilians. We evacuate people and we bring humanitarian aid.

"And we are grateful for this wonderful car. We want to thank you. And we want to promise that this car will have a wonderful and interesting life! It will save a lot of lives and serve hundreds more. Thank you – bless you."

In Sofiivska Borshchahivka, west of Kyiv, Roman Gakh, leader of the chaplain ministry at Grace Church, added his gratitude: "We are very grateful to our friends in the UK for this wonderful gift and all the support you provide to Ukraine. This vehicle will help us continue to serve those affected by the war. Many blessings!" 🙏

"We are very grateful to our friends in the UK for this wonderful gift and all the support you provide to Ukraine. This vehicle will help us continue to serve those affected by the war. Many blessings!"

MISSION TO RE-FIRE EV RETAIL CAR SALES

Senior executives at the IM Group are committed to helping motorists considering switching to electric cars.

Just a few years ago EVs were seen as the darlings of the industry. They appeared to be green, clean and seen as the answer to the quest for zero emissions. They would bring exciting new cars and technology to market.



But as that initial glow started to tarnish, sales plateaued, and more recently, retail uptake dropped dramatically. The UK isn't alone - similar patterns developed in the American, mainland European and other markets.

So is the EV retail market in Britain broken? At a brainstorming session of senior IM managers, the strong consensus was 'Yes'. However, it's not beyond repair and IM is determined to respond.

Following the UK Budget in October, Mike Hawes, Chief Executive of the Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders, said: "The lack of substantive measures to support the new car market - in particular for electrified vehicles - was hugely disappointing.

"With the sector challenged to deliver the world's most ambitious EV transition targets, achievement of those is in serious doubt."

However, William Brown, Managing Director of International Motors, said: "As a business we believe EVs have their place, and in many circumstances are a better alternative to internal-combustion engined vehicles.

"We recognise that in the current conditions there are some challenges we need to deal with but we remain committed and positive to the EV era."

Toby Marshall, Managing Director of GWM UK & Ireland, agreed adding: "A key action, is that the industry, and government, need to better educate consumers about everything EV, there are many myths which need dispelling!"

Teething problems with the charging network were noted by IM Group Managing Director, Andrew Edmiston. "Some people were put off buying EVs by this more than preconceptions they might have had about the cars themselves," he said.

"However, this is changing - our EVs are great products. Our challenge is to develop a strategy to entice more retail customers to change. Our big advantage is that we have excellent vehicles to offer."

Martin Dalton, IM's Director of Business Development, has witnessed the rapid growth of EVs in China where ownership has surged to 36 percent of total car sales. He said that Chinese government policy had stimulated growth - which all the IM managers agreed should be happening in the UK.

Positive notes were struck by Lorraine Bishton, Managing Director of Subaru UK, who drives the hugely successful all-electric Solterra. She said: "Whenever I stop people come over and talk to me about it - there's generally a very positive interest."

All the IM executives agreed that successive UK governments had lacked a joined-up approach to solving these problems, leaving the task to the industry.

Many industry pundits had thought the first Labour Budget for fourteen years would offer more carrots to incentivise motorists to make the switch to electric cars. IM's managers are even more determined to highlight the benefits of EV ownership. They point to a raft of new and exciting electric models they will launch in the coming months. 🚗



SUBARU UK
Tobias Rohlinner

DRIVING SUBARU FORWARD

LORRAINE BISHTON'S MISSION

Lorraine Bishton,
Managing Director, Subaru

Why leave dream
car manufacturer
McLaren to join

Subaru is a question Lorraine
Bishton is often asked.

But Lorraine, who is about
to celebrate her first year as
Managing Director of Subaru
UK, has a ready answer: she
relishes challenges and is on
a mission to unleash the huge
potential she sees in Subaru.

She explains: "Lots of friends
and family questioned why
I was leaving McLaren, but
instead of being dismissive
of the move, McLaren
colleagues said they got it
straight away. Like me, they
saw Subaru as a brand they
admired and respected."

She concedes that Subaru is a
niche product but she has set
high targets to change public
perceptions and has realistic
ambitions to grow sales –
particularly as new electric
models come on stream in
the next couple of years.

Challenging? Yes, but Lorraine
has a career history of
taking on challenges! After
A-levels she decided not to
go to university. She joined
Ford – quite apt for a self-
confessed 'petrol head' who,
as a youngster, was fascinated
watching Subaru dominate
world rallying – and worked in
its banking and finance division.

Once in the automotive business Lorraine was hooked. She moved from Ford to JLR and there a senior manager spotted her drive, ambition and potential and, despite not having a degree, nominated her for an MBA course at Aston Business School, part of Aston University. But a condition was Lorraine had to pass a Certificate in Management in year one.

She was determined to prove she could do it. "I just didn't have a social life for two years, but I wanted to prove myself." And she did. Lorraine completed her MBA, while working full-time, in just two years instead of five.

In her 20-years at JLR she was promoted many times, was instrumental in creating JLR's exclusive and highly-profitable Special Operations Division resulting in £700-million revenue by 2018.

One of her key strategies for that success was reducing new model concept-to-market time by 65 percent.

She had similar success at McLaren and headed its Special Operations Division. Lorraine led an increase of sales of ultra-special cars such as the £3.3-million solus GT. No surprise that Lorraine's results landed her another promotion to Sales and Marketing Director of McLaren Special Operations.

"Like me, they saw Subaru as a brand they admired and respected."

So, was it a down-to-earth bump when she joined Subaru? No she says "McLaren's Woking headquarters was designed by Norman Foster. It was striking and set in beautiful surroundings. But when I first saw The Gate it was just exceptional in terms of a working environment and I actually prefer it.

"The warmth of everyone I met was unbelievably genuine – I had found my new home!"

She got to grips with the Subaru business from day one. "It's such a great brand with huge un-tapped potential. My first ambition is to change the public perception of Subaru and unleash all the unique characteristics that go into the brand."

In just a few months she had been to Japan and met with senior Subaru executives to share her ambitions and set on a campaign to visit every Subaru dealer in the UK to reinvigorate them. All dealers were then invited to a Subaru Conference held in Harrogate – the first in years. "I'm determined to re-establish great relationships with our dealers and customers," she added.

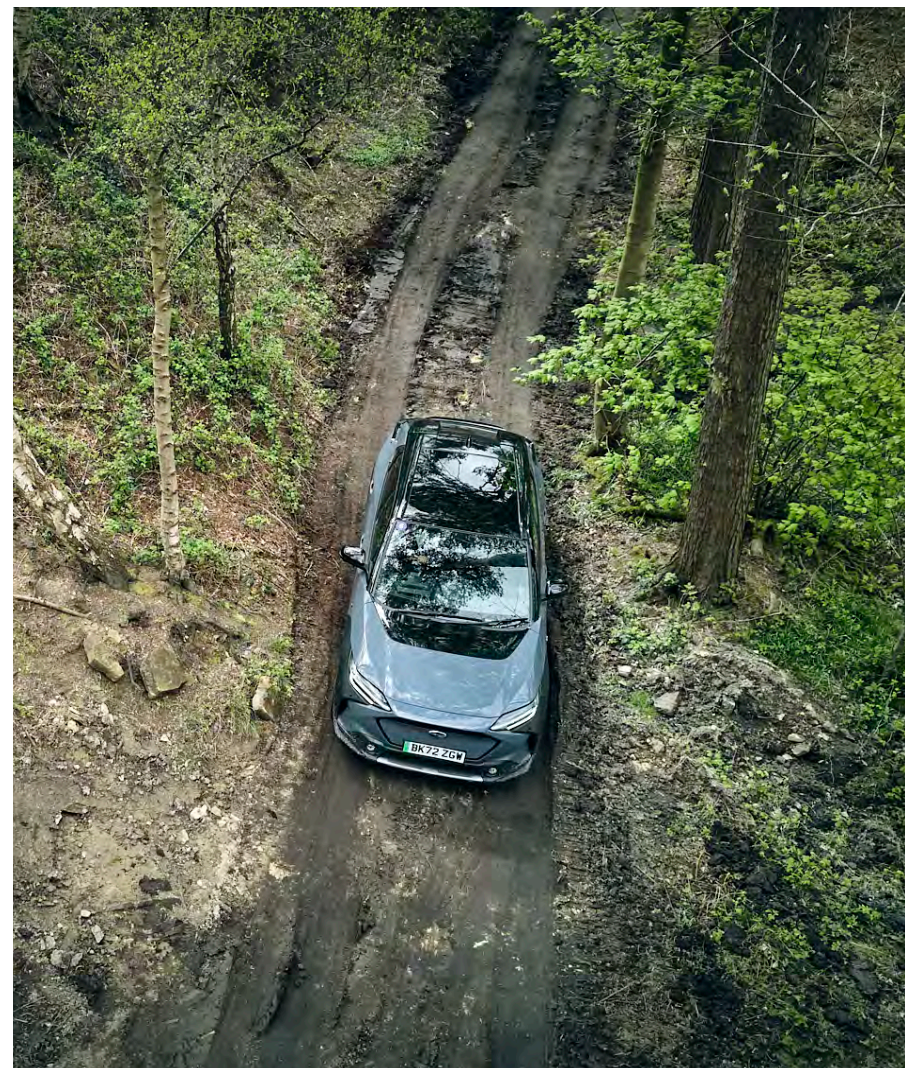
Lorraine points to an exciting future - four new electric

models to be launched by 2026, including Solterra and eight by 2028.

Alongside her drive and ambition is a calm realism. "We are not going to vastly expand the dealer network. But we

are going to give our dealers a clear pathway to the future."

"Like IM, most of the dealers are family-owned, and there are great strengths in that. Both IM and Subaru have fantastic reputations. Subaru in Japan has invested £8-billion in new facilities for the EV age. The future is exciting for us all." 📷



SALES SURGE FOR SUBARU


In the first half of 2024 sales of Subaru cars in the UK increased by a staggering 30.2 percent with 1,426 registrations. By October that figure hit 2,133.

The sales success far exceeds the growth in the market of just 5.54 percent and ranked Subaru as the seventh fastest-growing brand in Britain.

Subaru's all-electric Solterra has been outstanding in capturing 27 percent of all Subaru sales by mid-year – the

highest increase since it was launched two years ago. Powered by a 71.4kWh battery, the Solterra beats many rival EVs with a 289-mile (WLTP) range and the ability to charge to 80 percent in just 30 minutes with a 150kW charger. 🚗⚡





Octopus Energy, a leading renewable energy company, has taken a unit at Hinckley Park, IM Properties' key industrial and logistics park off Junction 1 of the M69.


The company will use the 47,000 sq ft warehouse to store and distribute customer orders for heat pumps and solar panels. It will also act as a national training centre for installation engineers.

The unit is one of three in the final phase of development at Hinckley Park, constructed with a strong

commitment to sustainability and built to the highest industry standards.

Hinckley Park has already created jobs for more than 1,500 people and attracted major logistics operators including Amazon, which has a 532,500

sq. ft facility and Europe's largest and most technically advanced parcel depot known as "Hub 5" on behalf of DPD.

Geosynthetics took a 60,000 sq. ft unit for its growing business supplying products to the civil engineering sector. 



octopus

TAKES A GRIP AT HINCKLEY PARK

ISUZU
Laban Lea

ISUZU GOES ELECTRIC

Isuzu is powering up to its most important new model in decades – an all-electric D-Max.

The multi-award-winning pick-up will set a major new benchmark by introducing a class-leading electric-powered model with a payload capacity of 1-tonne plus the ability to tow 3.5-tonnes.



No other electric 4x4 pick-up can match these demanding figures, which utility companies, farmers and construction firms set as the criteria for their tough working conditions.

However, this vital new model will not come to market until early 2026, setting Alan Able, Managing Director of Isuzu UK, a huge challenge. But he sees this more as an opportunity and he and his team have already spent two years planning for it. Left-hand drive versions for mainland Europe go on sale in mid-2025.

Alan explains: "The latest D-Max was launched in 2020 and the model cycle means that a replacement is not due until 2028. However, the Government's ZEV (zero emission vehicles) Mandate means that from January 2024 manufacturers and distributors like us face fines if we fail to hit targets for the sale of electric versions.

"For this year we get fined if we don't hit 10 percent of our sales with zero-emission models. Next year the thresholds increase to 16 percent, increasing every year until 2030 when we have to register 70 percent zero-emission sales."

By 2035 zero-emission sales have to hit 100 percent.

Isuzu in Japan has invested heavily in EV research and development and, given the pressure the UK and European markets are facing, has pulled out the stops to bring forward the launch of an electric D-Max.

"We will be the only 4x4 manufacturer to hit those vital 3.5-tonne towing capacity and 1-tonne payload targets with an electric 4x4."

Alan's task is to pull forward as many conventional D-Max sales to 2024 as possible to save both Isuzu in Japan and the UK from the swingeing fines.

Last year Isuzu UK chalked up a record 6,318 sales. The UK is the biggest market in Europe for D-Max and the vehicle has won hundreds of awards earning a reputation as 'the professional pick-up' with outstanding go-anywhere and do-anything abilities.

Handling the two-year gap until the D-Max EV arrives might seem a daunting task from a sales and marketing perspective. But Alan and his team have tackled it

head on. He explained: "The Commercial Vehicle Show at the NEC in April is the showcase event for our industry. So we took this as an opportunity and, alongside our internal combustion engine models on display, we had a whole section devoted to our new EV model.

"We had already spent a great deal of time talking with our key customers such as National Grid and other utility companies who are regular fleet buyers. And we had fleet specialists at the show and sales staff who regularly speak to farmers, land owners, stables, forestry businesses and the like.

"We talked them through what was coming, and when, while highlighting the special equipment we have on existing D-Max models."

This is another vital profit area for Isuzu and its UK dealers, said Alan: "We reminded our dealers that we have a 93-

page accessory and options list already. Bringing this to their customers' attention creates an opportunity for up-selling and creating even better customer satisfaction."

Alan is also aware of the growing lifestyle buyers of D-Max. "It's a vehicle that has remarkable off-road abilities. It's tough, reliable, rugged and sought-after by people who love outdoor pursuits. Many of them will upgrade to the EV model but will customize their existing vehicles in the meantime."

In September Alan was able to put prototype EV models to the test in Japan. With UK sales of the existing model looking healthy, he relishes the prospect of launching the EV model in the UK.

"We will be the only 4x4 manufacturer to hit those vital 3.5-tonne towing capacity and 1-tonne payload targets with an electric 4x4. None of our competitors can match it.

"We are managing expectations in the meantime but our EV D-Max will show the industry the way ahead and delight our dealers and customers." 📸

GRACE
FOUNDATION
Perry Craigs

HELPING YOUNGSTERS EXCEL



Schools are reaching out to Grace Foundation for help as they see the incredible success it has made to pupils' lives.

It's a huge compliment to the organisation, founded by IM Group Chairman, Lord Edmiston. However, to help more schools the charity needs further funding from new partners. Grace Foundation CEO, Gary Spicer, explains: "Our proven track record of making fundamental improvements to schools, often classed as failing, is now widely recognised by Ofsted, educationalists and the public.

"But it's the changes to the lives of youngsters that is even more important and there are now, thousands of shining examples of students whose total outlook on life, confidence and educational performance have sky-rocketed.

"Now, many more schools are asking us to help them achieve the same. But our budget is stretched. We can help, but we, in turn, need financial sponsorship from successful entrepreneurs like Lord Edmiston – business people who want to give to the community."

In September, Grace Foundation's



partnership with schools expanded to 13 with the introduction of the Huxlow Academy in Irthlingborough, a socially-deprived town in Northamptonshire.

The cost of the Grace Foundation intervention in a school is around £100,000 per

real difference that financial support needs to continue for at least three years.

Dave Boden, Grace's Executive Director, said: "More young people are suffering from poor mental health these days and that is an increasing factor in the work we do.

"Wellbeing is key to the future of our young people. We have proved that our approach, and the work of our teams, really helps. This will certainly continue at all of our partner schools."

year. That helps fund three full-time "Ethos" staff to work directly alongside school teachers plus the support of the organisation's central team. However, to make a

"We focus on this because we know poor mental health not only impacts on students' academic work but can profoundly affect their personality 24-hours a day.

"Depression, anxiety and feelings of low self-worth come at the worst time for adolescents on their journey to adulthood. But we can help youngsters to help themselves – and the results are joyous as students blossom and flourish.

"Wellbeing is key to the future of our young people. We have proved that our approach, and the work of our teams, really helps. This will certainly continue at all of our partner schools."

Grace Foundation is based firmly on a faith ethos.

"Faith is central to what we do and why we do it," he says. "Although we need more sponsors to help, we won't accept financial offers unless that person shares our faith beliefs." ■

IM LAND
Tony Garuth

LAND FOR OUR FUTURES

Former MOD site,
Ennsleigh

IMReview

One of the newest IM Group divisions has created new communities, new jobs and new homes. Now it plans to go further.

IM Land was officially launched in 2016. In eight years it has changed the lives of thousands of people across the Midlands, and beyond, based on one basic ingredient – land.

It was formed as a sub-division of IM Properties and tasked with unleashing the potential of land for residential development – mainly in partnership with landowners. It has been hugely successful.



Richard Knight

Currently it has access to land with the potential to create an estimated £2.6-billion of Gross Added Value – the amount of value that could be released when land is developed.

Richard Knight, recently appointed as IM Properties UK Residential Delivery Director, explains: “We do directly own land. But we mainly work in partnership with landowners who have redundant or under-used land they wish to release to realise its best value.”

IM Land’s expertise in quantifying land-potential, its experience in planning negotiations and skill in bringing schemes to market have been winners. Profits are shared with the land owners.

The division has been so successful in building access to a large portfolio of land opportunities that for the past three years it’s not had to actively look for potential sites. Instead it’s had direct approaches!

Whole new communities have been created as a result. MOD Ensleigh, a site near Bath, was an ugly former

Defence Logistics Organisation base. IM Land bought it, cleared it and sold it to builders resulting in the vision IM Land had of a thriving neighbourhood of nearly 250 homes, a primary school, retail store and a care village.

Near Lichfield, IM Land was successful in appealing for permission to build 750 homes at Curborough Lakes – an area that hadn’t reached its target delivery of housing for many years.

The site is next to land previously Draft Allocated for up to 2,800 more homes in the next couple of decades.

Meanwhile, IM Land has paved the way for 330 homes to be built in Maidenhead by securing the allocation of the site and gaining planning permission. It was subsequently sold to Bellway Homes in August this year. Part of this deal included land for a new primary school and open public spaces – something IM Land is keen to ensure happens when needed on other sites. 🏡

“We do directly own land. But we mainly work in partnership with landowners who have redundant or under-used land they wish to release to realise its best value.”



Curborough Lakes

LIFE ADDS UP FOR JAMES



Who said accountants were boring?

Meet James Pearson, Head of Finance and Operations for International Motors, a hugely-energetic number cruncher who will change your perception for ever.

His day job is both straightforward and complex. In simple terms his task is to keep the firm's books balanced – in reality the work of Finance is far more demanding and fast-moving.

And the popular image of accountants and auditors being dull is miles away from James's high-energy spare time interests.

From riding across Europe on a powerful motorbike to weightlifting and mastering Krav Maga – an Israeli self-defence martial art – to learning to play the drums with his eight-year-old son, James can hardly be described as boring. He was also a Special Constable in the West Midlands police for five years.

James took a degree in Accounting and Finance at the University of Birmingham before joining the Birmingham office of BDO, a global accountancy firm. He's a qualified Chartered Accountant.

"I was in the rat race but seemed to thrive on long hours and challenges – I got a buzz from it and confess I was a work junkie."

"But I was missing out on family life and also the time pressures then meant my compliance work load increased massively but I wanted to focus more on the commercial operations of my clients.

"I always wanted to make a difference in whatever I did – accountancy, police work, being a Dad or even boxing training. So for me joining IM in 2012 was the perfect fit. My attitudes were mirrored by IM's philosophy," said James.

It was a time of huge change. IM's motor business was still recovering from the 2008 global economic crash. So it was

in at the deep end for James. With his team he shifted focus to building new systems to replace out-dated ones.

"We had to modernise, so a lot of time had to be devoted to that while doing all the day-to-day routine work. It was a big, but vital task."

Here there's a twist to the tale! James explains that the IM Group is a bit like David and Goliath – people within the company perceive it as a traditional family-based business, yet the very high public profile of the company puts it on the Goliath scale!

James explains: "On turnover and profit IM would be comparable to a FTSE 350 or even 250 company and because of Lord Edmiston's charity work and the firm's high profile, external stake holders such as HMRC, the banks and financial institutions put everything we do under a microscope.

"From a financial reporting point of view, we have to respond to that public perception to defend the company's great reputation. That involves a lot more work and contributes to another complexity of our work – we have to do far more forward planning. It's almost like a penalty for the company being so good at what it does."

He leads a team of 15 specialists responsible for all the automotive side of IM's businesses. Despite many people's image of accountancy being mere 'bean counters' James' team are often called on for ultra-rapid responses to internal questions.

He recalls the Covid period, during which most of IM's car dealers had to mothball their businesses. "At around March 2020 we effectively had no income from our dealerships," said James. This was a frightening proposition when preparing cashflow forecasts for banks and auditors.

"Our audit risk went from near-zero to sky-high and it was a hugely stressful period. Every year we have to produce a 'Business Going Concern' report. Normally that takes a couple of days but then it took weeks of intense work."

James says demands like these distract the finance team from the vital work, but these tasks become high-priority. "So we streamlined to respond quickly and increased our focus on financial forecasting."

This proved vital when International Motors bought the Mitsubishi after-sales business. The finance team had to support decision making around the acquisition. They and IT had to integrate Mitsubishi's financial systems into IM's finance operation which now operates seamlessly.

The GWM ORA business presented other challenges and the ZEV Mandate even more.

James got hooked on motorbikes when he turned 30. Not content with passing the standard bike test, he went on to pass a tough Advanced Rider test. He rides a Ducati 1200 Multistrada and has ridden the North Coast 500-mile route around northern Scotland as well as cross-Europe runs.

Having always been into fitness and weigh training, James enjoys sparring and that came in useful on a business trip to Thailand when he met colleagues from Japan. He recalls: "On a free day we had the choice of going shopping, visiting temples or watching a Thai kick-boxing match. Somehow the message got mis-translated and I ended up sparring with my Japanese colleagues!" 🥊



IAN'S AMAZING PEDDLE-POWER

Don't say 'On your bike' to Ian Deverell, because he might be gone for some time and end up thousands of miles away!

Ian, the Senior Planning Manager at IM Land, has raised thousands of pounds for charities as a result of his amazing peddle-power. And we are not talking about nice, easy rides. Ian sets the handlebars much higher than that...

Earlier this year he completed a gruelling 1,000-mile ride from John o'Groats to Land's End, cycling an average of 110 miles a day for nine days. And he rode the length of the country on his own.

To put that epic journey into prospective, most cyclists complete it over 12 to 14 days, often longer, usually riding in pairs or larger groups. So Ian virtually flew down the spine of Britain!

He took on the challenge to raise money for cancer survivors in memory of

his nan, Madge, who had been a strong influence on his early life. She died from cancer last year.

"I decided the challenge would help me through the grieving process," he said. "But I also wanted to raise money for a good cause. I was upset at not being able to be there in nan's final days and I wanted to do something positive to work through my grief and make her proud.

"I set out thinking I would raise money just for Cancer Research UK in memory of Madge. However, after a conversation with our Social Value Manager, Kerry Amory, she suggested I raise money for In The Pink, a charity IM had funded through one of our project-led community funds."

Ian spoke with In The Pink and, seeing the difference they made to breast cancer survivors, he donated £6,000 to them with the remainder of the £9,200 raised donated to Cancer Research UK.



Memories from the ride stay with Ian. "The daily mental challenge took me by surprise," he said. "I hadn't consciously prepared for that.

"The trials of adverse weather, navigating steep inclines, riding on rough road surfaces and enduring seemingly never-ending A-roads proved to be almost as challenging as the physical one.

"It's also surprising how difficult it is to daily consume the 5,000 calories needed, particularly when your body starts to reject food as a result of the effort required."

The final two days of the challenge meant tackling unrelenting 20-percent-gradient hills through Devon and Cornwall. "It was an unwelcome sting in the tail," he admits. "It wasn't until I coasted into Land's End and crossed the finish line that the enormity of what I had completed, and the incredible amount of donated funds towards the charities, sunk in. The emotion flooded out!"

Ian is currently training for a number of mountain bike races in 2025, including a 200-rider, mass-start, downhill race from the top of Ben Nevis in Scotland. 🏔️

EXCITING TIMES FOR CHRISTIAN VISION



This has been a truly exciting year at Christian Vision, says Lady Edmiston. "In 2024 we have been building on experience, insight and data as well as launching our new five-year strategic plan at 'Athens 24' – CV's global conference. We also revealed our newly-reimagined logo, which was received with great excitement."

Staff members representing every key area of CV's work and geographical locations were invited to attend 'Athens 24'. More than 220 people came together for the event – and many paid their own travel

costs! In addition to the live experience, the conference was streamed in real time and made available, on demand, for those in challenging time zones in order for everyone to enjoy together.

"Christian Vision is all about evangelism and is committed to navigating both physical and digital communities. Identifying and connecting with groups of people who currently don't know Jesus – and sharing with them His life-transforming message of hope, peace, and salvation – remains a major objective of our work. Having achieved the

previous goal of reaching one million people every day with this message during the past few years, our new five-year plan – 5YP2030 – pushes further. It aims to achieve more, with one million people every day to be on a faith journey with us," she explains.

Digital markers and milestones will track and assess progress and CV's achievement.

To those already on a faith journey, CV desires to activate them to share their faith with others, with its reimagined web platform acting as a hub for individuals and churches alike to discover actionable tools and strategies to equip them for evangelism. **See: cvglobal.co**



Individual stories of people – in remote and dangerous places – whose lives have



been impacted through the work of CV were showcased at Athens 24 in a fabulous video series entitled Every. Single.One. The series can be found on the platform.

"Some of those featured, although unable to be physically present, joined us at the conference by hologram in a 'holobox' enabling some to interact live with the audience," added Lady Edmiston. "As 2024 comes to an end, a sense of gratitude undergirds every decision combined with an excitement and anticipation to seize every opportunity presented in 2025." 📺

NOVA IS JUST PERFECT - THAT'S OFFICIAL

"The building has just been awarded a
BREEAM 'Outstanding' certificate
with a perfect 100-percent score
– the highest ever in Britain
and an industry first for a
facility of this kind."





BREEAM
100%
OUTSTANDING

IM PROPERTIES
Hatty Gourn

Forget a perfect 10 – IM Properties has helped score a perfect 100 for a landmark building with the highest-possible 'green credentials' setting a new benchmark.

Nova, a unique facility, is set in a prime location close to Oxford's key science areas – Oxford Science Park and the Arc Oxford. The building has just been awarded a BREEAM 'Outstanding' certificate with a perfect 100-percent score – the highest ever in Britain and an industry first for a facility of this kind.

BREEAM is an internationally-recognised sustainability assessment method for the built environment used to measure buildings' sustainability performance.

In addition, Nova scored the highest Energy Performance Certificate – EPC A+ further recognising its outstanding features.

IM Properties forward-committed to the Nova scheme with developers Wrenbridge and now owns the property, which is to be let. There has been a wave of interest from life science, automotive and battery-development companies. It covers 43,745 sq. ft making it the ideal size for both R&D and mid-tech businesses.

Rob Hemus, IM Properties Asset Director, worked on the Nova project from the start. He explains just some of the many green aspects of the development which sets it apart. "Nova maximises sustainable

transport with green-roof cycle shelters, EV chargers for up to 100-percent of all parking spaces, showers/locker room and has a number of dedicated car-share spaces. The local authority was involved in the process too, with improvements to surrounding pedestrian and cycle routes.

"Nova has the benefit of external breakout-space in a dedicated landscaped garden.

A number of low- and zero-carbon technologies – roof-mounted PVs, which could save the occupier £44,000 a year, air-source heat pumps, solar shading via external brise soleil – louvered screens shielding windows from direct sunlight.

"That reduces heat gain within the building while also being a great architectural feature."

The high specification of the building minimises heat leakage and the warehouse roof area has 15-percent rooflight coverage for additional natural light, reducing the need for artificial lighting and improving staff wellbeing. Water-efficient fittings and leak detectors are installed, to prevent wastage.

Nova's wildlife garden and pond helps put social responsibility and employee wellbeing front and centre. 🌱



SURF'S UP!

Photo - Trevor Murphy



Bethany Hamilton

Photo – Mary Ernsdorf @rockingseaphotography



Wax those surfboards ready for action in what will be Britain's largest urban wave park!

A 5.4-acre man-made surfing lagoon – with technology capable of producing up to 1,000 waves an hour, each up to two metres high – is being built at Coleshill Manor Estate, near IM Group's former headquarters.

The £50-million Wave-Garden Cove is the second largest urban wave park in Europe – second only to one being built at Atletico Madrid's stadium complex. When the Coleshill centre opens in 2026 it's expected to welcome up to 200,000 guests a year. Wave-Garden Cove sits in 140 acres of land owned by IM. It will be visible from the M6 and M42 motorways, the HS2

rail line and Birmingham Airport flights. It will be next to The Eternal Wall of Answered Prayer – a 169 ft tall monument also to be built on land provided by IM. Bulk excavation to create the lagoon started in December. It will be the size of almost four full-sized football pitches and take two-years to build. It's likely 100 full-time jobs will be created plus many more in the construction phase.

Surfing normally conjures up images of exotic ocean locations like Hawaii, Portugal or South Africa. But Lewis Payne, IM Properties Development Director, said urban surf parks have one big advantage: "The beauty is predictability. You might sit floating in the ocean for 40-minutes waiting for the right wave to come along. But in an urban lagoon technology allows the wave to be adjusted by

size and shape and the computer can send 16 towards you in a minute."

The Park is being delivered by Stoneweg Infraspport – a joint venture between two Spanish funders.

Lewis added: "The surf park will be a unique leisure centre for Birmingham, attracting visitors to the region and saving surfing Brummies long trips to Cornwall!"

The road serving the surf lagoon and The Wall will be called Bethany Hamilton Way, named after the Hawaii-born professional surfer with a strong Christian faith.

She lost an arm when, at just 13, she was attacked by a 14ft tiger shark. But Bethany went on to be an international surfing star, mother of four and an inspirational writer, lecturer and life-coach. 🏄‍♀️

ROLLIN', ROLLIN', ROLLIN' ON THE RIVER!





When Creedance Clearwater Revival frontman John Fogerty wrote the huge hit song

'Proud Mary' he couldn't have imagined that 520 staff and guests of the IM Group would celebrate the summer on a steamboat sailing along the Thames.

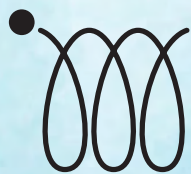
He said the song "portrays a new life available on the river, the promise of like-minded camaraderie and the chance for rebirth among friends." Quite apt for the spectacular Summer Party of 2024.

On a blazing hot day in June everyone in their finery boarded the replica Dixie Queen Mississippi paddle steamer for a night to remember. The exciting evening cruise was the highlight of a glorious weekend of fun and laughter –

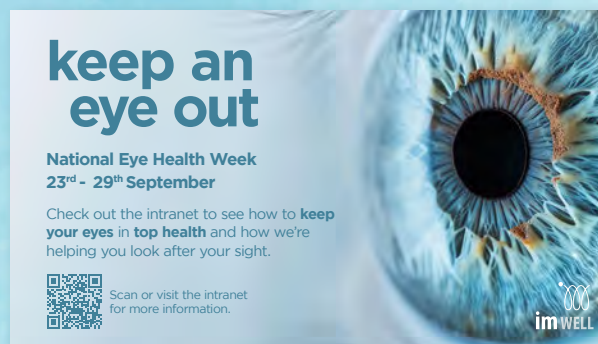
as IM Group Managing Director, Andrew Edmiston, said "We love a good party."

Barbeque food, wine, beers and, of course, lots of lively dancing took place while the Dixie Queen glided along old Father Thames. Tower Bridge was raised to let her through as she cruised on past Canary Wharf, the Old Royal Naval College at Greenwich, the O2 arena – the venue for another IM party 10-years ago – and the Thames Barrier.

Behind all this was a year of careful planning by IM Promotions Manager, Steve Eardley and Executive and HQ Office Manager, Sarah Sheridan. And, of course, every detail clicked into place and worked perfectly – even the weather! 🌞



im WELL IS REALLY WORKING



Staff wellbeing has always been fully embraced by the IM Group. So much so, that it has launched 'im well' to benefit staff and the company as a whole.

It reflects one of the firm's core values of 'togetherness' and is implemented by IM's Wellbeing Events Delivery Group, chaired by Lyndsey Thomas, IM Properties' Head of Marketing. Sixteen members from across all the Group's UK divisions and locations focus on delivering a wide range of events and activities to support and improve peoples' wellbeing.

Lyndsey explains: "We want to prioritise and help improve

the wellbeing of our staff by focusing on the three main pillars of physical, mental and financial health that are so often linked and can impact a person's wellbeing."

All the members are volunteers and do the work alongside their day-to-day roles. They meet every month and have a dedicated Teams channel, ensuring a space for sharing ideas and inclusion for members away from The Gate headquarters.

Lyndsey added: "We aspire to do things that interest people, make them feel good, bring them together and make their life more convenient. It's a great opportunity to forge

new relationships, meet and understand other people within the business and to learn about colleagues.

"It also gives the opportunity to collaborate and ultimately learn from, and learn about, people we work alongside. We've had some great feedback from staff getting to know and speak to other people in the business. Without our activities, they might not have done so."

Among the many events and topics are weekly fitness classes and cooking master classes run by the Wilson Vale team – IM's catering partners. Hampers of ingredients and instructions are delivered to

Group sites across the UK so that everyone can be involved.

We want to continue to try new ideas and engage everyone," said Lindsey. "I was very proud of the event we held for International Women's Day in 2024 and would like to continue to trial events that not only engage our staff, but also our key stakeholders.

"The IM Group's success is as much down to those who work with us as it is to those that work here. It's great to be able to engage our wider stakeholders in the activities." ■



NO HOLDING
NORDIC BACK

You just can't hold IM Nordic's operation back – even in challenging times. And tiny Latvia is a shining example.

Latvia has one of the smallest populations in Europe. So it may be surprising to hear that it's a great market for IM Nordic.

Since the GWM ORA 03 model was launched in the Baltic states of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania it has gained the highest market share of sales in Europe. Latvia was outstanding, winning 1.1 percent of the total market and 17 percent of the EV market from a standing start.

GWM ORA has become the number one EV in the Baltic states, outselling models such as the Tesla Model Y, Hyundai Ioniq 5 and VW id 4. Another GWM model, a premium SUV called the WEY05 has recently been launched

and IM Nordic is looking forward to results in 2025.

Confidence in Latvia is so good that IM Nordic has just opened a new showroom in the capital, Riga. It will sell only Subaru and GWM products with the aim of achieving even higher sales and increased market share.

Isuzu has also been the star performer in Sweden. In 2023 the brand was the number one pick-up in Sweden and held the highest market share in Europe. Christer Blomdell, IM Nordic's Managing Director, said: "Isuzu has always been very strong for us in Sweden. In the first half of 2024 we surpassed 2023's record full-year sales.

"After a couple of tough years we are back to the same volume as 2019 but with fewer dealers."

"We expect this to continue and should reach a total of 1,500 units by year end, meaning year-on-year growth of more than 50 percent."

IM Nordic reduced the number of dealer outlets in Denmark from 12 to five in 2022. The move has proved to be the right one explains Christer: "After a couple of tough years we are back to the same volume as 2019 but with fewer dealers. However, dealer profitability has increased."

"Due to big tax advantages for EV cars in Denmark, Subaru Solterra sales have helped a lot during 2024 and we expect double sales volume compared to 2023." 📈



Christer Blomdell



HELPING HAND FOR BELFAST

A group of 30 students and staff from three Grace Foundation partner schools spent a week in Belfast, joining in with local community groups on various social-action projects.

The youngsters threw themselves into decorating a youth centre, gardening, litter-picking and creating a huge graffiti mural. But, importantly, they talked to local people from diverse cultural and religious

backgrounds about themes of conflict and reconciliation.

One young student said: "I learnt that everyone has their own struggles and everyone's past is different and valid – respect that and be kind."

A student's parent commented: "It helped to transform her confidence and outlook. She loved the whole experience and is now looking for other community-based projects that she could join." 📷

IMPACT IN NUMBERS

Impressive numbers tell just part of the story behind the important work of the Grace Foundation.

Figures just released show how the charity has impacted the lives of so many young people and their families. A snapshot of the figures shows that that last year Grace Foundation reached out to more than 12,000 students at 12 partner schools.

There were more than 621,630 individual engagements with students, and nearly 29,000

family-support interventions. Vital one-to-one support was given to nearly 3,000 youngsters and all this crucial work was provided by just 45 Foundation staff.

Dave Boden, Grace Foundation Executive Director, said: "We provide timely support for the wellbeing of students who require it the most as well as championing and aiding their families." 📷

Dave Boden, Grace Foundation
Executive Director



ELECTRIC SOLTERRA SHINES

Subaru's all-electric Solterra has won two important awards for value-for-money.

The brand's first all-electric vehicle scooped the coveted Which? Best Buy accolade in the medium/large SUV category. The consumer champion praised Solterra for its assured handling and grippy all-wheel drive system, along with efficient safety and equipment levels.

Which? said: "Solterra's design, inside and out, marks it out as something special. It's unusually comfortable and efficient, as well as very practical for families. The secure all-wheel drive and excellent safety credentials means you can drive with peace of mind."

In the inaugural Leasing.com awards the Solterra quietly drove away with the Best Leasing Newcomer title.



Chris Evans, Chief Marketing Officer at Leasing.com said: "Subaru hasn't traditionally been a brand associated with personal contract hire. But that's all changed courtesy of the new, all-electric Solterra.

"It's rare to see a new all-electric entrant perform so well. The Solterra showcases Subaru's leap into a new sector, blending affordability, style, and cutting-edge technology. A thrilling debut performance." 🚗

DOUBLE TOP START TO 2025

As 2024 came to an end, Isuzu UK was already celebrating a duo of top awards for 2025 – adding to a clutch of honours won throughout the last 12 months.

Isuzu's D-Max was named 'Best Range' and 'Best Pick-Up' by Overlander 4x4 Magazine in the just-announced 2025 awards. Editor, Alan Kidd, was fulsome in his praise of the D-Max. He said: "No other pick-

up manufacturer's customers are as overwhelmingly positive about their ownership experience and that of their interactions with dealers.

"Isuzu offers a well-balanced range, the availability of key options such as automatic transmission and rear diff-lock from the Utility model up and its outstanding range of options and accessories, specifically thanks to its alliance with



ARB." ARB is a specialist firm offering a range of accessories tailored for the D-Max.

Managing Director of Isuzu UK, Alan Able, said: "We are immensely proud to have been recognised for the depth of the D-Max range and the comprehensive package we

offer through our dealerships. Customer satisfaction is an essential pillar of the brand, from the point of sale all the way to the aftercare in our leading warranty and aftersales support. With our first awards for 2025, we are excited to carry this strong momentum into the following year." 🚗

ONCE, TWICE, THREE TIMES A WINNER



Lorraine Bishton, Subaru UK's new Managing Director, has been named not once or twice, but three times in Autocar's "Top 100 Women in the Global Car Industry" awards.

It's a biannual award and Lorraine figured in it in 2016, 2018 and 2022.

When she was appointed in January, William Brown, Managing Director of International Motors Ltd, said: "We are thrilled to have

Lorraine on board and heading our Subaru operation in the UK. Last year was one of growth for the brand and we are looking to continue this progress in 2024 and beyond.

"Lorraine's appointment comes at a pivotal time as Subaru launches the new Crosstrek model and continues its momentum towards electrification with the all-electric Solterra and more models in the future." 📸



NATIONAL RECOGNITION FOR GRACE FOUNDATION

Grace Foundation was a finalist in the prestigious 2024 Centre for Social Justice (CSJ) awards.

Just 12 organisations in the UK were selected as finalists from more than 700 entrants. The CSJ is an independent body dedicated to helping those living in the poorest and most disadvantaged communities

in Britain to flourish and reach their full potential.

Gary Spicer, CEO of Grace Foundation, said: "Just to be nominated for the award is an honour, to be a finalist among so many other worthy contenders is extra special.

"Nomination is a testament to the hard work of all the staff at Grace Foundation and they should feel very proud of this recognition." 📸

SUBARU POWERS TO THE TOP

Subaru has won one of the most important awards in the automotive industry – the Auto Express Driver Power Survey.

The prestigious award is based entirely on owners' feedback – often the strongest critics. But thousands of Subaru owners voted for it, which saw Subaru beat 32 mainstream brands.

Owners poured high praise on Subaru's many virtues, citing their immense

satisfaction with the product. Quite an accolade!

Paul Barker, Editor of Auto Express, said: "Subaru may not be the most high-profile of brands, but owners have made it clear they're delighted with their car's practicality, safety, reliability and quality among other key attributes.

"There's clearly something special about a brand that provides such exceptional levels of satisfaction!"



LEADING INSURERS MOVE IN



An international insurance specialist has moved its UK headquarters to Bourn, the Coventry city-centre multi-storey office which was given a £9-million total refurbishment by IM Properties.

Global Insurance Management has taken 7,291 sq. ft in Bourn – the third letting in the Net-Zero-Ready building, which spans 90,330 sq. ft. It operates in more than 39 countries.

The premium, Grade A, high-specification offices are designed to provide best-in-class customer experience, integrating sustainability,

wellbeing, smart technology and a sense of community.

Rob Hemus, Asset Director for IM Properties, says the letting emphasises the attraction of investing for the future and creating an innovative brand of offices. He added: "As we move forward, operating in a socially-responsible environment is becoming imperative for businesses. Bourn not only aligns with this ethos but also elevates the green credentials by breathing new life into an existing building. Bourn's transformation rivals the long-term sustainability of even the most cutting-edge new builds."

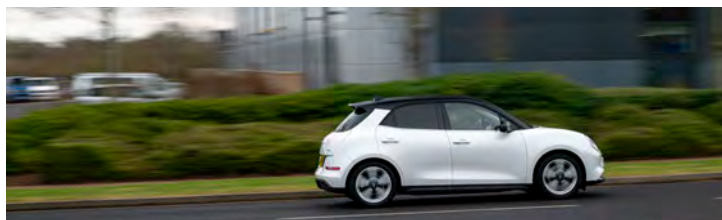


"We're delighted with the fantastic results that ORA 03 has achieved as part of the rigorous Green NCAP testing."

ORA 03 has been awarded top marks by Green NCAP, an independent testing initiative measuring cars on their efficiency and environmental impact.

With an average test score of 97 percent, ORA 03 comfortably achieved a 5 star Green rating and was proclaimed winner of the Green NCAP 'Small Family Car' and 'Full Electric Car' categories.

Toby Marshall, Managing Director of GWM ORA UK, said: "We're delighted with the fantastic results that ORA 03 has achieved as part of the rigorous Green NCAP testing. As the winner of two key categories, it is clear that ORA 03 has exceptional sustainability and efficiency credentials, factors that will resonate strongly with UK consumers." 📸



DOG POWER versus HORSE POWER

Isuzu owners are used to towing. But a D-Max towed by three dogs has got to be a joke. Right?

Wrong! That's exactly what happened when Isuzu dealer F J Chalke & Vale Motors in Somerset got a call from customer, John Binding.

John owns powerful Alaskan Malamutes and took part in the World Sleddog Dryland World Championship in November. But for months he wanted to get some early practice.

He called the dealership who sent Business Manager, Ross Fowler, and Sales Specialist, Jordan Brown, along for a training session with an impressive Isuzu D-Max Arctic Trucks AT35.

Ross said: "The dogs were incredibly intelligent and powerful. Their size can be quite intimidating, but they are beautiful creatures with nothing to fear. It was truly a fun and eye-opening experience."

John Binding is a member of the Alaskan Malamute Working Association. He said: "The dogs genuinely enjoy working in harness. They get very excited and can be noisy, eager to go. Stopping them can be fun! It's all about knowing your dogs and their capabilities. You work as a team, – competitor and dog alike."

In races a three-wheeled cart called a rig is used. The dogs are harnessed by gang lines and controlled only by voice commands. 📸



LIGHTS ON AT MERCIA PARK




One of Britain's largest electrical accessory suppliers has taken a huge warehouse at IM Properties Mercia Park logistics site.

Scolmore Group has secured Mercia 51, a 51,000 sq. ft unit at the vast 234-acre centre just off junction 11 of the M42 on the Leicestershire/Derbyshire border. Mercia Park is also home to Jaguar Land Rover's global logistics centre and a flagship distribution centre for DSV, one

of the world's biggest transport and logistics companies.

Scolmore is a family-owned business founded in Tamworth in 1989. It's a major player in the electrical accessories, fire, security, and lighting markets and employs more than 350 people.

The state-of-the-art logistics centre will house the extensive and growing collection of lighting products from Scolmore's Ovia lighting division. 

GWM ORA LOOKING BONNY IN SCOTLAND

Arnold Clark, one of the best-known name in car retailing in Scotland, has opened two GWM ORA outlets north of the border.

"We're delighted to welcome GWM ORA to the Arnold Clark family."

The sites in Glasgow and Sterling add to GWM ORA UK's growing number of sales points across Britain.

Arnold Clark is one of the largest car dealer groups in Europe supplying more than 200,000 cars a year.

Gavin McKenzie, Arnold Clark GWM ORA Brand Director said: "We're delighted to welcome GWM ORA to the Arnold Clark family. While they may be a relatively new manufacturer to the UK, they are an established brand with a fantastic reputation, and we look forward to a long and fruitful partnership." 



OUTSTANDING OUTBACK BEATS ALL COMERS – AGAIN



Subaru's Outback has firmly stamped its name as the best crossover car that money can buy.

It was named Best Crossover of the Year in 2024 by specialist publication Overlander 4x4. But it's far from the first time that Subaru has won the title. Last year it was voted Best Crossover Estate and the Subaru XV took the title in 2021 and 2022 by the magazine.

Editor Alan Kidd said: "Subaru's first 4x4 station wagons

"Subaru's first 4x4 station wagons invented the crossover estate class way before the sector was defined."

invented the crossover estate class way before the sector was defined. It's a class that grew and grew, with big-name manufacturers pitching in. But Subaru always defined it. And now it's seen off the lot of them – to the extent that this year we've had to combine the crossover and crossover estate classes into one.

"The Outback is up against all sorts of rivals. But, ultimately, Subaru is outstanding off-road and the brand is the true master of the artform. It does everything right as an everyday family vehicle and can tackle terrain that would give most other brands a nosebleed." 🏆



MITSUBISHI MOTORS CELEBRATES GOLDEN ANNIVERSARY



Three years after International Motors bought the Mitsubishi parts and after-sales business it helped celebrate Mitsubishi's 50th anniversary of being in the UK.

To mark the milestone, 50 Mitsubishi cars and their owners embarked on a 100-mile rally through the

Cotswolds, starting at the headquarters of I.M. MAPS (UK) – the subsidiary of International Motors now selling Mitsubishi parts – in Watermoor, Cirencester.

Jack Morris-Marsham – one of the founders of Mitsubishi Motors in the UK, formally known as The Colt Car Company – started the rally.

Several of the 110 Mitsubishi Motors dealers across the UK held events to mark the anniversary. The various celebrations raised money for the British Heart Foundation and the British Red Cross.

International Motors bought the Mitsubishi parts business in 2021 and continues to supply thousands of owners with parts and accessories for their cars. 📷





FUTURE IN FOCUS

Having covered a wide variety of topics in this issue of IM Review, it can easily seem like everything is the same as previous years. To some degree that is true. But there is a metamorphosis happening in many parts of our business that will have a far-reaching impact on the way we compete in the future.

We have always been agile and fleet-of-foot. That certainly won't change. But we are in a season where we are working out exactly what we think the future will be like and how we find success in it. For example, the drive to electric vehicles and the degree to which governments across Europe are committed to low or no emissions. This has sounded like a simple change. But we've been discovering that it is not. We have numerous brands in our portfolio with various different powertrain solutions. This has certainly benefitted us in terms of the agility we seek, especially in challenging situations. To date it has cost us, in terms of losses generated, to sell EVs. This will change, but only by playing a patient game of understanding how the mechanics of the EV market will develop - watching, learning, predicting, adjusting.

Our car business has been doing well over the last few years. Not because of the changing legislation, but despite it. Many have not shared the same story. But the immediate future looks even

more complicated - at least for a couple of years. We are in a good position to take quick advantage of how things turn out though. As the mist clears - and it will - we aim to be the ones to see the landscape clearest and work out our path accordingly. We hope to give our manufacturers the safest passage through because of the assets at our disposal and our ability to use them well.

Our Spitfire housebuilding business is another case in point. We know that there will be strong demand for UK housing for decades to come. This means that if we do our work well, Spitfire could become a very successful, and very important business - even more than it already is. There have been headwinds; interest rates, the cost-of-living crisis, repeated changes of government thinking. And in our desire to build one of the strongest brands in the industry, something that we believe we have done, we have again sacrificed some profitability in pursuit of this goal during those headwinds. But now our time is coming. We are planning a long-term and powerful business, one that focuses on quality of earnings and premium product. The way forward is clear to us. Capitalise on what our brand has become to so many house buyers, add value, be focused. This coming year will see a strong move towards those aims.

Our commercial property businesses have been quieter this year, at least on the surface. But, like the famous swan analogy, don't for a minute think that underneath there isn't tremendous activity. We are now two years into the changed landscape that higher interest rates brings. It seems they have peaked, but we don't take that for granted. Reflecting the many conversations around the group, the collective opinion is that the autumn budget was not helpful. But our resolve remains unchanged. A little like our car business, we must be patient, prudent and ready to strike when the time is right. The benefit of so many great businesses in our group is that we can buy ourselves time for the patience we need. We would rather do things well than in quantity. Our cash position is healthy and we are ready to build and move into our future.

But here comes a warning. If we don't remain resolute, focused, disciplined, working together as teams and with our eyes firmly set on the prize, we will not make the most of our advantages, we will not be first to find our way when the mist clears and the way forward will suddenly not be clear. This piece has always been titled 'Future in Focus'. This year, our future is focus.




Andrew Edmiston

"We would rather
do things well than
in quantity."

Andrew Edmiston





Several flying cars have been developed as prototypes during the past 30 years. However, XPENG Aeroht, a division of XPENG Motors, is the first to take them into full commercial production.

In October work started on a dedicated factory in Guangzhou, China, with the capacity to produce 10,000 units a year of the first of two models. The front cover shows the six-wheeled vehicle, which houses a two-seater vertical take-off and landing electric aircraft. Both will go into production. Order books are open for them now in China.

Five generations of electric vertical take-off and landing manned flying cars have been shown by XPENG Aeroht and, so far, more than 20,000 test flights have been conducted.