

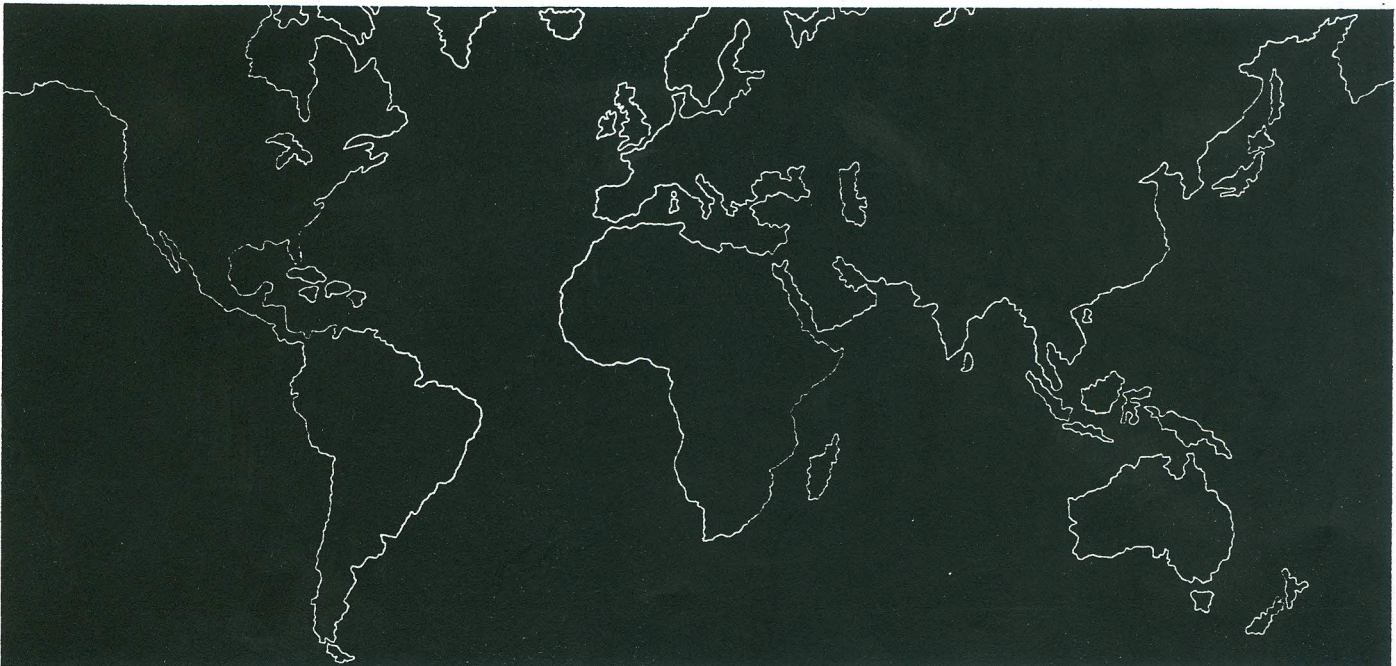
*A  
Great  
Partnership*

In the early days of the century A. C. Howard, the son of a farmer in Gilgandra, New South Wales, was fascinated with the new steam tractor but his enquiring mind could not help wondering whether the best use was being made of the power which was surely wasted as the cumbersome machine had to pack the ground hard before it could obtain sufficient grip to drag a plough.

A machine, therefore, was needed which could take the power direct from the tractor and use it to break the soil. Here, then, was the conception of the first rotary tiller and in 1912 young Howard rigged up what would now be called his first Howard Rotavator. Then, as a result of many experiments he finally designed a blade of the right size, shape and weight to cut cleanly through weeds and trash and lift and break the soil. Thus was born the famous Howard blade which is still largely the same today working on hundreds of thousands of Rotavators around the world.

The Great War interrupted Howard's plan to develop his ideas for tractor powered machines and he found himself working instead in England on experimental aircraft engines at Napier. After the war he returned to Australia and in 1922 succeeded in building his first engine powered rotary tiller, a 15-ft wide monster powered by a 60 h.p. engine.

A company, Austral Auto Cultivators Limited, was formed at Moss Vale in New South Wales and limited production was started. By 1926 this first small factory had been out-grown and a new, larger site was acquired at Parramatta outside Sydney. The enterprise expanded steadily and in 1928 arrangements were made with a British firm to produce machines and market them world-wide outside Australasia. But in 1938 Howard parted company with his Australian partners and came to England to form his own company.



At this time E. N. Griffith was farming in Essex and for years he had been closely following the development of Howard's ideas and machines. He was probably the first man in England to appreciate the potential for rotary tillage in home and overseas markets, his faith and vision was such that he gave up a twenty year career in shipping to hitch his wagon to the rotary tillage star.

Here then, at West Horndon in Essex, was the beginning of Rotary Hoes Ltd. with Griffith as Chairman and Howard Managing Director. At first it was hard pioneering work all over again, interrupted soon by the Second World War.

1939 saw the prototype of the famous "Gem" model and 1941 the first of the company's tractor powered models, but the war interrupted and production of Rotavators ceased when the company undertook Government contracts to manufacture half-a-million mortar bombs and many other types of munitions.

As soon as the war was over the company, realising that the world was its market sent salesmen and demonstrators to the four corners of the globe, with Howard himself leading the drive on the U.S.A. with a "Gem" in the back of a station-wagon. As Griffith has said—"to meet your market you must know your market". The company's new designs were not restricted to temperate farming but encompassed the whole field of agriculture with perhaps more emphasis on tropical areas than elsewhere. This was particularly true in the vast sugar, rice, cotton and coffee growing areas.

As a result of this pioneering the sales developed to such an extent as to justify the setting up of Subsidiary Companies in—

- South Africa (1948)
- U.S.A. (1949)
- New Zealand (1950)
- France (1951)
- Germany (1959)
- Italy (1962)
- Spain (1965)

whilst, in 1959, Rotary Hoes Ltd. were able to buy back Howard's original company outside Sydney, Australia.

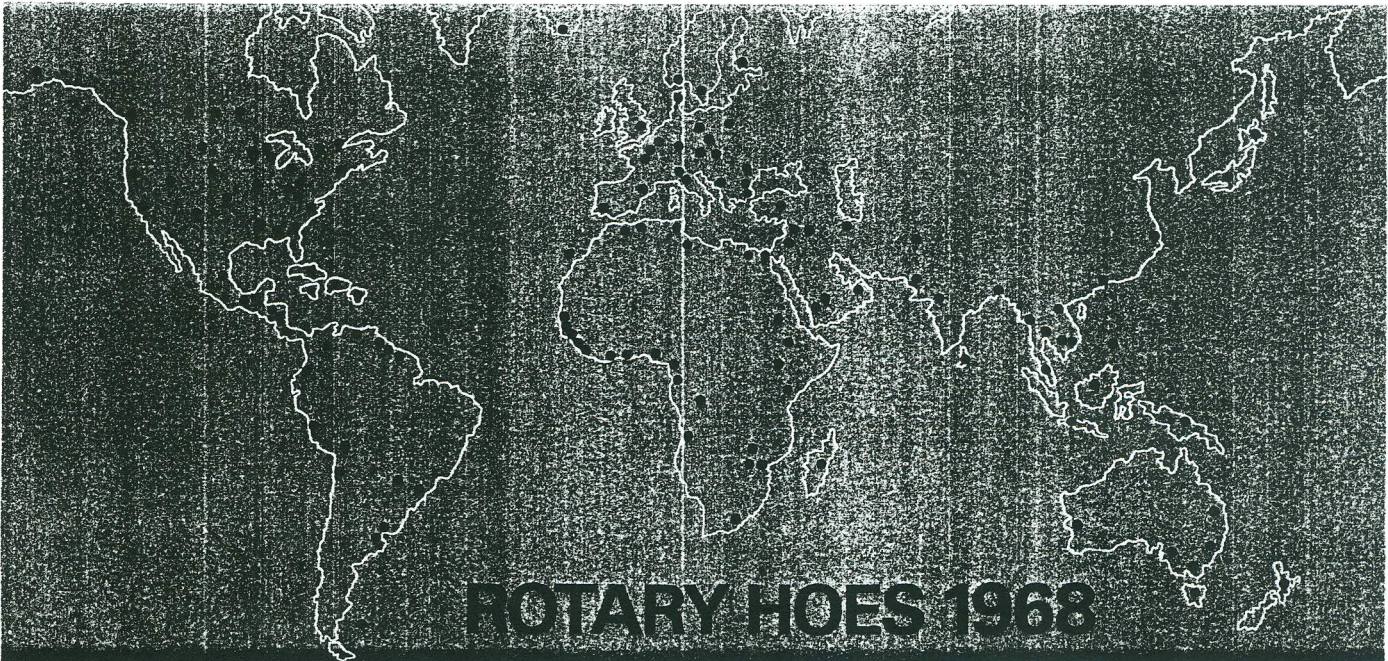


Three factories outside England—in Australia, France and Germany—now produce Howard Rotavators and markets have been established in 154 countries, and in addition to the original factory at West Horndon, now grown out of all recognition, new factories have been built at Harleston, Norfolk, in 1961, and Halesworth, Suffolk, in 1968.

To meet the world demand over these years the company's production has been diversified to include in addition to Rotavators a manure spreader, haymaking and grass cutting machines, soil stabilisers, trenching machines, grass and grain silos, slurry machines, the latest automatic potato planter and even wine presses.

In recent years the responsibility for the design and the development of new machines has fallen more and more on the shoulders of John Howard, A. C. Howard's son, and Howard himself has devoted his unflagging energy and ingenuity to the design and building of new factories and to special machine tools for manufacturing the machines.

On the commercial side Griffith, with his own farming experience, his financial expertise and his considerable knowledge of the agricultural world not only in England but overseas, has built up the company's reputation and standing. As President of the Agricultural Engineers Association from 1948-1954 and later President of the British Engineers Association, as a member of the F.B.I. Trade Delegations to enquire into the internal working and scope of the World Bank and Trade and Investment Missions to Sweden and Pakistan he has carried the flag for Rotary Hoes Ltd. wherever he went. Anybody who has attended an agricultural meeting and noticed a small stocky figure from the floor preface his remarks with—"Griffith—Farmer—Essex", will recall that some telling words would follow which would ensure that the interests of Rotary Hoes were not overlooked. His work as a Governor of the National College of Agricultural Engineering is untiring and carried out with his usual zestful enthusiasm.



In the final analysis perhaps one of the greatest assets that Griffith and Howard have contributed to their companies has been their ability to collect around them men who have loyally and energetically responded to their enquiring minds and adventurous determination, and so helped them to realise the dreams of 1938 thus ensuring that the future of their companies will be in tried and proven hands; whilst for their part, the succeeding generation wishing them a long and well deserved retirement will be happy in the knowledge that from time to time they will still be able to call upon the experience and wisdom of the companies' founders, Griffith and Howard.