

Gloucestershire businessman named in King's birthday honours

A Gloucestershire businessman has been awarded an MBE in the King's birthday honours list. Robert (Bob) Griffin, owner of trike manufacturer Tomcat, received the accolade for his contribution to engineering and improving the lives of people with disabilities.

Mr Griffin set up Tomcat 26 years ago to help people with learning or sensory impairments, including children, to cycle. He wanted to find a solution to help his son Tom who had Angelman's syndrome – a disability that causes severe learning difficulties, sleep disturbance and poor coordination.

His first invention – the Carer Control system – was designed in 1997 and has revolutionised the cycling experience for thousands of individuals worldwide for over two decades. His later designs have opened countless opportunities for individuals with a disability or mobility condition, enabling greater independence and freedom.

He said: "A few things came together for me in 1997. A job I didn't like, the want to help my disabled son Tom achieve more in life, a chance to challenge my engineering skills and a glimpse of how the less able can become more able, once given the chance.

"I took the plunge and walked through an open door into a world where everyone was grateful for your help, or wanted to help you in what you were doing through their knowledge and skill. Sometimes easy, sometimes difficult, the journey has always been its own reward, but to receive this MBE in recognition of that journey is undoubtedly the proudest moment of my life and a tribute to so many others who've been with me

along the way.”

Mike Dawson, previous chief executive at Tewkesbury Borough Council, was one of the people who supported Mr Griffin’s nomination for a national honour.

He said: “Bob’s contributions to both engineering and the disabled community are truly outstanding. He has built one of Tewkesbury Borough’s and Gloucestershire’s most successful businesses.”

He added: “His inventions have brought joy and freedom to so many, he is an amazing man, and this MBE is a well-deserved acknowledgement of his tireless efforts and remarkable achievements.”

Tomcat has twice won a Queen’s Award for Enterprise in Innovation – in 2013 and 2020.