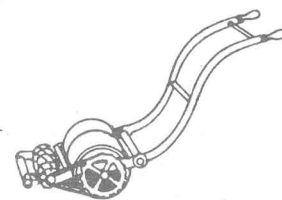


Grassbox

The magazine of The Old Lawnmower Club

Number 8



Winter 1993

TON UP FOR CHRISTMAS

Welcome to Edition 8 of Grassbox, and a very Happy Christmas and prosperous New Year to all Old Lawnmower Club Members and other readers.

Since the last issue the Club has grown to over 100 Members. Those joining since September are included in a special Membership Directory Supplement on the back page. Using this list and the Directory gives a complete list of current Members.

Thanks to everyone who has sent in all sorts of information for inclusion in the edition. As you will see when you flick through, I have tried to include as wide a selection as possible. If it is not there, then I have probably kept it back for the next edition. Keep the information coming though, as I am always looking for stuff to put in.

Elsewhere in this edition, there is news on the brand new Members' Information Service we are launching, news of some additional rallies for 1994 and a short review of the year.



Michael Duck's c1924-26 Qualcast Major push mower, one of the first models produced by the company. Michael hopes to bring the Major to the MK Rally in 1994.



Andrew MacMorland's two Drummond mowers. Notice how both seem to have the same handles, giving a distinctive 'flow' to the mowers' outlines.

Roger's Budding Skills

Old Lawnmower Club Member, Roger D C Evans is Librarian and Agronomist at the Sports Turf Research Institute in Bingley, West Yorkshire. Roger has a collection of over 30 early lawn mowers and writes regularly for publications such as Historic Garden and the Institute's own magazine, Sports Turf Bulletin. In edition 183 (Oct-Dec 1993) of the Bulletin Roger has written a short piece on Edwin Budding and the Invention of the Lawn Mower. Copies of this booklet are available free from Roger Evans, c/o The Sports Turf Research Institute, Bingley, West Yorkshire BD16 1AU.

Villiers Query

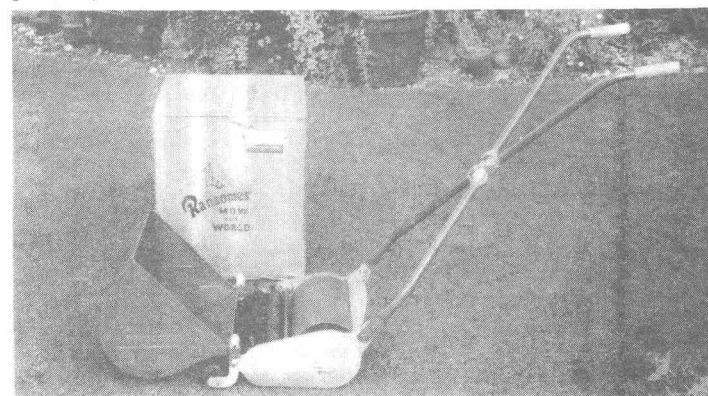
Tony Garratt wonders which Villiers engines are peculiar to Atco, particularly from the 1930s. Apparently a number of engines were supplied to Atco with 'made for Atco by Villiers' stamped on the barrel, with serial numbers prefixed SZ and TZ, but are not listed in normal Villiers dating lists. If anyone has any suggestions or knows the why this might be, let the Club know and we will include the information in a future edition.

Information Service

The Club is introducing a special information service for Members. The service will be co-ordinated through the Club, and will be run in conjunction with the Hall & Duck Collection, which has kindly agreed to charge just £3 per machine enquiry to Club Members rather than the normal charges of £6.50. This is a very generous discount and, as anyone who has used this service in the past will know, well worth it. However, to make sure that this special price is only available to Club Members we have had to impose some very basic rules:

- 1 All enquiries must be made either through the Club Secretary or the Club's normal address.
- 2 All enquiries are to be made on the correct forms, and a Membership number must be included (you will find this on your Membership Card).
- 3 The fee is £3 for Members in the UK and £3.50 for Members overseas (to cover additional postage costs). The fee for non-Members is £6.50 for non-Members.
- 4 A copy of the information obtained will also be held by the Club to help build up a database of material.
- 5 The Club will be able to publish any interesting material in Grassbox.

A single form is enclosed with this edition of Grassbox. Forms may be copied as often as required. If possible, a three-quarter view of the machine being queried should be enclosed with enquiries as this will help greatly with identification and general queries. *Robbie Robinson.*



It is unusual to find an old mower complete with its original packing case. This c1950s Ransomes Ajax belongs to Tony Garratt, and still has its original paintwork and transfers too.

RALLIES

Milton Keynes Museum

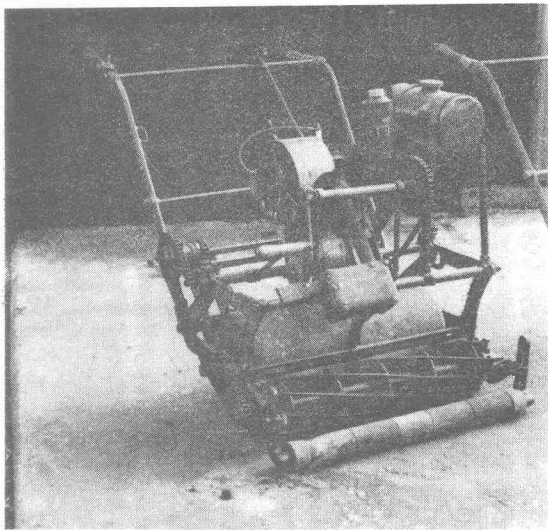
The Club's Annual Rally will be held on the weekend of 21/22 May. For the first time, the Rally will be the main event at the Museum over the weekend, giving ralliers more freedom to do their own thing. In addition to the main rally, it is hoped to organise a special social evening on the Saturday and some special activities on the Saturday afternoon.

The Club's AGM will be held at 12noon on Sunday 22 May at the Museum. Any Member of the Club may attend the AGM or Rally. Further details of the AGM, and Rally entry forms, will be mailed with the next Grassbox (March 1994).

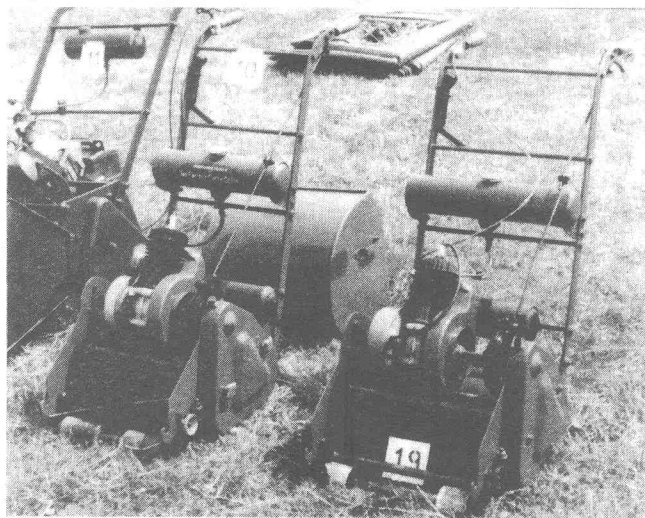
Hatfield House

Scheduled for 18/19 June (not 20/21 June as stated in Grassbox 7), this really is an excellent event. The Club will have a special marquee and display area, and there is lots to see for the rest of the family too. We have put on a respectable show in the last two years, but we really should try to make 1994 our best effort yet. Forms will be available in the New Year.

Both these Rallies are organised directly by the Club. We do not ask Members to come for both days or not at all. One day is good enough for us, so long as we know.



Early Greens motor mower, part of the Hall & Duck Collection.



Royal Enfield mowers, one belonging to Ted Sutton and the other to Alec Hillyar, as seen at Banbury Rally.

Banbury Rally

Another Club regular, organised by Club Secretary, Robbie Robinson, this is one of the best vintage rallies in the southern half of England. It has to be worth it just for the social "event" in the evenings. Forms for this rally will also be available in the New Year.

Additional Rallies

We have been approaching a number of other organisations, some suggested by Club Members, to see whether we can participate in their rallies in 1994. We have received invitations from Bishops Castle Steam Rally, Mid Shropshire Vintage Club, Erewash Museum (Derbyshire), and a new steam rally proposed for a site close to Stansted Airport on 2/3 July. We have also received tentative approaches from a couple of other locations. Dates and arrangements have not been confirmed yet, but we hope to have more news in the next issue. In the meantime, if anyone has any ideas for suitable venues, particularly in the South East, South West, Wales and Scotland please let the Club know. And what about overseas?

THE COMMITTEE

The Old Lawnmower Club is run by a small working committee of five Members. I thought it might be a nice idea to introduce each of the new committee Members (two this month, three next edition).

Robbie Robinson, Secretary

Robbie joined the Old Lawnmower Club since 1991, and has been actively involved in its activities ever since. Robbie collects pre-1939 push mowers and his collection includes Ransomes, Drummonds, Greens and others. His oldest mower is an 1885 Ransomes 10" New Automaton. In addition to his hard work organising the Club's Membership and other activities, Robbie runs the Banbury Steam Rally lawn mower section and is editor of Banbury Steam Society's Yardsheet newsletter.

Andrew Grout, Committee Member

Andrew has been involved with the Old Lawnmower Club right from the start. He attended the very first lawn mower rally at Milton Keynes Museum in 1989, before the club was officially formed. Andrew has over 70 mowers and collects "anything" and "doesn't worry about the condition", although he tends to specialise in Ransomes. At the moment, Andrew's largest Ransomes is a 42" cut ride-on, from about 1920.



Almost a committee meeting. Martin Stephenson (left), Andrew Grout (standing, second left) and Robbie Robinson (standing, right) keep an eye on Andrew Hall and Michael Duck inspecting MK Museum's Budding patent mower. Neil Williams (centre, with hat) is probably looking for ideas for his occasional 'Two Stroke' cartoon.

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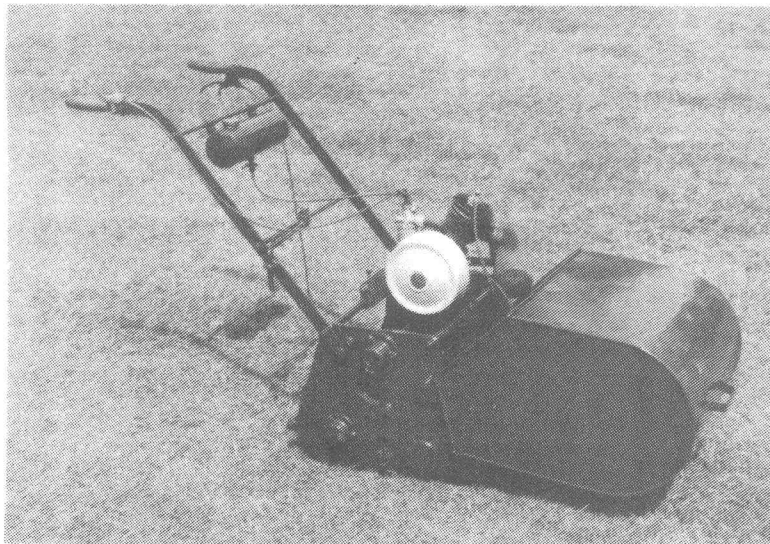
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that's
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1939 advert for the then new Qualcast 16 mower (left, supplied by Malcolm Hemley). Above, the real thing, this model belonging to Keith Wootton.

BITS & BOBS

Some useful contact points for the supply of parts and assistance:

The Green Spark Plug Company, 340 Washnay Road, Sale Cheshire M33 4HA Tel: 061 973 6755: Can supply new, obsolete makes and types of sparkplug, including Lodge which were fitted as original equipment to many lawnmowers.

Independent Ignition Supplies, Myrtle Street, Appledore, Devon EX39 1PH Tel: 0237 475986: Can supply original remanufacture and repair obsolete components. Mail order catalogue available.

Information supplied by GF Baker, Cornwall.

Brian Radam, c/o British Lawnmower Museum, 106-114 Shakespeare Street, Southport, Lancs PR8 5AT (Tel: 0704 35369), offers a restoration service to Club Members, for a small fee. Brian is also able to make many parts for restoration projects, including grass boxes. Incidentally, Brian has also asked Grassbox to remind readers that he allows Club Members to visit his Museum free of charge on production of their Membership Card.

Corrections to Mem Directory

The following are corrections to the Membership Directory, Number 3, as issued with the last Grassbox:

Robbie Robinson's telephone number is Oxford (0865) 68682, not as printed in the Directory.

Ted & Pat Wells were omitted from the Directory by mistake. Their telephone is 0749 880310. "General gardening bygones, with special interest in hand tools and traps."

Take A Tip From Atco

In 1927 Charles H Pugh produced a booklet entitled 'The Finest Motor Mower on Earth', a rather ambitious title perhaps, given that the mower in question was the Standard. Nevertheless, many Standards have survived (according to Atco, by 1927 they had sold 14,000 of the model, and production continued for a couple more years after this). The book contained some handy month-by-month tips for Atco owners. The company's comments for December and January are still relevant to owners today.

December: 'Little can be done out of doors in December. Have the cutters of your Atco reground if necessary, the engine decarbonised, and the mower generally cleaned and adjusted.'

January: 'When the turf is frost-bound or very wet, keep off it as much as possible....If cutters have not been ground it is advisable to have this done now.'

Could it be that Atco knew 70 years ago what Old Lawnmower Club Members would be getting up to during the Winter?

More comments next issue on the Atco booklet, which was passed to Grassbox by John Barnard.

Review of the Year

1993 was a transition year, and will go down in the Club's history as the year we really began to make a mark. Following the growth of the original 'free membership' club to over 150 Members, it became impractical for one person to run it part time. An inaugural meeting was held at Milton Keynes Museum in May, when it was decided to form a small working committee to handle the running of the Club, draft a constitution and to introduce a small membership fee.

The MK Museum Rally in May was the Club's most successful yet. The events at Hatfield House and Banbury in June were also the biggest in their short histories too.

During the Summer, the Club spent a great deal of time contacting all Members, collecting subscriptions and compiling a new Membership Directory. This resulted in a consolidated Membership, starting from about 60 Members, but growing to just over 100 by the end of the year. This is no mean achievement for such a young Club.

Throughout the year, many members were featured in local and national media. This publicity has helped the Club to grow and raised awareness of old lawnmower collecting.

1994 will see more of the same, and the introduction of new events and services for Members.

ADVERTS

For Sale: JP Super, c1930s. Contact Mr G Mackey: Tel 081 946 3548 (London) (Not Member)

For Sale: Hayter rotary motor mower, c1950s. Contact Keith Morgan: Tel 0794 68379 (Romsey, Hampshire) (Not Member)

For Sale: Atco Standard without grassbox. Contact Mr E Smith: Tel 0672 810811 (Marlborough, Wiltshire)(Not Member)

For Sale: Atco Standard and 1950s Atco Kick Start. Contact Christine Mason: Tel 0384 872788 (Stourbridge, W Midlands)(Not Member)

Wanted: Correct fuel pipe, original or pattern for Atco Standard fitted with Senspray carburettor. Contact Adrian Gray: Tel 079 986 561 (Bangor, Gwynedd)

For Sale: Greens 14/4 motor mower in perfect condition, mid 1950s. Also 16" Zephyr hand bowling/golf green mower with ten blades, early 1950s. Contact J H Parker: Tel 021 355 3525 (Birmingham)(Not Member)

Wanted: Carburettor for Atco Standard. Contact Michael Morris: Tel 0531 650240 (Ledbury, Herefordshire)(Not Member)

For Sale: Atco Standard c1930, Rotascythe "Eton" c1960, Atco Long Grass mower. Contact Mr JFN Stanier: Tel 0283 31190 (Burton)(Not Member)

For Sale: Unusual motorised "American" Pennsylvania lawnmower, with Blackburn 4S engine. Contact Mr R Rainbow: Tel 0920 438761 (Great Munden, Hertfordshire)(Not Member)

For Sale: 1926 Atco Standard, complete with aerator front roller in addition to wooden rollers. Contact Lewis Glossop: Tel 0246 590326 (Chesterfield)(Not Member)

For Sale: Atco Standard, complete. Contact JS Landless: Tel 0706 214995 (Rossendale, Lancs)(Not Member)

For Sale: 1955 34" Atco cylinder mower, with spare grassbox and roller seat. 1951 38" Mayfield Garden Tractor. 1955 38" Atcoscythe. Contact Gavin Douglas: Tel 0573 450357 (Kelso)(Not Member)

For Sale: Atco Standard, complete but needing minor repairs. Contact James D Keir: Tel 0342 834621 (Lingfield, Surrey)(Not Member)

Wanted: For 1935 Ransomes Mk6A 24" with 348cc Sturmeys Archer engine: Scraper/Name plate, Wing nut for cylinder clutch. Hand wheel for cylinder clutch, ignition control bracket, cam lever, magneto. Contact M Cherry, 13 Barrow Road, Barton On Humber, DN18 6AA (Not Member)

Wanted: Rear roller for c1950 MkIV RSJ 14" motor mower. Contact Alan Holden: Tel 0803 614865 (Torquay, Devon)

Wanted: Clutch assembly for RSJ Mk8 24" motor mower with 350cc Sturmeys Archer engine. Also wanted, set of gangs or large sports ground mowing machine. Anything considered. Contact Martin Seymour: Tel 0206 761012 (Stowmarket, Suffolk)

Free: 1950s 14" Greens motor mower, in working order, complete with instruction booklet. Contact AR Hawkes: Tel 0538 385324 (Stoke-on-Trent)(Not Member)

Club Booklets

In the New Year, the Club will be publishing three leaflets designed to help Members enjoy their hobby even more. The publications will be:

- List of Books, Articles and Papers on Old Lawn Mowers.
- List of Museums with Old Lawn Mowers on display.
- List of Recommended Suppliers.

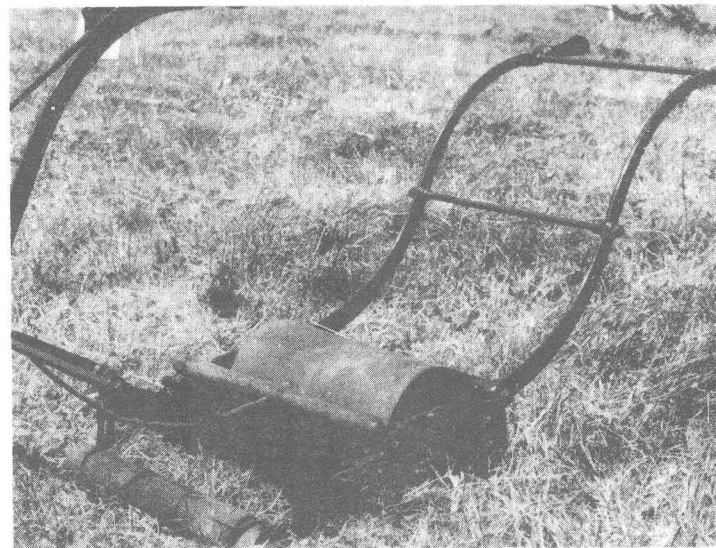
In addition, a new Club Membership leaflet is being prepared, as are posters. Although none of these are not yet available, it is hoped to have them ready by the time the next Grassbox is published (March 1994).



Another Automower (belonging to Antony Lewis). This make was featured in Grassbox 7.

Back Copies of Grassbox

As more and more people join the Club it is becoming increasingly difficult to supply complete sets of back copies of Grassbox as this now requires special reprints. Therefore it will not be possible to supply back copies from now on.



Greens produced mowers with 'Leeds and London' cast into the handles for many years. However, between 1863 and 1865, the company also produced mowers for the Irish market with Leeds, London and Dublin cast into the handles, like this rare example of a two-person Silens Messor is from the Hall & Duck Collection.

Deadlines

Readers are reminded that the deadline for adverts and contributions is the first day of the month of publication. The deadline for the March edition is therefore 1 March.

Next Edition

Mar 1994

AGM & Rally Preview

More Photographs

More Tips From Atco

Grassbox

Edition 7 - December 1993

Edited by Keith Wootton