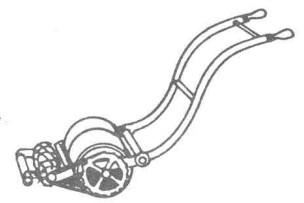


Grassbox

The magazine of The Old Lawnmower Club



Number 9

Spring 1994

A NEW YEAR

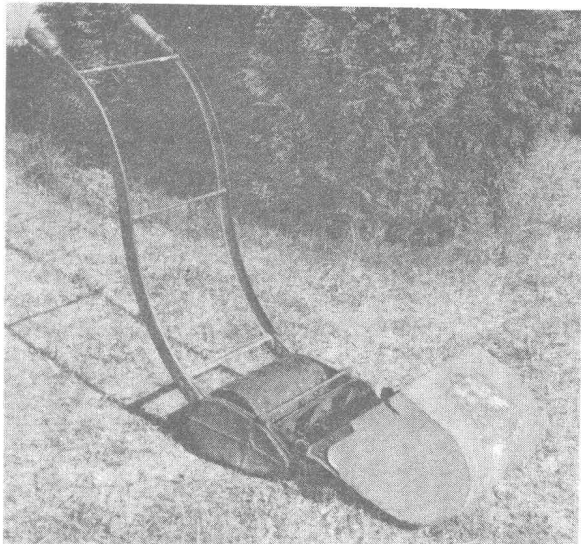
Since the last edition just before Christmas we have increased Membership to 110, and more people continue to contact the Club.

We have been looking at how we can publicise the Club's activities and have contacted a number of gardening and history magazines to see if they are interested in writing about our activities. Some have expressed an interest, so look out for some coverage.

In this edition, there is lots of information about the AGM, which is being held on the Sunday morning of the Annual Rally at Milton Keynes Museum. The Annual Rally and AGM are important events for the Club, and of course it would be great if as many Members could attend as possible. If Members want to attend the Rally, but are unable to bring exhibits, that is fine.

We realise of course that many Members are too far away to come along so we are going to use a postal vote system for any motions that are received by the Club six weeks before the AGM (ie received by 8 April). If anyone would like to discuss any motions for the AGM, we would be delighted to hear from you. Once we have received motions, we will send out voting papers which must be returned to the Club before 19 May (so that we can count them etc).

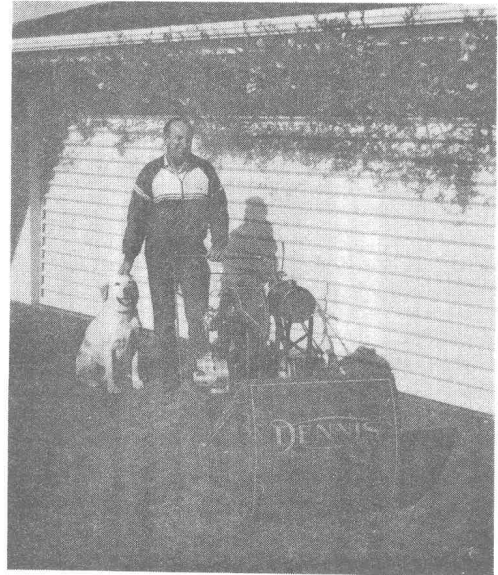
Anyone who attends the AGM is requested to bring their Club Membership Card with them. This is so the Museum will admit you to the AGM and Rally without charge.



Ransomes Atlas push mower c1950.

Information Service

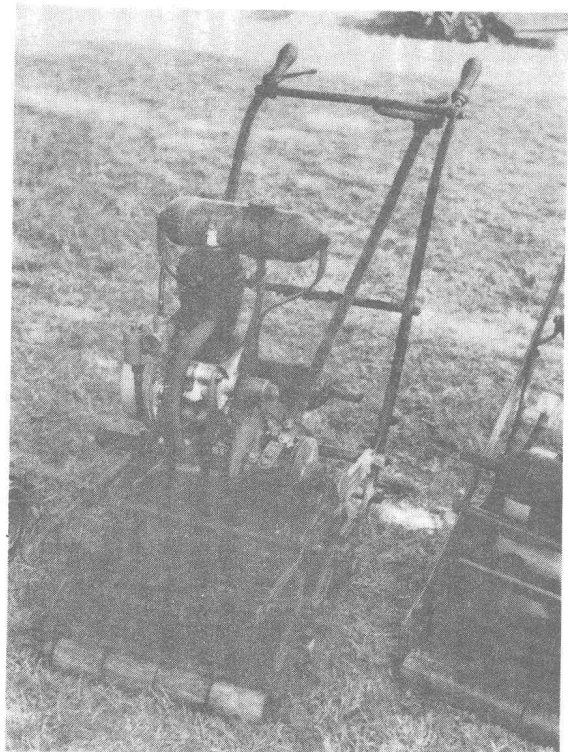
So far only three people have taken advantage of the Club's new Information Service using the extensive archives of the Hall & Duck Collection. The people that have used the service so far have been very pleased with the results. Information supplied through the service has included dates of manufacture, details of the correct timing and carburettor settings and copies of adverts and manuals for the mowers concerned. This type of information is well worth the £3.00 fee per mower, and can help greatly with restoration and display projects.



The Club's 100th Member was Peter Liggett of Christchurch, New Zealand. Peter is seen here with 24" Dennis No 73527. The mower was used to mow the lawns at a local factory until 1986.

MEMBERSHIP DIRECTORY

There have only been a few new Members since the last Grassbox, so there is little need for an updated Membership Directory insert. However, one will be produced to accompany the next edition in June.



Although it looks like a normal Atco Standard, this model was in fact called the HY and was made around 1929.

Advance notice of the
Annual General Meeting
of
The Old Lawnmower Club
to be held at
*Milton Keynes Museum of Industry & Rural
Life, Stacey Hill Farm, Southern Way,
Wolverton, Milton Keynes MK12 5EJ*
Sunday 22 May
12noon

Formal Business will include:
Selection of Committee & Officers for coming year.
Ratification of Accounts for 1993/94.
Consideration of any motions.

All Members are entitled to attend the AGM, which is on the Sunday morning of the Annual Rally. Exhibiting at the Rally is optional.

Under the Club Constitution, Members should submit motions in writing no later than six weeks before the AGM (ie by 9 April 1994). Postal voting forms on motions will be issued to all Members three weeks before the AGM and should be returned to the Club no later than Friday 20 May.

Copies of the Club Constitution are freely available to Club Members from the Club Secretary on request, but please send an A4 sized stamped address envelope.

Members attending the AGM are requested to bring their Membership Cards to obtain free entry to the Museum.

B A Robinson, Secretary, The Old Lawnmower Club, 10 Burchester Avenue, Headington, Oxford OX3 9NA (Tel: 0865 68682).

RALLIES

One of the questions which always crops up during the rally season is 'Can I come if I've only got one mower?' The answer is definitely YES. The Club encourages participation by as many Members as possible. After all it is the Members which make the Club, not their machines.

Below are details of the various rallies which the Club is organising or promoting this year. We are hoping to add others to the list. Forms for each event can be obtained from Keith (MKM, Hatfield, Town & Country Festival) or from Robbie (Banbury, Salop) or from the contact listed.

Annual Rally Milton Keynes

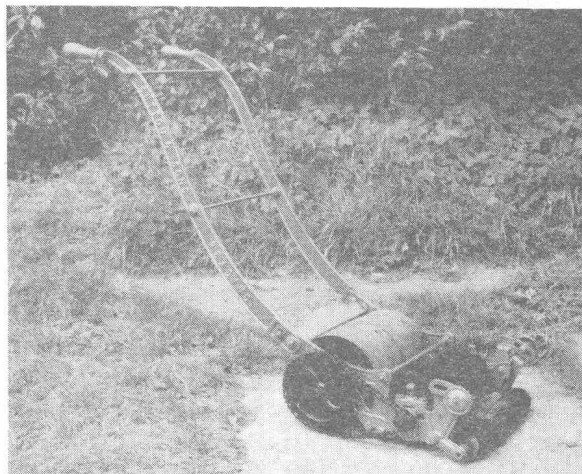
21/22 May

The Club's Annual Rally is our BIG event of the year and I hope that as many Members as possible will be able to come along. The Saturday will be informal, with some special events throughout the day. We will be going to a local canal side pub in the evening, and there will be limited overnight camping facilities at the Museum for anyone coming for both days. Our AGM will be held on the Sunday morning. Club Members attending the AGM will be able to visit the Museum free of charge, but Members attending during the public admission hours of 1.30-4.30pm each day will be asked to pay a small admission charge (£1.25 Adults/75p concessions). (Details from Keith).

Hatfield House Festival of Gardening

18/19 June

This is a super event, which is well worth attending. The Club has its own marquee to use (to shelter from the sun, no doubt) and a small mowing area. The event is worth visiting just to see the gardens and the House, even without the mowers! (Details from Keith).



Know Your Maker SUTTONS MOWERS

In times past it was common practice for the leading manufacturers to produce mowers for sale by other companies. The machines produced were often sold by mail order or by catalogue, hence the name 'catalogue mowers'. Ransomes was one of the leading producers of catalogue machines, and between 1892 and 1900 it produced a range of machines for the seed company Suttons based on the popular Automaton range. Although the design was more or less identical, special castings with the name of the 'manufacturer' (ie Suttons) were made for side frames and scraper plates to 'brand' the machines. Models between 8" (sold for £2-15s) and 22" (£9-10s) were made. This 12" example, a recent addition to the Hall & Duck Collection, would have been sold for £4-10s. A 20" model is on display at MK Museum. Suttons is now based in Torquay, Devon. This information was supplied by Michael Duck.

Banbury Rally

25/26 June

Banbury Rally is one of the best on the circuit and as usual, we'll be taking part. There's lots to see and do over the weekend and it is in a very easy to get to location close to the M40. (Details from Robbie).

Takeley Centenary Steam Fair

2/3 July

This is a new Rally on a site close to Stansted Airport and is being organised by the East Anglian Traction Engine Club. Closing date for entries is 7 May, and further details can be obtained from Tony Brown, 6 Highfields Close, Duxford, Cambs.

Stowmarket

9/10 July

Another new Rally for Members in Suffolk, Essex, Cambs and Herts. Details can be obtained from Martin Seymour, 47 Northgate Street, Colchester, Essex CO1 1EY.

County of Salop Steam Rally

28/29 August

This rally (formerly the Bishops Castle Rally) is well established and popular with a number of Club Members. We have been invited to attend and are making it our "Midlands North" event. (Details from Robbie).

Town & Country Festival

11 September

The Town & Country is a popular end of year event with ralliers in the East of England. It is only one day, but well worth the effort. (Details from Keith).

Thanks to the people that suggested other venues. We have been in touch with many of them, although we are unable to confirm invitations as a Club at this stage.

Letters To The Editor VILLIERS QUERY

Gordon Davenport writes:

Regarding the "Villiers Query" in Issue 8 of Grassbox, I have checked my records and found that the following prefixes were used:

SZ for 1½hp Atco, 147cc
SZF for 1½hp Atco with fan and cowl, 1934
TZ for 2½hp Atco, 249cc

The list below shows other engine types made by Villiers for Atco. As far as I can recall there was an agreement between Villiers and Atco that only Villiers made the engines for Atco in the early days and as such no books were printed by Villiers with the Atco numbers.

On my many, many visits to Villiers in Marston Road I made notes in my book of most of the numbers of the engines, with the help of members of the excellent staff at the time.

BX	1½hp Atco
CX	2½hp Atco
CYA	
CYB	
CYC	Atco 98cc
CYD	Atco Scythe
KK	Atco 1937
JR	2½hp Atco
JX	2hp Atco
TY	Atco Midget
TZ	2½hp Atco
422	Atco 79cc
764	Atco 79cc
428B	Atco 79cc
594	Atco 147cc
487B	Atco 20", 1956

I have a number of spares for Villiers engines 1950 onwards and few for the earlier years, should anyone be interested.

Mr Davenport is from Shrewsbury and can be contacted on 0743 362950 & 344482. Ed.

THE COMMITTEE

Concluding our brief introduction to the current committee.

Mike Dibley

Mike, from Norwich, has been in the Club since almost the beginning. Although he collects all makes of mowers and has 76 in his collection, Mike tends to specialise in pre-1939 Ransomes. Despite this, his oldest mower is a 1870s Greens. Mike is also an active member of the Norfolk Internal Combustion Engine (NICE) Club, as well as helping with a number of local charities. Mike attends rallies all over the country, and has been to many of the OLC events in the last five years.

Martin Stephenson, Treasurer

Martin lives near to our home base in Milton Keynes. Although he is not a collector, he has attended many of the Club's events and is often seen getting his hands dirty helping out (and always in the beer tent). Martin works for a large accountancy company and drives a 1961 Morris Minor.

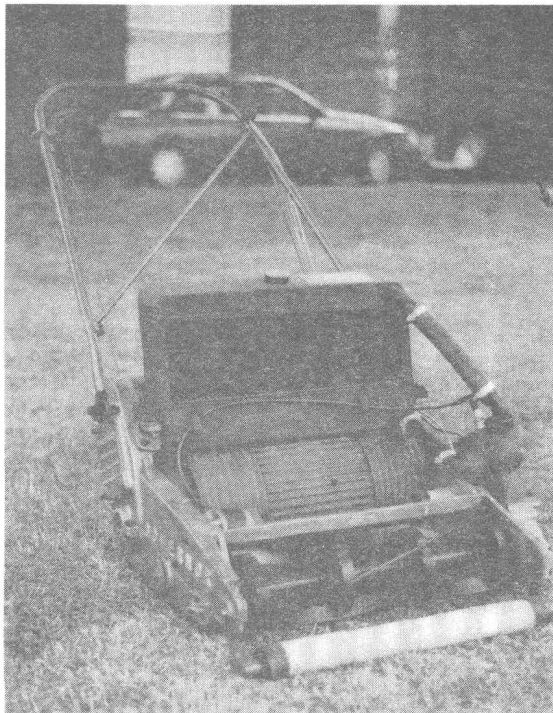
Keith Wootton, Chairperson

Keith Wootton, the Club's Chairperson, founded the Old Lawnmower Club in 1990. He has been collecting and rallying lawnmowers since 1978, although his collection is still quite small at less than 20 machines. Keith lives in Northampton and is actively involved with MKM, where he helps with publicity and was one of the team that created the current display of 60+ mowers, including three of his own machines.

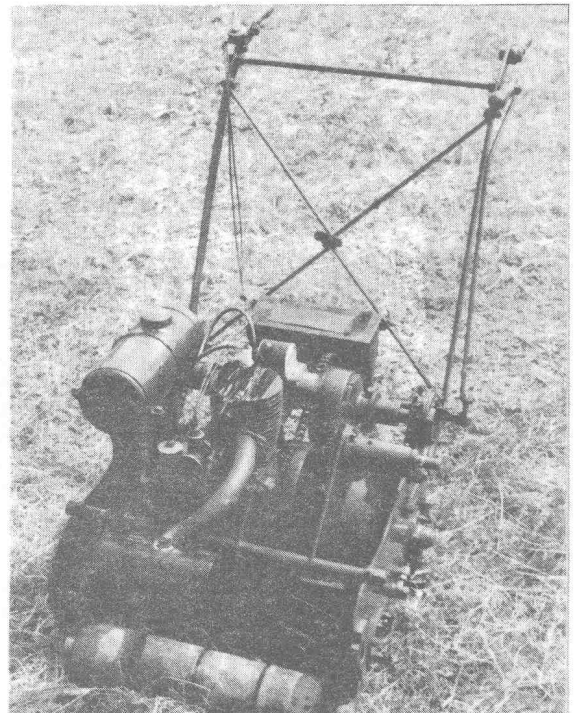
SWEAT SHIRTS

We have arranged for the production of a range of Sweat and Polo Shirts for the Club. The shirts are dark green with the club's logo and name embroidered in gold lettering. Prices are £12 (+ £1.50 postage/packing) for the sweatshirts and £11 (+£1.50/p) for Polos. They can be ordered through the Club and from Robbie Robinson. If you are ordering, please make clear whether you would like a sweat or polo shirt, the size (small, medium, large, extra large) and enclose a cheque payable to The Old Lawnmower Club.

THE GOVERNOR



Both these mowers are made by the same company and have the same name! The John Shaw 'Governor' shown on the left is unusual in that it has a large radiator mounted above the rear roller. Even more interesting, the cutting cylinder acts as the flywheel. The John Shaw 'Governor' on the right is more conventional, but is still a very uncommon



machine. The company was based in Birmingham, and both models are from the 1920s. The example on the left is part of the Hall & Duck Collection, while the machine in the right belongs to Antony Lewis. A similar machine is on display at Milton Keynes Museum.

Adverts

For Swap or Sale: Ransomes 9" Lion (R), Ransomes Conquest (R), Ransomes Anglia MkV (R), Ransomes 20" c1955 with 250cc Sturmev Archer engine (R), Suffolk Viceroy (R), 8" and 10" Greens Silens Messors, Greens 20" c1938 with 250cc JAP engine, Lawnrider, Pre-1935 Pennsylvania, Two JP push mowers. Will swap for any Atco related material (eg catalogues, handbooks, etc) and mowers pre-1950. Also Boatimpellor, Autoscythe, pre-1939 Lawn Edge Trimmer, Bent-scythe etc. Would also sell any of listed machines. Note R=restored. Contact Tony Garratt: Telephone 0694 751322 (Shrewsbury).

Wanted: Any Shanks mowers, particularly Shanks Pony Lawnmower, any condition, and Shanks 16" Ivanhoe. Also wanted, scraper plate to buy or borrow for pattern for Shanks 16" Lynx hand mower. Also wanted, Ransomes 8" New Automaton. Contact Michael Duck, 1 Belmont Terrace, Shepton Beauchamp, Ilminster, Somerset TA19 0JX.

For sale: 1924 Atco 30" with grassbox and trailer seat, 12" kickstart Atco, 14" kickstart Atco, 14" rotary with 2S JAP, make unknown, Ransomes Fourteen with BSA engine, Teagle one-wheel jetscythe, 1969 Masport Rotarola SP, 1963 Wolseley Merry Tiller in original condition, Danarm DD8 chainsaw, JAP engine from Howard Bantam, BSA 120cc 4S engine in excellent condition, early Briggs & Stratton engined Merrytiller. Contact Fred Werring: Telephone (and fax) 0566 772706 (Launceston, Cornwall).

For Sale: 1960 18" Atco four stroke. Contact John Davis: Telephone 0491 638347 (Henley-on-Thames)(Not Member).

For Sale: Atco Standard, late 1920s complete with grassbox, Bayliss Monarch Excelsior c1931 with Villiers engine, Ratcliffe Push Mower, complete with box, Lloyds Autoscythe with Villiers Marvil engine. Contact Andrew MacMorland: Telephone 0621 828264 (Maldon, Essex).



The New Excelsior pony mower was made in the US, and was unusual in being one of the first ride-on mowers.

AGM Thoughts

The Committee has considered any business that it would like to put before the AGM and proposes that the current Annual Membership fee of £7.50 be retained for at least the next 12 months. This is in line with discussions at the initial AGM which set the current fee with a view to providing a couple of years of stability to get the Club going.

In line with our constitution, Members joining after 1 January and before 1 May are given Membership until the following May (ie up to 16 months after joining. Membership fees will be due after the AGM. All Members will be contacted at the appropriate time to remind everyone and to check details of Directory entries and so on. We are also hoping to introduce a special gift for Members for the coming year.

The Committee believes that no other constitutional amendments are required this year, although this of course does not mean that Members cannot put forward amendments of their own.

Finally, Mike Dibley has asked that he is not considered for re-election to the Committee for the coming year. I am sure that all of the Members will join me and the rest of the Committee in thanking Mike for his help in setting up the Club and for his input into the first year of the Committee.

Wanted: For 1935 Ransomes Mk6A 24" with 348cc Sturmev 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).

For Sale: Collection of mowers, including c1932 Ransomes 16" Mk4 with Blackburn engine, c1950 Ransomes Mk5 14", various Atcos, Shay Rotoscythe, British Anzani Powermow and many more. Contact Paul Smith: Telephone 0703 433323 (Southampton).

For Sale: 1936 30" Ransomes motor mower with Sturmev Archer engine. Contact Mr S J Earl: Telephone 0603 720485 (Norwich)(Not Member).

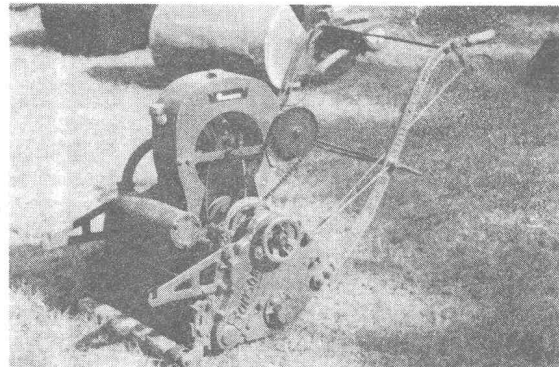
For Sale: Ransomes Ajax Mk3 (choice of three), Presto Rollmo 5-15 10", JP Minor 10", Webb Whippet 10", Atco 12" motor mower with 4S Villiers engine. Contact Tim Durant: Telephone 0628 521953 (Bourne End, Bucks).

For Sale: Webb Whippet 10". Contact Fred Walker: Telephone Boston 750285 (Boston, Lincs)(Not Member).

For Sale: 1930s Atco 20" Professional with Villiers engine. Contact Mr Dentchfield: Telephone 0908 312731 (Milton Keynes)(Not Member).

For Sale: Atco Standard, complete but non-runner. Contact A Hall: Telephone 0538 308391 (Ashbourne, Derby)(Not Member).

For Sale: c1930s Atco 16" Deluxe with 9 blade cutting cylinder, tool box in petrol tank etc. Also, early Shay Rotoscythe. Contact Bob Westlake: Telephone 0908 542414 (Milton Keynes)(Not Member).



1930s Ransomes Mk6V 20" motor mower with Blackburn total loss engine belonging to Mike Dibley, as seen at Hatfield Rally.

More Tips From Atco

In the last edition we published tips for December and January from Atco, taken from a 1927 publication 'The Finest Motor Mower On Earth'. Tips for this time of the year include:

February: 'Shortly the Atco will be required in regular service. See that it is in readiness and if the cutters have not been reground, have this done at once.'

March: 'Use work killer if worms are too numerous. Distribute worm casts first thing in the morning and run the mowing machine over once a week, whether the grass is long enough or not. The improvement in appearance will be at once apparent.'

April: 'Devote a certain amount of time to removing dandelions by cutting them out. The best and simplest way to do this is with the Atco Turf Replacing Weeder.'

Incidentally, in 1927 the 22" Standard cost 54 Guineas. When the model was introduced in 1921, it had cost 75 Guineas.

Next Edition June 1994

AGM & Rally News
More Photographs
Grassbox
Edition 9 - March 1994
Edited by Keith Wootton