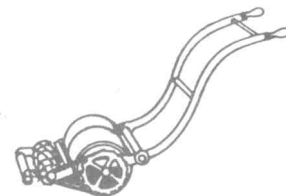


# Grassbox

The magazine of The Old Lawnmower Club



Number 16

Spring 1996

## READY, STEADY, MOW!

It's rally time again, and by the time this edition is sent out some members will already have been to their first event of the year.

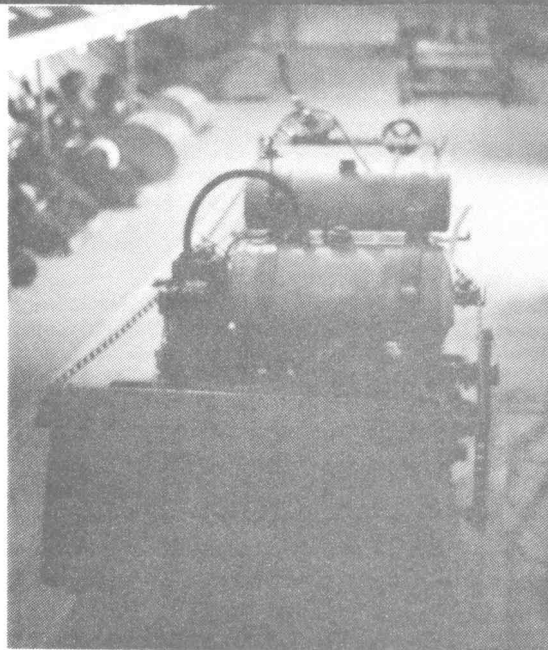
The Club seems to be receiving invitations to a larger number of events this year than ever before. This is surely an indication that lawn mower collecting is becoming more popular and that event organisers across the country (and overseas) are beginning to recognise that lawn mowers make interesting exhibits.

The Club's big event of the year of course is its Annual Rally and AGM at Milton Keynes Museum on 18/19 May. It would be marvellous to see as many Club Members as possible at the Museum over the weekend. If you have not been before, please try to make a special date in your diary. It really is worth the trip, and it is a truly friendly event. Of course, some people will not be able to come to the rally, so we'll be producing a special Grassbox soon after the event to make sure everyone gets the latest news as soon as possible.

The Annual Rally also incorporates the Club's AGM. For many people, meetings are a bit of a bore. However, it is important for the Club that as many members as possible attend the meeting to ensure that the business in hand is sorted out properly.

With this edition, we have mailed an entry form for the Annual Rally. There is no need to fill in this form, but it does help the Club and Museum to plan accommodation and facilities if people intending to attend the rally send it back.

Incidentally, look out for coverage about the Club in The Sunday Telegraph, Amateur Gardening and Practical Gardening between now and the MKM Rally.

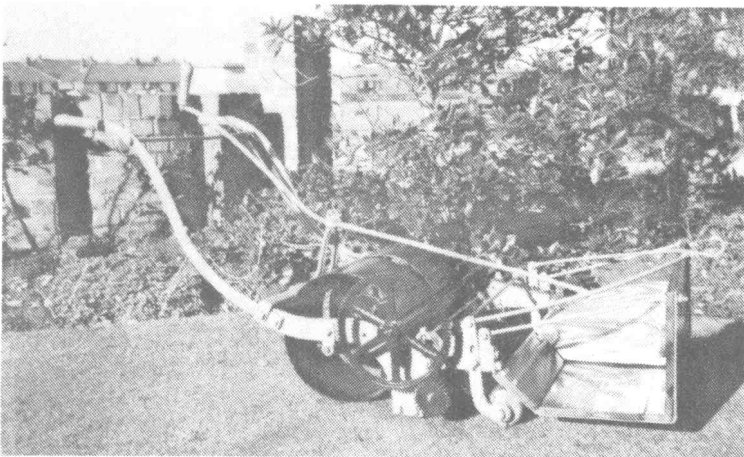


This early Ransomes 30" motor mower, c1906, is at the Terrice Lawnmower Museum.

## Annual Rally

This year's Annual Rally is being held on Saturday 18/Sunday 19 May at Milton Keynes. The rally is the biggest club event of the year in terms of exhibitors, and it is always great fun. There's always something new to see, and it's a great chance to meet up with old friends, make new ones and discuss the latest additions to everyone's collection. This year, as in recent years, there will be a special excursion to a local pub on the Saturday evening, but for those that can only make one day, the Sunday is definitely the one to put in the diary. There will also be a special chance to see behind the scenes at the Museum.

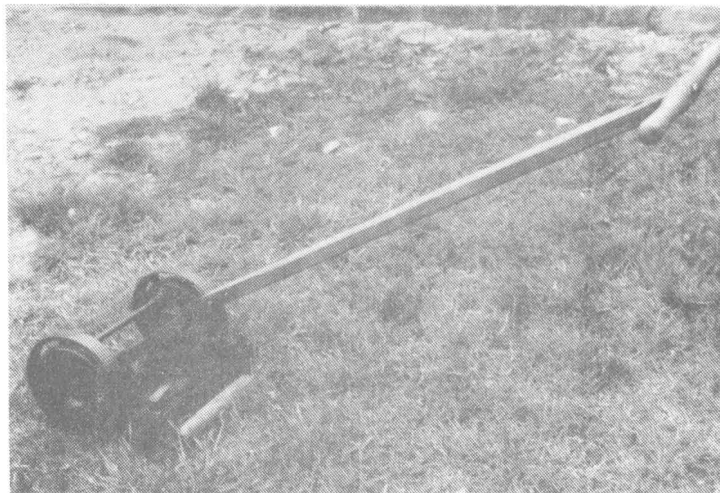
To mark the 75th anniversary of the first Atco motor mowers, we are trying to have as many different Atco mowers as possible on show at the Annual Rally. It must be possible to get at least one example of all the pre-1940s Atcos on show on the Sunday afternoon. Of course, if you don't like Atcos (or don't have one) you'll still be able to come to the show because it's for all mowers.



This very early Shanks 25" No 7 patent pony mower, made between 1860 and 1890, belongs to Stanley Hardwick.

## CLUB BANNER

The Club has invested in two large banners which can be borrowed by any Club Member. The banners are made from strong vinyl and are 15ft long and 2ft high. Each banner has the Club logo at each end with 'The Old Lawnmower Club' in big letters in between. Background is green, with yellow lettering and graphics. The banners have eyelets for fixing to poles or tents. They are available for free loan from Keith Wootton, and are supplied in a strong carry tube and fixing ropes (you will have to supply your own poles if you need them). The Club will pay postage to and from any UK/EC location. If anyone should like to borrow the banner, please contact Keith Wootton. They will only be available after the Annual Rally at Milton Keynes Museum.



The Dux, made in Sweden during the 1930s, is a 10" mower.

## DIARY DATES

### Milton Keynes Museum

Saturday 18/Sunday 19 May. AGM is at 12noon on Sunday 19 May at the Museum. Details from Keith Wootton on 01604 31192 (Northampton).

### Banbury Steam Rally

Saturday 29/Sunday 30 June Details from Robbie Robinson on 01865 450899 (Oxford).

### Erewash Museum

Saturday 17 August. Our (becoming) annual day out in Derbyshire. Good venue, friendly reception. Details from Keith Wootton.

### County of Salop Steam Rally

Sunday 25/Monday 26 August. Details from John Barnard on 0161 7759934 (Warrington).

### 1996 Chester Carnival Weekend

Saturday 11/Sunday 12 May.

The Club has been invited to attend. We will encourage Members to attend the Rally. Further details from Dennis Mitchell (Member 124), on 01244 851362 (Chester) or at 11 Mollington Court, Mollington, Chester CH1 6LA.

### Hanbury Steam Rally

Saturday 21/Sunday 22 September

Martin Briggs has been in touch to invite Members to the Hanbury Steam Rally, at Hanbury, near Bromsgrove off the B4090. For further information, please contact Martin on 01527 854191.

### Quainton Railway Centre

Sunday 5/Monday 6 May. This event is being held at the Buckinghamshire Railway Centre, Quainton, near Aylesbury on the above dates. There is a promise of a ride on a footplate at some stage during the weekend. Details from Robbie Robinson.

### Lister-Petter Tyndale

Saturday 15/Sunday 16 June. This is one of the big stationary engine rallies. They are trying to expand the range of exhibits this year, hence the invitation to the Club. Details from Jenny Wytchard, 14 The Street, North Wibley, Dursley, Gloucestershire GL11 6DW Tel: 01453 546024

### Aldham Old Thyme Rally & Fayre

Saturday 8/Sunday 9 July. An established rally with a special lawn mower section (22 entries last year), recommended by a number of Club Members. Details from Pauline Mattin on 01206 210307 (Colchester) or Ken Austin at 19 Mornington Avenue, Ipswich, Suffolk IP1 4LA. Tel: 011473 747007 (Day).

### Farm Machinery Preservation Society: 13<sup>th</sup> Annual Rally

Saturday 6/Sunday 7 July. Entries are invited for a range of classes, including lawn mowers. There will be an auction on the Saturday afternoon at 2pm. Venue is Sudbury, Suffolk. For further information contact the Secretary, Mrs P Fenn, Nevermoor, The Birches, Felsham Road, Cockfield, Bury St Edmunds IP30 OHW.



1930s Greens 12" SM Junior, owned by Robbie Robinson.

## EXHIBITION LOG SHEETS

Les Harrison suggested an Old Lawnmower Club exhibit log sheet similar to the one produced by Stationary Engine magazine. Les came up with a design, and the Club has now had them printed on tough card with black text and green border/club logo. They can be used for all types of lawn mower and will help promote the Club at rallies and events where members are exhibiting. The forms are available from Keith Wootton for 10 pence each, the cost of printing. Send postage stamps to the equivalent value of the number of forms require.



The Sovereign No 999, an 8" machine from the 1920s, was made in the USA by EC Stearns but supplied through Canada to avoid import taxes.

## PAINT COLOURS

Finding the right paint can be a problem, especially if you do not want to spend a small fortune. Here are a few of the paints/colours recommend by OLC Members for specific mowers:

**Ransomes, Sims and Jefferies:** Andrew Hall and Michael Duck often use Woolworth's Rural Green for Ransomes hand mowers. This is pretty close, goes on well and only costs a few pounds a tin. Robbie Robinson also uses this paint, while Alec Hillyar and Andrew Grout both reckon the Tractol range Ransomes Green is the one to use.

**Green & Sons:** Robbie Robinson says that Deep Bronze Green or Land Rover Green is a good match for Greens. Robbie gets some of his paints mixed to match at his local specialist, the Oxford Paint Company.

**Dennis:** Malcolm Hemley, a Dennis expert, says that Mid Brunswick Green is a good match for 1953-61 models, although for years before this, the paint was slightly darker because more blue pigment was used.

**Moving Parts:** Most mowers had red for the moving parts. As a general rule, Signal Red looks more authentic than, say, Poppy Red, but it is often a matter of using the one that looks right. Robbie Robinson suggests a colour known as Aries Red, while Andrew Grout tends to use Tractol's Massey Red on his Ransomes. Many people, such as Alec Hillyar, recommend Hammerite paints for general colours such as red, black, silver etc.

**General:** Most mowers were green, and Mid Brunswick is often a good bet for a close match. Most manufacturers' ranges include a reasonable product which gives a good match.

**Priming & Undercoat:** Before you can put the finishing coat on, you need to prime of course. For most occasions, a good quality red oxide primer is all that is required. Zinc based primers often give extra protection against rust, but they are a bit more expensive. Many people in the Club recommend Finnigans Number One as a really good primer.

## CLOTHING

The Club still has a supply of sweatshirts, polo shirts and sew-on badges, in dark green with gold lettering and club logo. These can be obtained from Robbie Robinson at the following prices (which include post and packing): Sweatshirts £15, Polo Shirts £14, Sew On Badges £5.

## ARE YOU ABROAD?

Reading publications such as Stationary Engine it is evident that there are collectors on the Continent, and elsewhere, taking a keen interest in old machinery. However, I have never come across in any of these magazines and references to old lawn mowers. I for one would be interested to hear what activity there is in other countries to parallel our work here in the restoration and preservation of old mowers; and what contact, if any, we have with them. Perhaps one of your readers can enlighten me.

Chris Thompson, Braintree

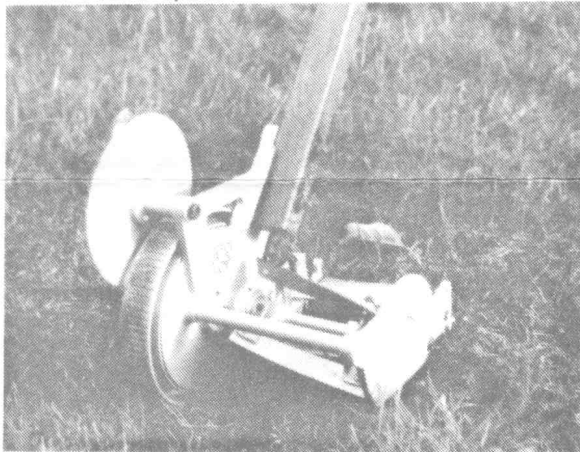
*Editor's Note: A good idea! Can anyone help. Incidentally, look out for a forthcoming story about a German mower which found its way to England.*

# A 5000 MILE TRANSPORT PROBLEM!

By Alan Hardwick

Although some people may travel to every corner of this country to collect mowers, one of my recent restoration projects came from a little further afield. Whilst holidaying in America last August with my parents, I found myself with an interesting little mower.

Driving through the suburbs of Buffalo, New York State, we caught sight of the unmistakable 'T' handle of an old side wheel lawnmower, and after stopping found not just one, but 5 old mowers grouped together on the pavement outside a house! I was preparing the camera for a few shots when the occupier turned up and was very surprised to be approached by a British family wanting to examine part of his rubbish put out for the dump! An interesting conversation revealed that the 'native' had just bought the house and was clearing out the last occupier's leftovers. Along with a skip full of rubbish there were the five mowers, all due for collection by the 'trash' man the next day! The five consisted of two 'Pincor' side wheel motor mowers and two 'Tough Cut' hand side wheel machines, all apparently from the mid 70's. However, the one that really grabbed my attention was a 6" Pennsylvania edge trimmer, that was obviously much older. A closer examination discovered the machine to be complete and in good order, other than being rusty and neglected. Initially I thought there is no way of getting this home, but when even the bemused owner announced it was "such a shame I couldn't put it in my collection" I rose to the challenge and decided to make an offer! The chap was more than pleased to give it away and also went off down the garden to get another identical machine for me to use as spares!



Pennsylvania lawn edger, restored after its long journey.



Mowers awaiting transport from Buffalo to Alan's home.

Anyhow, we set off on the rest of the trip, with both mowers, my mother cursing me and my father wondering what he had let himself in for. After travelling around for the next two weeks of the holiday, from Buffalo, back to their state of manufacture - Pennsylvania, then to the sights of New York and Washington, a suitable cardboard box was acquired for the mowers from the 'grocery store'. A few basic tools belonging to a friend we were visiting enabled the machines to be dismantled enough to fit inside and with the parcel heavily wrapped in sticky tape we approached the airport check in desk with the prospects of a 52lb baggage excess. However, we were relieved to find everything was disappointingly uneventful (after spending ages working out my excuses for possessing the thing it was a shame not to have to use them!) other than receiving strange looks as we boarded the plane with the wooden handle as cabin baggage!

Eventually after the long journey the mower arrived home and into the shed. With a little love and care it has been returned to its former glory and now forms an interesting member of my collection.

As an aside, whilst still in America, I also visited an agricultural museum/collection in Cayuga, New York State. Included here were some mowers of a fairly early appearance. The largest was a Coldwell 'New Excelsior' and along with this were two very interesting side wheel machines. The first was manufactured by 'Allcut' and used two very thin blades as a cylinder, that cut with a scythe action, hence using no bottom blade. The other one was called the 'Clipper lawnmower' and was an amazing 12" cut (approx.) side wheel reciprocating knife mower. An eccentric running on the axle between the two wheels provided the movement of the blade and two small land wheels adjusted its height. The fingers and knives themselves were very fine, and gave the appearance of cutting the lawn with an enlarged set of sheep shearing clippers!

## ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The Annual General Meeting will be held at 12 noon on Sunday 19 May at Milton Keynes Museum. Every Club Member is entitled (encouraged, even) to attend and help contribute to the way the Club is run. Everyone that attends will receive free admission to the Museum. Although the AGM is held on the same weekend as the Annual Rally, it is not essential to bring a mower if you want to attend. However, it would be great if everyone was able to bring a couple of mowers too!

## MORE ON MATERIAL SHORTAGE

Following the item in a recent Grassbox about shortages of raw materials in the years after WWII, Alex Paton wrote to suggest that it wasn't just wood in short supply. Apparently, the Ransomes Ajax Mk3 (approx 1953) had one-piece light gauge handles, replacing sturdier parts on the earlier models. By the time the Mk4 came out a few years later, the brass nuts had been replaced by steel.

Alex is also trying to identify the setting for the Shanks engraving as featured Grassbox 14. Suggestions anyone?

## Farm Machinery Preservation Society

The Club holds a meeting on the last Wednesday in the months of Jan to May and Sept to Nov in the Queen's Halls, Halstead, Essex starting at 8pm. Guest speakers are invited. All welcome. The Society's members are interested in collecting and restoration of a wide range of machinery and hand tools used in Agriculture, Horticulture, Rural Crafts and Industry. For further information contact the Secretary, Mrs P Fenn, Nevermoor, The Birches, Felsham Road, Cockfield, Bury St Edmunds IP30 0HW.

Brian Radam says he can make single colour stick on transfers to Members' designs for a very reasonable price. Contact Brian direct at the British Lawnmower Museum on 01704 535369 (Southport).

## FEEDBACK

Many thanks for the comments and feedback on the last edition and the new information leaflets. All information received will be included in future editions.



# ADVERTISEMENTS

## For Sale

Atco Standard. Contact Mr FN Grocock. Tel: 01909 591764 (Worksop)(NM).

Ransomes Conquest push mower. Contact Mrs Broadbent. Tel: 01483 569093 (Guildford)(NM).

17" Atco kick start; 14" Atco kick start; 14" Ransomes motor mower with recoil start. Contact Jack Smith. Tel: 0181 205 2117 (London)(NM).

Box of spares for Villiers, JAP, Wisconsin engines, various ages. Contact Peter White. Tel: 01904 448249 (York)(NM).

Allen Scythe model TS (1952-55); Monro Tiller, totally restored (1950s). Contact Crawford Stirling. Tel: 01376 512372 (Witham).

Shanks motor mower, with 'pram handles', number 16IV1004. Contact Mr JA Evans. Tel: 01222 702200 (South Glamorgan)(NM).

Webb child's mower. Contact Tony Leach. Tel: 01622 692370 (Maidstone)(NM).

Tecomaster Holiday rotary mower c1960 £75; Trusty two wheel tractors, choice of two, one JAP and one BS engine, with ploughs, harrows, trailer seat; ex-MOD Danarm chainsaw with swivel blade £75; Ransomes Minor Mk6 in excellent condition £250; Howard Gem, restored, £400; Remington Bantam chainsaw, £50; Atco model 448 mower, £100, Allen scythe 2S, £75; Danarm DD8 chainsaw, £60; early Webb electric cylinder mower with box and transport wheels, £60; Villiers C12 engine, £50; BSA engine £50; early petrol Flymo, £60; Howard Bantam rotovator, £100; Howard Bullfinch rotovator, £150; Farmfitters rotovator, £40; Colwood motor hoe, £60; Kick start Atco mowers, 12 or 14", £30 each; Victa rotary mower, £60; Tourelle platform truck, £300. Contact Fred Werring. Tel: 01566 772694 (Launceston).

Qualcast Model P 16" Royal Blade, c1947, with Villiers engine. Contact Malcolm Brierley. Tel: 01606 592131 (Middlewich)(NM).

Atco 16" bowling green mower, 1930s, with carrier; British Anzani mower. Contact PE Delger. Tel: 01622 683177 (Maidstone)(NM).

British Anzani Easimow, suitable for exhibition rather than use. Contact D Steynor. Tel: 01494 881254 (Day)(High Wycombe).

Hayn electric lawn mower. Contact Mrs A Seward. Tel: 01728 747609 (Woodbridge)(NM).

## Wanted

For 1928 Automower. Magneto chain cover and round manufacturer's plate mounted on handles. Contact Chris Thompson. Tel: 01376 320259 (Braintree).



1890 Follows & Bates 6" Manchester sidewheel mower, owned by Robbie Robinson.

In the Atco Standard dating table in Grassbox 16, the 30" should read 350cc Villiers 2S, not 350cc JAP. Apologies for this.

## 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 19 May**

**12noon**

Formal Business will include Selection of Committee & Officers for coming year, Ratification of Accounts for 1994/95, 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.

Members should submit motions in writing no later than four weeks before the AGM (ie by 22 April 1996).

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

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

## MEMBERSHIP DIRECTORY

A supplement to the recent Membership Directory is enclosed with this Grassbox. This contains details of Members who have joined recently, and also includes a few corrections to typographical errors not spotted during compilation of the first edition.

## RANSOMES VAN

Lledo, the manufacturer of die cast models, has launched a new series, known as Vanguard. One of the first four models in the range is an Austin A40 delivery van decorated as a Ransomes delivery vehicle. The model looks similar to the Days Gone Chevrolet van which was available a few years ago. The Club can supply the new model for just £9.50 (including postage and packing), which is less than it is being sold for in most shops. The models are being supplied to the Club by a bus preservation group and a proportion of the price will go towards the restoration and running of the bus. The Club is making no profit from the sales. Models can be obtained from Keith Wootton at the usual address. Cheques made payable to 'The Old Lawnmower Club'.

## Milton Keynes Museum

The Museum has now reopened following the fire at the start of the year. The lawn mower display has been revised slightly to account for a smaller display area, but is not much different to before. Elsewhere, new display areas have been opened and existing areas reorganised to allow a wide range of exhibits to be displayed despite the loss of the main wooden farm buildings. New and replacement buildings will be constructed later this year and during 1997.

Keith Wootton can be contacted by post at Milton Keynes Museum or at 92 Artizan Road, Abington, Northampton NN1 4HS. Tel: 01604 31192. Robbie Robinson can be contacted at 10 Burchester Avenue, Headington, Oxford OX3 9NA. Tel: 01865 450899.

## Next Edition May/June 1996

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Edited by Keith Wootton