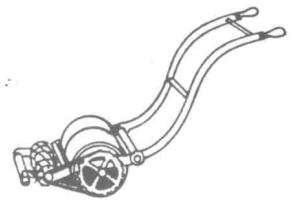


Grassbox

The magazine of The Old Lawnmower Club

Number 17

Summer 1996



SUMMERTIME...

Welcome to yet another edition of Grassbox which, despite my best intentions, is slightly later than I had hoped. In this issue there is lots of information about the Annual Rally and AGM, plus all the usual features and (hopefully) something for everyone, as they say.

This year there seems to be more rallies and events which welcome lawn mowers than ever before. This is an encouraging sign. Perhaps as a Club, and individually, we are finally convincing event organisers what we have known all along - lawn mowers are interesting and fun.

Thanks to everyone who has sent in information, photographs and articles. The more I receive, the more varied the newsletter can be, and the less work for me!



John Barnard with his prize winning Shanks Caledonia and tankard at Chester Carnival.

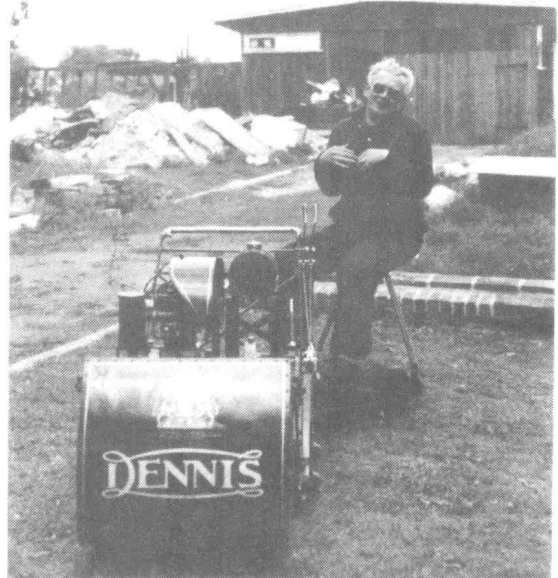
MORE ON ATCO

Following my recent article in Grassbox on the Atco Standard, I have been continuing my research. It would appear that all Atcos had Senspray carburettors before 1926.

On the subject of motor cycles and lawn mowers, most people have heard of Royal Enfield and Excelsior, but not many realise that Charles H Pugh owned Rudge-Whitworth and that C H Pugh's grandson (or great) was chief designer there during the racing successes in the 1930s. Rudge used the Senspray carburettor (another C H Pugh product) and Atco used Rudge Tradesman's Combinations at their depots.

Tony Garratt

Editor's Note: Martin Seymour also reckons that as late as 1929, some of the large 24" machines with the JAP 350cc engines also had Sensprays and not Amals. Incidentally, Martin is looking for clutch and cylinder head spares for such a machine. Call Martin on 01449 774207 (Stowmarket).



Roger Wilkinson looks like he's feeling the cold at the Annual Rally, but the Dennis didn't seem to mind and ran well as usual.

MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL

By now everyone should have received their Membership renewal reminder from Robbie Robinson. Please remember to send in your Membership Card so that Robbie can update the information it contains.

Choo! Choo!

Time flies by when you're the driver of a train. You ride upon the footplate, there and back again.

Eight Club members attended a vintage weekend at the Buckinghamshire Railway Centre near Aylesbury over the May Day Bank Holiday Weekend.

Robbie Robinson had arranged for each exhibitor to be given a ride on the footplate of a real steam locomotive, and most of us took advantage of this rare opportunity. Although there were not many visitors to the event, it was really great way to spend a weekend.



Six characters looking 'chuffed'. That's (left to right) Tim Durant, Martin Stephenson, Mike Tomkins, Alan Hardwick, Robbie Robinson and Andrew Grout.

ANNUAL RALLY

There were more exhibitors and more mowers at this year's Annual Rally than ever before, making it our biggest ever rally. On Sunday afternoon, we reached 100 mowers on the Museum's lawn. These ranged in age from the '1860s through to the 1960s.

A considerable number of exhibitors came for the whole weekend, so even the Saturday was quite busy. In the afternoon, I gave a tour of the Museum to show the effects of the fire, and in the evening nine of us went for a drink and a meal in a local pub. I do not think they knew what had hit them in the pub, but it was a great evening!

Sunday was busy, and a steady stream of old and new friends arrived throughout the morning in time for the Club AGM at noon. By lunch time we had filled the Museum's lawn with mowers and decamped to the meeting room for the AGM.

One new idea this year was to award a prize, 'The Andrew Grout Trophy', for the mower that the exhibitors chose as the one they would most like to take home. Each Member attending the rally was able to choose their favourite mower, with the majority of votes going to three machines - an c1880s Shanks pony mower belonging to Stan Hardwick, a 1930s Dennis belonging to Roger Wilkinson, and an 1880s Archimedean belonging to Alan Hardwick. When all the votes had been counted, the Shanks pony mower emerged as winner, and Andrew Grout presented Stan with the Trophy, an engraved silver tray, and a souvenir engraved tankard. Stan will keep the Trophy for one year, but the tankard is his to keep.



In fact Stan had quite an eventful weekend. He set off from home in Filey very early on Saturday, and was one of the first to arrive at Milton Keynes. On the way the magneto cover on his 1921 Atco oval frame had fallen off, and been lost en route. By pure chance, John Barnard arrived with a similar mower to sell, but with a spare engine, so Stan was able to buy a new cover for a few pounds without having to 'split' another complete machine.

On the Sunday afternoon, I presented a number of exhibitors with a special souvenir to mark the 75th anniversary of Atco. The souvenir was a box of sweets in the shape of an Atco delivery lorry. The company was presenting these to visitors to the Chelsea Flower Show the following week, so the rally exhibitors were the first to receive them.

One thing that everyone said about this year's event was that the standard of the mowers, and the variety of models, was better than in previous years. I am sure that the standard rises because of the natural competitiveness that these sorts of event engender, and because people are refining their approach to the hobby all of the time.

It would be unfair to pick out particular stars of the show because there were so many. Besides, some people will find reasonably modern motor mowers at least as interesting as the oldest gear drive push mower. It is the variety of machines that makes the show what it is, and everyone seems to get along with each so well.

The only thing that spoils the event, if spoil is the right word, was the weather. It was wet and windy for virtually the whole weekend, only really clearing up right at the end, when quite few people had gone home. One day we will have some sun at the Museum for the rally. In fact, some people can even remember the last year it was warm (1993 I think).



A selection of mowers from the Hall & Duck Trust Collection at the Annual Rally. Below left, Stan Hardwick (left) with Andrew Grout.

AGM REPORT

The AGM was attended by more than 30 Members of the Club on Sunday 19 May at Milton Keynes Museum.

Keith Wootton opened proceedings by welcoming everyone. In his report, Keith went through some of the highlights of the previous year and said he felt the Club had continued to be successful. He thanked everyone who had been to the events, contributed to Grassbox or helped by simply joining the Club.

Keith also thanked the Committee, particularly Robbie Robinson who, with Keith, undertakes most of the day to day running of the Club.

In his Secretary's Report, Robbie Robinson said that there were now well over 200 Members and that the majority had rejoined from the previous year. He also reported that the Club now had a number of Members overseas, and that he thought this was a good sign for the future of the Club.

Martin Stephenson was unable to attend the AGM, but his Treasurer's Report was made instead by Keith Wootton. Income in the year to 30 April was £1636.16 and expenditure was £1477.89, a surplus of £158.27. This left £1227.13 in the bank, some of which was already committed for specific projects. The remainder will be used to develop new services and facilities for Club Members.

There were no proposals to raise the Membership fee for the foreseeable future.

Keith, Robbie and Martin were re-elected to their positions for a further year. The existing committee Members, Andrew Grout, John Barnard and Alec Hillyar all offered to stand again and were re-elected. Two additional committee Members were also elected, these being Tim Durant and Les Harrison.

The meeting was completed in approximately 30 minutes.

Copies of the Club Accounts and a more detailed report of the AGM are available on request from Keith Wootton or Robbie Robinson.

DIARY DATES

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).

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 (Studley).

Otmoor Show

Saturday 14/Sunday 15 September (to be confirmed)
Details from Robbie Robinson.

OBSCURE MOWERS

By Tony Garratt

Most people who are interested in collecting lawn mowers have heard of Greens, Ransomes, Atco etc, etc, but the following are a few that I have never seen mentioned in Grassbox or in various articles that have appeared in other journals and wonder if any member has either heard of them or, better still, owns an example or can add to the list. Any comments or information welcome.

Editor's Note: One or two of the mowers listed do exist and are in collections of Club Members. However, if anyone does have further examples of unusual mowers, please send photographs or information for publication.

D.B.SWALLOW
D.B.SNIPE

- Patent removable cutting cylinder.
- Patent enclosed ratchet.
- Detachable handles.



- Patent self-oiling bearings.
- 7 driving wheels.
- Sheffield blades.

12 INCH ONLY 69/6

BE LAWN PROUD D. B.

prices from 10' complete with grassbox at **30/-**

D.B. 4 IN 1 A new patent machine.

Roller - Mower. } combined into one
Sweeper - Aerator. } machine from £12-0-0

Lists free. other models.

DRONSFIELD BROS. LTD. - ATLAS WORKS - OLDHAM

Name	Size	Type	Supplier or Manufacturer	Source	Comments
The All British Mower	10 & 12"	s/w push	Victory Brand Garden Tools, John Palmer Ltd, Portsmouth	John Palmer Catalogue, 1934	Prices 28/6 & 30/-
The Army & Navy Special Lawnmower	10 & 12"	s/w push	Army & Navy Stores	Army & Navy Catalogue 1933/34	Prices 18/6 & 20/-, grass box extra
James Boyd	?	Roller push	James Boyd Lewisham	Great Exhibition Catalogue, 1862	Patent brush lawn mower, self cleaning, self sharpening, shaft roller, tubular scythe handles
The Cooper Lawnmower	8, 10, 12, 14 & 16"	s/w push	William Cooper Ltd, 761 Old Kent Road, London SE	William Cooper Catalogue, early 1900s	Prices 10/6, 12/6, 13/-, 14/- & 15/6
Gamages	10"	s/w push	Gamages, Holborn, London	I own it	Made in USA, year unknown. Presume others available
The Jackson The Plantation Jackson Roller Mower	8, 10 & 12" 10 & 12" 12"	s/w push s/w push Roller push	?	Thomas Plant Catalogue, circa late 1930s	
Kennan's Lawn Mowers			Kennan & Sons, Dublin	Great Exhibition Catalogue, 1862	"With registered tilt gear"
Keynsham	15"	Roller motor	Sole makers, H Brecknell & Sons, Tangent Works, Keynsham, Bristol	Gardening Illustrated, 11 April 1931	Price 25 Guineas
The Kingfisher	?	Rotary	Farmfitters Ltd, Gerards Cross, Buckinghamshire	Gardening Illustrated, April 1955	Price £35 (plus £6-6-10 purchase tax). "Britain's New Lawnmower"
The Maco	10, 12 & 14"	s/w push	Metal Agencies Ltd, Bristol	MAC Catalogue, September 1932	Prices 20/6, 21/6 & 23/-, grass box extra
The Smistol	8, 10, 12 & 14"	s/w push	J Smith & Co, Department 8, 300 Wells Road, Bristol	Amateur Gardening, 16 April 1932	Prices 18/6, 20/6, 22/6 & 25/6, grass box extra
D. B. Swallow	12"	Roller push	Dronsfield Bros Ltd, Atlas Works, Oldham	Amateur Gardening, 18 April 1936	Price 69/6
D. B. Snipe	From 10"	s/w push	Dronsfield Bros Ltd, Atlas Works, Oldham	Amateur Gardening, 18 April 1936	Price from 30/-, grass box included
Woods Patent Grass Mowing Machine	?	?	W. M. Cranston, 58 King William Street, London Bridge	Great Exhibition Catalogue, 1862	Not certain whether machine is for lawns or fields

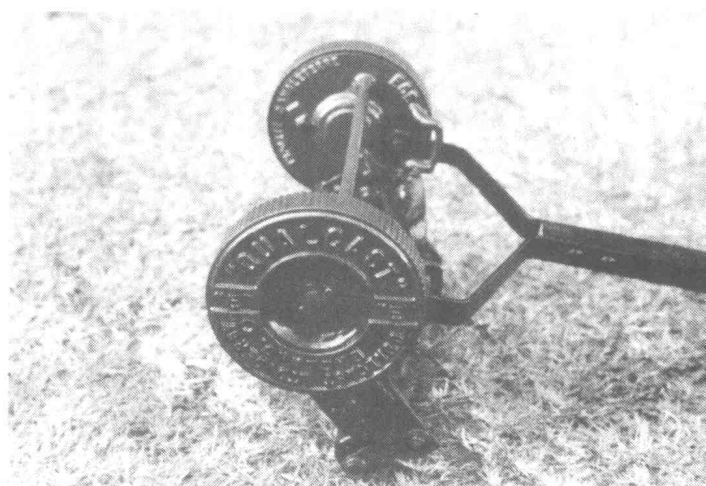
The French Connection

As a general collector of old lawn mowers I have no specific interest, but from time to time this brings out the odd or unusual, as in the case of my Qualcast Model 'E'. When I stripped it down for restoration, I discovered some writing in French, IMPORTE D'ANGLETERRE on one of the side frames and MADE IN ENGLAND on the other. It looks like it was destined for the French market, but I guess it never made it. I also have another mower, with EDEN FOREIGN stamped on it. What a daft situation, exporting a Qualcast and importing an identical machine made in Germany!

Alec Hillyar

CLOTHING

The Club has 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



Alec Hillyar's 'Français' Qualcast Model 'E'.

INSURANCE

A number of Club Members who are perhaps new to rallying have asked about the type of insurance that many event organisers require exhibitors to hold.

Virtually all events insist that exhibitors have what is known as Third Party Public Liability Insurance. Basically, this is required in case someone else (ie a Third Party) is injured or property damaged as a result of the use of the mower (it's similar to third party car insurance). The idea is that if an accident does occur, the person injured or the owner of damaged property can be compensated by the insurance. Many events now ask for a minimum cover of £1,000,000 for third party liability.

There are various ways of obtaining cover. It can be added to household insurance, but this can be expensive. It is also worth bearing in mind that household insurers are not experts when it comes to mowers and rallies, and may not understand what they are covering, which might cause a problem if the worst should happen. Some Members have rally insurance as part of the membership fee of their local tractor or engine club, which is a good system and generally inexpensive. Others prefer to use one of the specialist insurers, such as David Franklin or North Cotswold Insurance. These offer sufficient cover for a small annual fee. They generally cover all machines in a collection, but limit the number that can be taken to a rally. This means that you can insure your entire collection, and then take which ones you like to an event without having to make special arrangements for each event.

Editor's Note: Members should be aware that David Franklin has raised the annual premium to £8.00 from £5.00. His address is David Franklin, The Mount, Dolleys Hill, Normandy, Guildford, Surrey.



Crawford Stirling with JP motor mower at the Milton Keynes Annual Rally.

NO MOWERS AT AMBERLEY

There are no mowers at Amberley, as suggested in the Museums Directory published earlier this year. However, we are hoping to hold a special rally at the 'Chalk Pits', as Amberley is sometimes known, in 1997, with a possible view to making it a regular Southern Area get-together. The date, to be confirmed, is likely to be the last Sunday in July or the first Sunday in August.

EXHIBIT LOG SHEETS

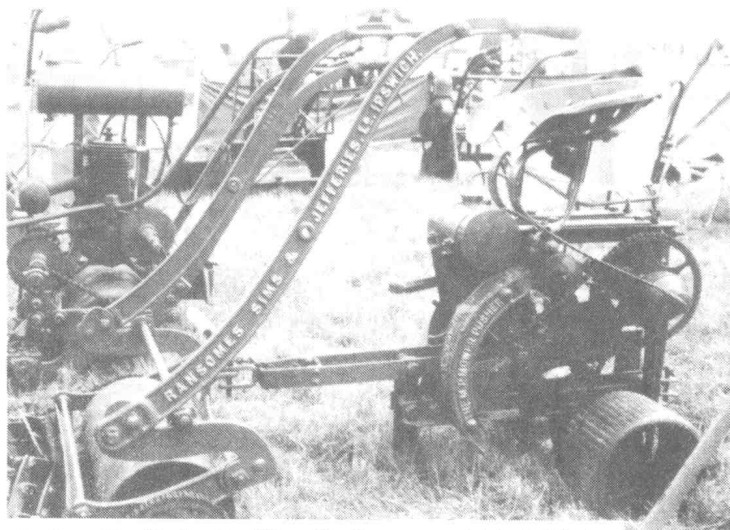
Old Lawnmower Club exhibit log sheets are printed on tough card with black text and green border/club logo. They can be used for all types of lawn mower and help promote the Club at rallies and events. The sheets are available from Keith Wootton for 10 pence each. Please send postage stamps to the equivalent value of the number of forms required.

RALLY REPORTS

Chester Carnival, 11/12 May

A number of OLC Members attended the Chester Festival of Transport, including Tony Garratt, John Barnard and Jeff Skinner as well as mtself. John Barnard won the Trophy for the 'Best in Section' with his 1880s Shanks Caledonian hand mower (photo, front page). Another OLC Member, Dennis Mitchell, is treasurer of the Chester Vintage Club, the organisers of the event.

Ian Fewtrell



Andrew MacMorland's MP with Ransomes Patent Chain Automaton at Aldham.

Aldham Old Tyme Rally, 8/9 June

The 20th Aldham Old Tyme Rally was held at its usual venue near Colchester, Essex. One of the new Club banners announced the participation of several Club members, including Tony Houghton, Andrew MacMorland, Crawford Stirling, and Chris Thompson. Tony had brought along three reciprocating knife mowers, Crawford an early Allen Scythe, Andrew an early Ransomes pushed by an MP and a Shanks Jehu, whilst Chris had a 1928 Automower. Best mower of the Show was won by Club Member Mrs J Austin of Ipswich with her 1875 Ransomes, Sims and Head 8" Automaton, a really rare and original machine. Once again the Aldham Rally proved itself to be 'mower friendly', with a well-sited location for the mowers giving good publicity to the Club. About 20 machines in all were on display.

Chris Thompson

CLUB BANNER

The new Club banners are available for use at rallies. The banners, made from strong vinyl, are 15ft long and 2ft high and feature the Club logo at each end with 'The Old Lawnmower Club' in large lettering in between. Background is green, with yellow lettering and graphics. The banners have eyelets for fixing to poles or tents. They are supplied in a strong carry tube and fixing ropes (you will have to supply your own poles). The Club will pay postage to and from any UK/EC location. If anyone should like to borrow the banner, please contact Keith Wootton.

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

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Grassbox

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Edited by Keith Wootton