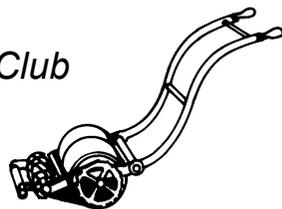


# Grassbox

*The magazine of The Old Lawnmower Club*

Number 77





*Winner of this year's Andy Grout plate at the Milton Keynes rally was Stan and Jonathan Hardwick's 24" Shanks Jehu. Andy is seen here presenting them with the prize at Banbury, a few weeks later.*

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## EDITORIAL

It is now a couple of months since the annual rally, and it was good to catch up with so many of you there. Keith has provided a detailed report on the day in this issue, but I would just like to add my thanks for all the hard work Keith does in organising the rally, and encourage members to bring machines to display there again next year.

Many of you who have attended the rally in recent years will be aware of the club shop. Robbie has for some years been gradually expanding the range of transfers produced and there are now so many that there must I'm sure be something for most members among them. Recent additions include Willing Worker and the original design Atco petrol tank transfers, while there should I hope be Patent Automaton Grassbox transfers on the way soon. All those available can be viewed in the members area of the website. The members

area password is towards the end of this magazine.

The methods used to produce transfers has moved on enormously in recent years, and while it isn't viable for the club to produce one off transfers for very rare machines, only a very small number need be printed for it to be worthwhile. I would encourage members who have any really good and complete examples of mower transfers in their collections that are not already available to get in touch with Bernard "Robbie" Robinson, whose details are on the previous page.

Summer is pressing on now, but there still events to attend, and I hope members will continue to support rallies that some of keener supporters regularly attend. Also, the drought that marked dominated all of April and May seems now to have abated and with the grass growing apace, those of us who like to use our old mowers are being kept busy doing what they were designed for.



*Club members gather round for the auction, with Andrew Hall indicating which lot is being sold. Several of you will spot yourselves in there I'm sure.*

# MILTON KEYNES ANNUAL RALLY REPORT

by Keith Wootton

Another great Annual Rally weekend on 14/15 May when we were celebrating the 21st anniversary of the founding of the club. Lots of members made the effort to be there on one, other or both of the days. Both days were well attended and the number and variety of machines was to the usual excellent standard.

This year we decided to rearrange the layout of the site with the hope of getting people to mingle with each other a bit more and join in with the various activities. This allowed us to keep the areas used for the displays, auction and bring-and-buy stalls separate. In particular we moved the display and working area to a new position nearer to the middle of the site which encouraged members to exhibit their machines in groups rather than rows. On the whole the idea worked very well.

This year's theme was mowers with a bird or animal name. That meant there were plenty of Lions and Leos to be spotted along with a few Punches and Ponies as well as some more obscure machines such as the DB Swallow and Shanks Hawk. At least two members brought along complete sets of Ransomes Lions which, as aficionados will know, includes the rare 15" model that is seldom seen. The theme is just a bit of fun but it's good that many members make the effort to bring a qualifying machine.

The AGM went through in the usual speedy fashion with no major changes to report. The existing committee was re-elected for a further year with Peter Hampton as Chairman, Dick Hardwick

as Treasurer and Mike Duck as Secretary. Membership has stabilised at the "around 500 level" and the vast majority of members are what might be called long-term. The accounts showed a slight deficit for the previous year although this only served to reduce the amount of money in the bank to a more acceptable level. There was some discussion on subscription fees and it was felt that, while there is no rise this year, it may be prudent to raise it next year. That would be only the second rise in 19 years.

At the end of the meeting I presented the annual Charlie Jones Award to Stan and Jonathan Hardwick in recognition of their services to the club. Stan has been a member since almost the start and has attended the annual rally most years since, usually with son Jonathan. They have won the Andrew Grout Plate more times that anyone else and al-



ways bring an unusual mower which has been restored to the highest standard. They also support other club events such as the Banbury and Bedford rallies which is no mean feat considering that for them it's a four hour drive each way when they trek down from Filey to the midlands.

Bill Outram's "best working mower" competition was won by Colin Stone with his Ransomes motor mower. *(picture, on previous page)* Richard Jones's "spot the parts" competition was won by Andrew Macmorland. Jonesy managed to make the competition slightly harder than usual this year and Andrew was, apparently, the only person to identify all five bits correctly. Unfortunately he had to leave the show before the winner was announced.

To mark the 21st anniversary we were giving a double souvenir this year, a special Well Mown beer from Glastonbury Ales and a special matching glass to drink it from. These were presented to every member who attended the rally. If you were there but missed out

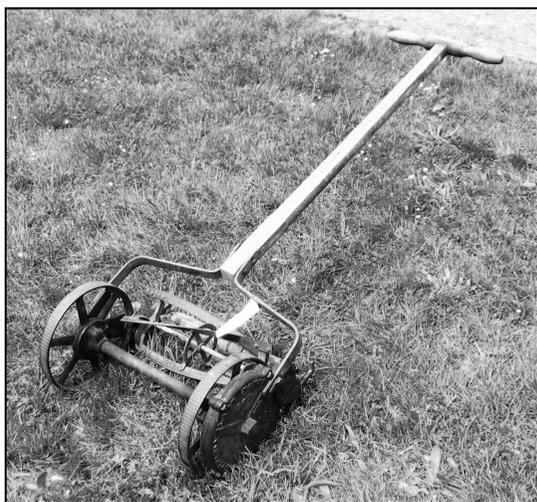
please let me or Robbie know and we'll be pleased to send you one.

We presented Brenda Stanford with an Acer for her garden in thanks for her sterling work enrolling new members.

The auction followed the AGM and this year we had more than 50 lots covering all types and age of mower. As stand-in auctioneer yet again (Christopher Proudfoot is still singing Gilbert & Sullivan, apparently) it seemed to me that bidding was a little slow and potential buyers were, how shall we put it, a bit shy. But afterwards when we added up the totals it turned out that we had taken in around £1400, the most ever I reckon, which meant a decent donation from the commissions was due to the museum. A few items failed to meet their reserves but most, eventually, sold for sensible prices. The most expensive was a Pennsylvania hand mower imported recently from America that fetched over £200 *(See picture below)*.

As always the most keenly anticipated part of the day was the Andrew Grout Plate announcement for the mower that

exhibitors would most like to take home. The usual suspects were all in the running as well as a few dark horses. In the end the winner, by a very small margin, was a Shanks Jehu motor mower exhibited by Stan and Jonathan Hardwick. As mentioned earlier they have a long drive home and had already left by the time we made the announcement. Luckily we were able to make the presentation at Banbury Rally at the end of June when they had brought along the same mower. By my reckoning this is the fourth time they have won the prize. Well done guys.



# RALLY REPORT

Holbeach Vintage Rally, 18<sup>th</sup> – 19<sup>th</sup> June 2011, by Joe Roulstone

This annual event near the market town of Holbeach in the Lincolnshire Fens has been growing steadily over recent years. With other commitments in the way I was only able to attend on the Sunday, but heavy rain on the Saturday meant that I was not too disappointed. I managed to wangle ten mowers into the trailer and back of the car and was on site and set up nicely as the gates opened.

My display featured several Ransomes machines including my Patent Chain Automaton and RSJ De Luxe, a Drummond Bros Willing Worker, JP Super, and a trio of Greens SM models (Supreme, Junior and 8" Silens Messor). There was another OLC member present (sorry, I didn't get your name) who had an interesting selection of 1960s equipment including a JP Minor and several edgers. The Vintage Horticultural and Garden Machinery club also had a few members present who, between them, had a number of items of interest to lawn mower types. A refurbished and somewhat fearsome looking Four Seasons rough cutter and Mus-

tang ride-on mower were quite unusual exhibits, as were an Allen Scythe Minor and a full size Allen fitted with an earth moving blade. A couple of other JP mowers were in evidence along with a Suffolk Viceroy.

Non lawnmower exhibits that caught the attention included a demonstration by a John Deere Hillside combine harvester, (a true behemoth), and a Fordson Double Drive tractor. Out of the ring, an immaculate 1950s Coulsons hand powered roundabout was one of my favourites.

I managed to enter the ring with my RSJ De Luxe which nearly managed the full circuit before getting bound up with long grass and mud, and I sneaked in again to do a lap with the Silens Messor. I was pleasantly surprised by the amount of interest my collection generated during the day a spent a good deal of time chatting and answering questions

The day was rounded off in magnificent style with a fly past from Just Jane, the Lancaster Bomber stationed at the Lincolnshire Aviation Centre. The 'plane flew over the field several times giving

excellent views of this splendid machine.

All in all, a great day on which the sun shone, the crowds came and saw a wide variety of Vintage machinery. For more information on this rally view: [www.fensvintage.co.uk](http://www.fensvintage.co.uk)



# TOP TIPS

By Tony Hopwood

## Leaking petrol taps

Some vintage mowers have the old push off / pull on fuel taps on them. These taps have round cork seal rings on the central carrier, and over the years the cork loses resiliency and shrinks causing the tap to leak. New or replacement seals are hard to find, so here's a way to rejuvenate them without dismantling the tap completely. Try cooking the seal lightly with a gas torch. Don't set it on fire, and remember that the seal will be impregnated with fuel, so it needs to be thoroughly washed and dried first. Also, for the same reason do this well away from the fuel tank.

## Ignition leads

Ignition leads have to be connected to the spark plug, and while you can use the proper brass connector if it is still there, a useful substitute can be the screw eyes used for the end of spring curtain cords, which can be simply screwed into the centre of the ignition lead to make a durable and reliable connection.

## Bents

The recent dry spell meant that the grass stopped growing, but the weeds in my lawn didn't. The roller first configuration of most cylinder mowers means that taller weeds escape the chop and remain to taunt you after cutting the grass. There are two solutions - either use a rotary mower (tut tut) or modify your cylinder mower so it gets the per-  
ishers.

Most cylinder mowers have several wood or metal front rollers on a plain bar axle. Either take out all the rollers

and leave just the two side runners as you can do on many Ransomes or Greens machines, or leave the two outer rollers and put a length of pipe over the shaft to keep them apart. My 30" Dennis has five 6" rollers so I have taken out the three centre ones. This way many of the bents get cut, though with a full grassbox the two side rollers make make on the lawn if it is soft.

*Ransomes put their minds to the problem of cutting really tall stems 100 years ago, and devised the bent cutter, possibly one of the most lethal unpowered machines ever sold. Its size and lack of any roller means that it is unsuitable for a lawn that is not dead flat as it will scalp the ground, but it could have been a useful piece of kit on a golf course if dry weather had caused an excessive number of bents to grow up. **Editor***

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# WHY ON EARTH DO YOU NEED ANOTHER ONE?

By Joe Roulstone

it is best to restore an old lawnmower or to leave well alone. The article was inspired by a visitor survey on the Club's website which, in turn, led me to revisit older visitor surveys. Going back to March 2010 there was a survey on the numbers of mowers that collectors have in their collections. I was quite surprised to discover that the largest number, 47% of the 154 respondents, owned between 2 & 10 machines. That's not many for a collection, I thought. Then my flabber was well and truly gasted. I was amazed to see that 26% owned only 1 mower. Having recently left the 47% behind and stepped into territory inhabited by a measly 9% who own between 11 & 50 mowers, I began to ponder what factors might affect the size of one's collection.

Most of us will have good ladies or gentlemen who share our living quarters and it is unlikely that these hapless souls share our delight in obsolete lumps of red and green cast iron. Cries of "Oh my God, not another one!" and "Haven't you got enough of those things yet?" resonate wherever collectors live in close proximity to non-collectors. The pressure applied by these usually tolerant people at the thought of the car being kept outside instead of in the garage, yet another shed being erected or, as in one case I heard rumours of, the spare room being filled with mowers can sometimes be enough to cool the ardour of the most dedicated enthusiast. As much as we may wish to populate our world with mowers of all shapes and sizes, sometimes we must compromise, and hitting double figures seems

to be a good place to stop. But what if the urge is too great to resist? What else might cause one to decide that the collection is large enough?

Space is another major consideration. Let's face it, mowers are quite large items and in the real world sensible people own one; the one they use to cut the grass. It is easy to home one lawnmower, not so easy to home a dozen, and beyond the capabilities of most to keeping adding to collections indefinitely. I have a length of well supported work surface in my garage on which reside a Willing Worker, a Mk 2 Ajax, a PCA, an 8" Silens Messor, a 12" Anglia (which is my mower of choice for the 3 small lawns around the house), a JP Super and a 14" Green's Supreme. Under the work surface lurks the Big Daddy, a 15" Ransomes Mk2 Bowling Green mower, a beast I have no interest in trying to lift on to the work surface, whatsoever. And that's fine. There's still room for his & hers cars in the garage, and it helps keep other clutter to a minimum. But, of course, it doesn't stop there. Serving as sentinels on the patio are a Ransomes Atlas and a Green's Defiance. In the workshop, currently under the care of Dr Heath Robinson, and awaiting a handle graft, is a recently acquired Lloyd's Pennsylvania. Alas, at present, there is nowhere for the Lloyd's to go once it is recovered. To add to my woes I am expecting delivery of a Green's SM Junior later in the week..... So what to do? The obvious answer is to be ruthless with the collection.

The Ajax Mk2 could go. It is neither rare nor an exceptional example. It does not have a grass box. It is, however, a very nice mower to use and more forgiving on my uneven turf than the Anglia. The JP Super, likewise, could go. For whatever reason, it doesn't particularly excite me. But it is in good, original condition except for a crack on one side of the handle mountings, and its grass box is, well, Super. It is slightly pitted but still bears the original transfers, and the wooden sides are in great shape. I might not appreciate it now, but I do know that I'd miss it if it were gone.

I am not, despite all the above, completely beyond redemption. My collection is, and will continue to be, limited by what I permit myself to collect. I only allow myself pre - 1939 roller push mowers. Neither side wheel mowers nor anything with an engine are permitted. While I can have my Mk 2 Ajax, I would need to tread carefully with an Mk3 and anything later would be strictly off limits. I did nearly stray when I inadvertently found myself bidding on a Slatter's Front Runner on a certain well known internet auction site. I had never seen one of these on offer before and before I knew it I was heading the bidding, regardless of the fact winning the auction would have forced me to buy a side wheel mower to go with it! Fortunately the bidding got far too rich for me and my maximum bid seemed almost derisory by the time the cyber hammer fell.

So what of the 26% who have only one mower in their collection? Are they men of steely determination, grimly hunting out their own personal lawn mowing grail? Are they able, through sheer will power, to resist the lure of auctions, be

they internet, dispersal or collective? Are they impervious to temptation? I like to imagine these men, for surely they are men, as the possessors of gems. Perhaps they have an immaculate Dennis or Godiva motor mower. Perhaps they dedicate every waking moment to bringing that Leyland Steam Mower back to life. Maybe, just maybe, behind the padlocked door of that ordinary looking shed sits, gleaming and perfect, a Budding.... Who knows? But could I forsake all of my hard won, much chased mowers for just one?

Well, last week I was fortunate enough to attend the wedding of a friend and work colleague. In the bar of the hotel was a framed photograph of a wild eyed man with an unusual hat and an enormous beard. He was standing, some 90 years ago, in front of that very hotel. Behind him, posing with at least as much aplomb as the human subject, was a horse. Which was harnessed to a pony mower. So, this week I am going to phone the hotel. Because the thought of that mower is haunting me. Is it possible that it's sitting, disregarded in some out building? Could it really have avoided being turned into a Spitfire or Hurricane when the war came? If that mower still exists, and if I could bring it home, then I think it would be my One. I could forget about finding places for new acquisitions, I could silence any spousal approbation by reminding her that "I only have the one, dear", and maybe I could rest easy knowing that the search was over.

I would have to get a pony, though.....

# ADVERTISEMENTS

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- 12" Suffolk, c/w Suffolk Iron Foundry engine, grass box, Offers C: Tim Pearson T: 07956 434841 E: timpearson77@gmail.com (barnsley)#
- 14" Suffolk Punch 1960s, c/w Suffolk engine, grass box, FTGH C: Andrew Macaulay T: 07909 886723 E: macaulaj@hotmail.com (Aberdeen)#
- Suffolk Super Colt 1960?, c/w Suffolk engine, grass box, £75/offers C: John Williams T: 01733 562488 E: johnw\_1947@hotmail.com (peerborough)#
- 19" Suffolk Squire MP058 1955, c/w Suffolk engine, no box, £15 C: G Stevenson T: 07891 000020 E: hopdragon@msn.com (Wakefield)#
- 20" Thomas Green & Son 20/04/1935 c1935, c/w Villiers 379F mark 12/2 engine, grass box, £100 C: Neil Mccarney T: 01772 679179 E: neil@braithwaites.co.uk (Preston)#
- 18" Unknown, c/w, no box, \$50 C: L Mundschau E: mundschau@gmail.com (Madison, WI)#
- W Bingham Rainbow Ballbearing c1920, c/w, no box, C: Cliff Smith E: imoz@att.net (#
- W Bingham Rainbow Ballbearing 1923, c/w, no box, C: Cliff Smith T: 001 440-749-5008 E: imoz@att.net (cleveland, ohio)#
- Webb Whippet Mark 11 ball bearing lawnmower with instructions, c/w, grass box, FTGH C: Linda Harrington T: 01225 753990 E: linda.harrington95@yahoo.com (Trowbridge Wiltshire)#
- 18" Webb, c/w B&S engine, grass box, £140 C: Justin T: 07528 850215 E: j.b.joinery@live.co.uk (luton)#
- 12" Webb Deluxe, c/w, grass box, Offers C: Steve Moody T: 07733 421885 E: srmood@blueyonder.co.uk (Bristol)#
- 14" Ransomes Minor Mk 6, c/w Villiers engine, grass box; 24" Atco 24 HD, c/w Villiers engine, grass box; 36" Dennis Motor Mower 36, c/w Dennis engine, grass box, offers; 20" Greens Zephyr, c/w Villiers engine, grass box, offers C: Ken Aicken T: 07799 698708 E: kenaicken@talktalk.net (Belfast)#
- 12" Suffolk Pony, c/w box; 20" Atco, c/w box, Villiers engine; 14" Greens Flyweight, c/w box, JAP engine; 14" Greens Master, c/w box, No L10086; Ransomes trailing seat from Verge Cutter, Multimower etc, c/w pneumatic tyres. C: N Dixon T: 01636 812533 (Southwell)
- Shanks Talisman; unknown Shanks sidewheel C: Jackie Harrison E: jackie@powderday.co.uk (Liverpool)#

## WANTED

Pre 1940 lawn mowers. Anything considered, except Atco, including individual machines and whole collections. Write to Michael Duck, 1 Belmont Terrace, Shepton Beauchamp, Somerset TA19 0JX.

**Adverts are best submitted through the Club website as this gets them into the standard format for the magazine. However, all adverts are welcome by post or phone and are free of charge. Non members are denoted by a '#.**

## HALL & DUCK INFORMATION SERVICE

The Hall & Duck Trust can provide information on almost any make and model of lawn mower. For just £15 per machine they will search their extensive information archive and provide copies of documents found, dates of manufacture and more. Special rates for multiple queries. Please make cheques payable to "The Hall & Duck Trust". Send queries with cheques to: **Andrew Hall, Archivist, The Hall & Duck Trust, 1 Belmont Terrace, Shepton Beauchamp, Ilminster, Somerset, TA19 0JX. T: 01460 241374 /E: [archivist@hdtrust.co.uk](mailto:archivist@hdtrust.co.uk) W: [www.hdtrust.co.uk](http://www.hdtrust.co.uk)**

## GARFITTS SPARES

Contact Richard Jones on 01243 575937 or by email at [richard.jones@oldlawnmowerclub.co.uk](mailto:richard.jones@oldlawnmowerclub.co.uk) to order bottom blades, cutting cylinders and fixing screws from Garfitt's of Sheffield. Items ordered through Richard are subject to special terms and you only need to pay the club after the order is received. Richard

will also be able to offer general advice on removal and replacement of the blades.

### **MEMBERSHIP RENEWALS**

Membership renewal notices were sent out by post and email at the beginning of June. We've had a lot back already but there are still plenty to come in. There's plenty of time to renew yet as all 2010/11 members will receive this Grassbox and the next one before we start crossing off names from the list. On this occasion the year after the "Until" in the bottom right hand corner of the address label used to post this edition may not reflect your membership status accurately but will be updated in time for the next edition.

### **WEBSITE PASSWORD**

The website user name and password will remain the same for general "members only" access until at least the next Grassbox. Using these will allow you to read all content, including back copies of Grassbox and an up to date list of transfers, but not to add content or reply to queries on forums etc:

Username: olcmember  
Password Sprocket#6

### **WEBSITE UPDATE**

We've been doing more work on the website, in particular the Forums section which is now being used for a good range of discussions. Members who register with their own user name and password (see website for how to do this) can contribute to the forums and post comments on other sections. You cannot do this with the basic olcmember username so it's well worth joining up.

The website will shortly have a new feature that will allow full members of the club (that's more or less everyone who receives Grassbox) to post their

own wanted and for sale adverts in a classified section. All visitors will be able to see these and we hope it will encourage more members to visit and participate in the website. You will need your own username and password to do this. Non-members will still have to submit adverts using the existing website form (or send us an email or letter) and these will generally appear in the following Grassbox as at present. Grassbox reaches more members so my expectation is that this will still be the preferred route for members who have a mower to sell which is considered more collectable or scarcer.

## **RALLY DATES**

**Wisborough Green Village Fete, Billingshurst, West Sussex: Monday 29 August.** Well attended traditional Fete on the Village Green, adjoining the A272. C: Colin Stone T: 01428 604003

**Alresford Show, Tichborne Park, Alresford, Hants: Saturday 3 September.** Very active Vintage Section and a regular event for several club members. C: Colin Stone T: 01428 604003

**Bedford Steam Rally, Old Warden Park: Friday 16, Saturday 17 and Sunday 18 September.** This is a three day event this year! C: Dick Hardwick T: 01462 816018 E: hadw2@aol.com. W: www.bseps.org.uk

**Malvern Autumn Show: Saturday 24 & Sunday 25 September.** Details from Tony Hopwood. T: 01684 592134 (Upton on Severn).

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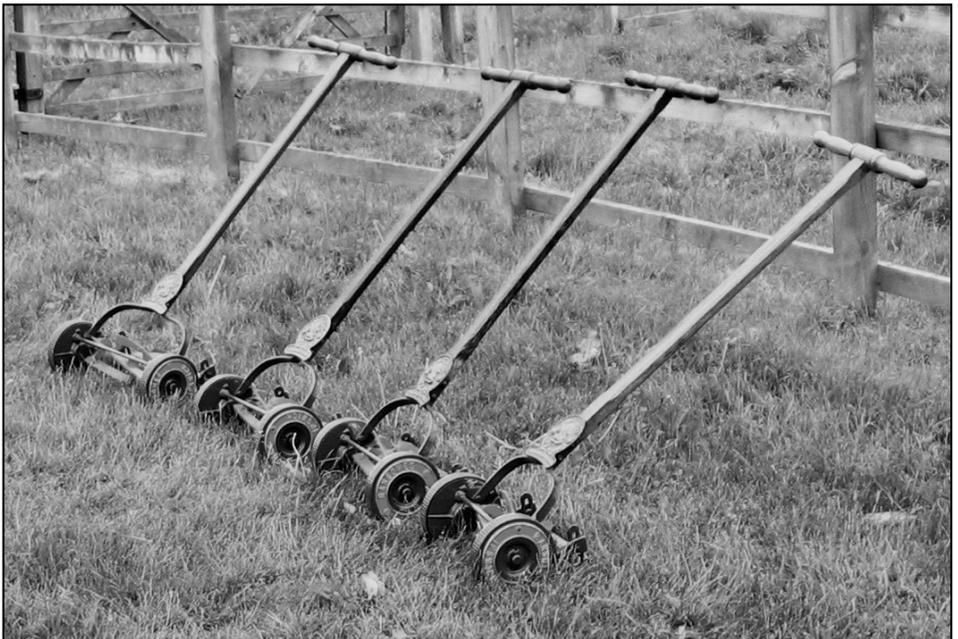
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**John Cruse** (Old Lawnmower Club Member)

[themowercentrehailsham.com](http://themowercentrehailsham.com)



*Right: Nigel Ball spotted this large canvas grass collector which Keith was trying to dispose of at the annual rally, and was delighted to find that it was just the thing to fit his Ransomes Antelope.*



*Opposite: A complete line up of all four sizes of lion at the Annual Rally. The largest, the 15", is very unusual Note also that these are all the same wide wheeled version too.*

*This 26" Silens Messor pony mower was displayed by Andrew Hall and Michael Duck at Milton Keynes, and dates from around 1905.*



**Next Edition: Autumn 2011  
Edition 77 - Summer 2011. Edited by William Proudfoot**

Just occasionally a mower turns up in such amazing original condition that one wonders if it was ever used at all. This is the case with Richard Jones's 14" Gear Caledonia. Probably a 1920s model it has all original paint, complete with almost immaculate grass-box transfer and much gold decoration, not just on the raised lettering and bolt heads but also lines and gold flowers painted on parts of the side



frames, as shown in the picture below. Note also how the steel straps on the grassbox sides are black, as are the crossbars in the handles. The inside of the roller is painted pale green. The gear Caledonia is the rarer version, more of the chain driven versions generally being sold. This mower also has the sprung rear



roller axle common to many Shanks designs which should make it easier to push and soften the bumps on a rough lawn. It is barely noticeable on the smaller hand mowers such as this, but has much more effect on the larger and heavier pony mowers for which the idea was designed.