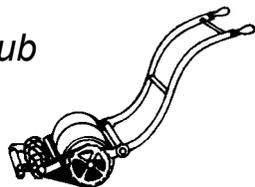


Grassbox

The magazine of The Old Lawnmower Club

Number 87

Winter 2014





Two views of the Lumsden Lawn mower collection at Picton Castle

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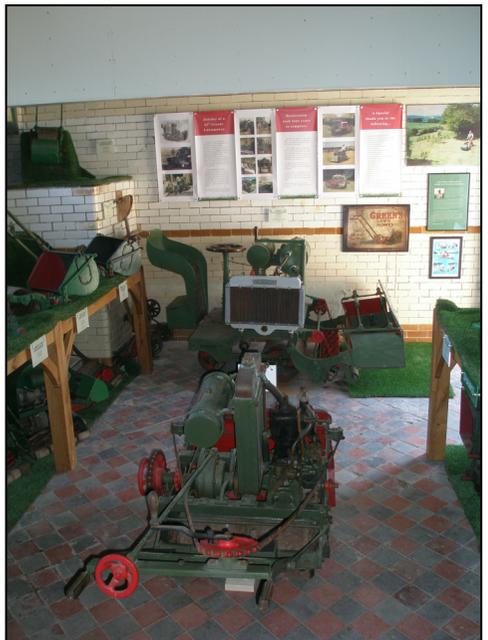
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EDITORIAL

Just a few words from me this time as I watch the endless rain that seems to have replaced the snow of the last few winters.

You will notice the separate sheet with this issue, showing that once again it is time to apply for insurance if you intend to display machines at rallies, and to enter lots for the Club auction.

The next issue will include details of the Annual Rally, and I would like to have all material for Grassbox 88 by 6th April to ensure it appears in good time.

DIARY DATES FOR 2014

**Annual Rally: Milton Keynes Museum
Saturday 17/Sunday 18 May**

All the usual events and features including the club's AGM and auction (see enclosed entry form) on the Sunday.

Theme for this year's rally is likely to be lawn edgers and/or electric mowers.

More details in the next issue, contact Keith Wootton for more information.

**Banbury Steam Rally
Saturday 28/Sunday 29 June**

Details from Robbie Robinson.

NEW MOWER DISPLAY OPENS IN PEMBROKESHIRE

By Nick Lumsden

The Lumsden Collection of Antique & Vintage Lawnmowers has been installed in the old dairy in the courtyard at Picton Castle, near Haverfordwest in Pembrokeshire, and will be open for viewing as from Good Friday, 18 April 2014. (see images opposite)

The collection was started over 25 years ago in an effort to preserve and save fine examples of some of the best of British Industrial engineering, dating from the early part of the 19th Century through to more recent times. It was becoming all too evident that generally these lawnmowers were being destroyed or abandoned and it was David Lumsden's personal dream that their extinction should be halted, so he set about accumulating a very impressive collection.

He was determined that they should be saved and preserved, restored if appropriate,

*Front cover: Back cover of the 1937
Ransomes Catalogue.*

but above all, kept from destruction, so that future generations could enjoy them and review their exquisite craftsmanship and engineering features.

The 85 exhibits include all shapes and sizes of every major brand name; Ransomes, Greens, Atcos and Shanks to mention a few, they are all present, and the majority still in working order and complete, and in some cases, their original livery. It includes some of the earliest examples of hand mowers, alongside animal-powered machines, a type of mower in which David had a particular interest. The 'piece de resistance' of the collection is a mighty 42 inch 1923 Greens with a four cylinder Dorman engine, an early playing field mower and the only working model in existence today.

One of David's sons married into the Philipps family in 2002 and so, having bequeathed the collection to his grandchildren, the genesis of the lawnmower museum was born.

MORE ABOUT THE RANSOMES AJAX

By Tony Roe

This series of lawnmowers was one of the most successful produced by the company. It was introduced in 1933 and was complementary to the concurrent Atlas and Mark 5 Anglia mowers.

The Atlas was a lower end of the market machine with chain drive whilst the Ajax and the Anglia were gear driven. The gears were of steel and machine hobbled to give a very accurate meshing. The gear case had a spring-cap oiler fitted. The Anglia was the top of the range machine and cost twice as much as the Ajax, the Anglia having compound gears, giving more cuts per foot, hand adjusters to the front roller and ball bearings on the rear roller as its main features. The Ajax was 50% more expensive than the Atlas.

The drive rollers were smooth and the single piece front wooden roller had pressed-in steel pins like a side wheel machine. There were spring cap oilers fitted into the roller brackets. These were more prone to wear than on most roller mowers due to the pins being fixed rather than the wooden rollers revolving on the shaft. The grass box was all steel while that of the Atlas was wooden sided with steel sheet curved over and pinned to the sides. There was a finger grip tab fixed to the top inner face of the Ajax grass box.

In 1937 the Ajax acquired ridged rollers. The front roller also changed to three wooden sections on a single shaft at this time. The scraper plate was altered to add the words Mark 2 immediately under the central Ajax name. The origi-

nal Ajax is referred to now as a Mark 1 though it never carried this designation. Curiously, the Atlas says Mark 1 on it, but there were never any further marks produced.

It seems that a number of the Mark 2 Ajax found their way into military service, and these had a oil nipple fitted into the gear drive housing instead of the spring-cap oiler. These were painted in the olive green that was applied to the soft-skin vehicles of the time. In 1936 King George V died and the Royal Warrant was changed to read "the late King George V ". This transfer continued until 1940 when King George VI issued his Royal Warrant.

Once The War was over production was resumed but many changes were forced upon the company (and almost every other manufacturer in Britain) by shortage of steel in particular. Surprisingly, aluminium was in plentiful supply and Ransomes re-designed the Ajax to incorporate aluminium side castings, gear wheels front roller brackets and roller scraper plate instead of cast iron. The mower was renumbered as the Mark 3. With the softer aluminium roller brackets, the roller shaft was now bolted with a grub screw to prevent it turning and wearing away the bracket. The Atlas was dropped from the range leaving just the Ajax as the standard domestic roller mower.

The Mark 3 Ajax used a number of pre-war parts that were in stock, including the pressed steel handles (though with the channel inwards rather than

outwards as on the pre war Ajaxes). The grass box was also a carry-over but reduced in width by ¼" to fit the new aluminium side castings. Pre-war and post-war grass boxes are not interchangeable even though they look identical at first glance. Later, the Mark 3 Ajax had the handles changed to tubing with rubber hand grips. The bent pipe was welded in the middle and strengthened with a quadrant of steel welded between the pipes. The transfer on the quadrant was red and carried the company name, Ipswich and England on it in white lettering with black borders. The grass box carried the Royal Warrant of George VI until 1952 when it carried the "Late King George VI". This transfer remained in use until 1955 when Queen Elizabeth II issued her Royal Warrant.

The Mark 4 Ajax was fitted with the 4 pipe with central clamp handle assembly. The grass box of the later Mark 3 and Mark 4 is tapered from rear to front being 14 3/4" at the rear and 12" at the

front. The grass box is inter-changeable with early Mark 3 and Mark 5 grass boxes, but would not be properly correct for these versions.

When the Mark 3 was introduced the Ajax was available with two very short wooden rollers fitted at each end of the front roller shaft and located by washers and split pins through the shaft to hold the rollers in place. This optional extra was the "long grass" adaptation which allowed the grass to pass onto the cutting cylinder without being pushed down by the front rollers. The Mark 4 was also available in this format. The Mark 5 however came in about 1960, and featured the 4 piece rollers and long grass conversion kit as standard. This consisted of two long and two short wooden rolls with a pair of washers and split pins in the tool kit. The front roller shaft has holes drilled through it where as the standard pre Mark 5 version is undrilled and all the rolls are the same length. Production of the series ended in 1972, no successors were made.

1959 Catalogue illustration, showing the Mark 4 and its tapered grassbox.



AJAX

12 inch cut

Precision cast light alloy side frames firmly braced ensure strength and lightness. Complete machine weighs only 54 lb.

Six-knife all-welded cutting cylinder with hardened steel cutters, and two-part land rolls with differential action combine to give a perfect finish with 46 cuts to the yard.

Easy running is assured by totally enclosed gear drive, and ball bearings fitted to cutting cylinder.

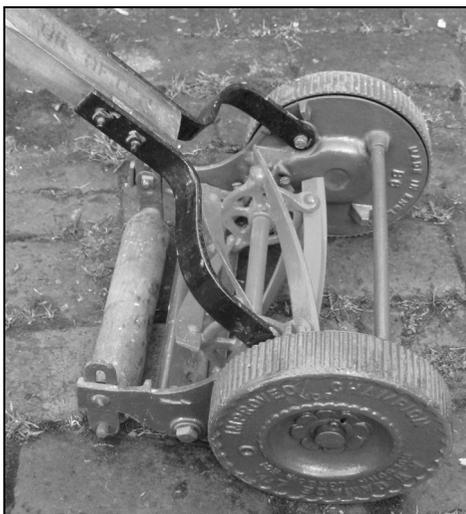
Simple adjustments. Accessible set screws control setting of cylinder to bottom blade. Height of cut adjusted by altering the graduated front roll carriages. Handles adjustable for height and spread.

PRICE: £13. 2. 2
including £2. 7. 2 P.T.

QUALCAST MOWERS: A LOOK AT THE SIDE-WHEELERS

By Christopher Proudfoot

Several new names joined the lawn mower market after the Great War, but probably the most influential in commercial terms was the least innovative technically. The lower end of the domestic market had previously been catered for by American imports, simple side-wheel machines that were lighter and cheaper than British counterparts from the Big Three (Greens, Shanks and Ransomes). After the war, import duties robbed these imports of their great advantage, and the newly-reformed Derwent Foundry in Derby started to fill the gap with their own American clone, the Qualcast.



Gamage Champion No.6: the wheels do have an oil hole, and the frame sides have the attendant arrow. But the captive loops for the bow irons are omitted.



Side view of an early Model C: no model designation on the wheel, no oil-hole, and so no arrow showing where the hole should be when oil is applied!

Exactly when the Qualcast mower first hit the market I have yet to discover; it was certainly being sold, as Model C, in the spring of 1922, and that may have been its first appearance, at least under the Qualcast name. But why start with Model 'C'?

The simple answer may be that Models A and B were experimental and never

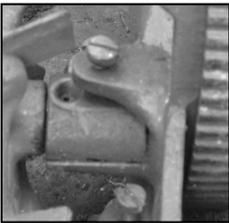
reached production, and the company hoped to give an impression of having been around for some time by using the 'C' designation publicly. However, it does look as if Model B was sold to the public; not as such, but as the Gamages Improved Champion No. 6.

Gamages was a department store in London, which unlike the smart stores of the West End, catered largely for the clerks in City offices, close to its Holborn address. Their Champion mower had been around for some time before 1914, but the No. 6 was, as far as I know, the first to have been British made, and inspection shows that it clearly came from the same foundry as the early Qualcasts. Was it sold by any other agent, under a different name? I

don't know. Why do I think it was Derwent's Model B, rather than Model A? Easy – the part numbers start with the letter B, just as those of Model C start with the letter C.

The Derwent Foundry Co. (1920) Ltd had been reconstituted in 1920 (presumably after the original company went into liquidation), and it may be that the date 1920 in the company name has given rise to an assumption that mower manufacture started in that year. The company was a foundry, making mangles, fire-grates and so on, and quickly developed a business in high quality repetition casting for, among others, the lawn mower and motor industries. Vintage Morris cars often have the oval Qualcast trade-mark on their engine blocks, and I recently saw it on the cast-iron chassis of a Garrard gramophone motor.

The Model C came in 8, 10, 12 and 14 inch sizes, and initially had adjustable cylinder bearings with a cast-iron cap, not unlike that of the low-wheel



Pennsylvanias. These were the same on the Gamages Champion (Model B) shown in the picture, *left*. These bearings were still

current in early 1923, but by the end of that year (as shown in a 1924 season catalogue, printed in October 1923 and available on the Club website) the 12 and 14 inch models had bronze bearings. Changing the bearings is a major business, since it requires a different side-plate casting, and this may be the reason for introducing the new design by degrees. Eventually, all Model Cs had bronze bearings, and the side-

plates had part numbers beginning with 'E'. It looks as if the change in the model designation was anticipated but held off until all C parts had been used up. Although early Cs had no model designation as such in the castings, later versions clearly say Model C on the wheels. I am not sure that there is any difference between a late Model C and an early Model E, apart from the different letter on the wheels!

When did Model C become Model E? The Model E was being advertised in



Above: Model C, later version, named as model C and allowing the pinion to get some oil! The bearings are now bronze.



Early Model E: indistinguishable from the late Model C!

1925 (and described as 'Improved Model "C"'). Whether the change came at the beginning or the end of 1925 I am not certain. Early Model 'E's still carry the Derwent Foundry company name on the wheels; 'Qualcast Ltd.' was established in 1928.

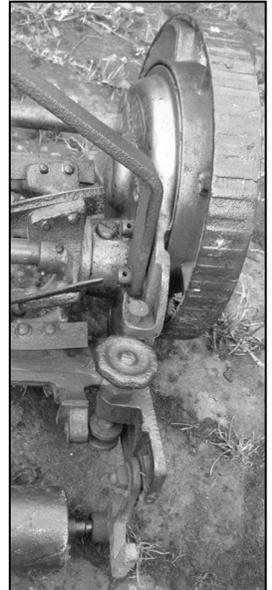
Why jump from 'C' to 'E'? Well, in 1924 the C had been joined by the 'D', a high-wheel version. This also had bronze bearings, and was devoid of a model designation on the wheels, as far as can be seen from illustrations. (I have yet to see a Model D in the 'flesh'.) By 1929 the high-wheel model had progressed, via Model G, to Model H. Model G is another version I have never seen. Model H had ball bearings, which was probably the only significant difference from the Model G. These high

Qualcast Model D: as advertised in France in April 1924. Qualcast clearly regarded France as an important market from the outset, as one of the side-frames, even on the Gamage, was marked Importé d'Anoleterre.

wheel models were made in 10, 12, 14 and 16 inch sizes. The Model D, like the C and E, was painted in Qualcast blue, but Hs that I have seen were finished in a varying mixture of green and gold.

The oddest development of the side-wheel Qualcast was the Model K. The 12 inch size (the smallest available) cost 75/- in 1929, compared with 42/- for the H and 35/- for the E in the same size. What extras did it offer? Its wheels were 10 inches in diameter, com-

pared with 9 for the 'H' and 7 for the 'E'. The cylinder had 7 blades instead of five, but the extra diameter of the wheels meant that, even so, the cut-per-foot rate was 12½ rather than the 15 offered by the five-bladed 'E'. (The 1929 catalogue boasts of the 12½ rate, without mentioning that the cheaper E performed so much better; I found the '15 cuts' figure in a later catalogue, after the K had been withdrawn!). The K also had hand-wheel adjusters, and 'terrace lugs' for use in cutting banks, though there is no reference to a special handle for this purpose. The Model K is undoubtedly a high quality, 'grown up' model, but it is hard to see how the extra cost was justified, and the public



K detail – the massive bearing housing, with a collar on the end cylinder spider to keep dirt out.

LE SECRET DES BELLES PELOUSES

RÉSIDE DANS L'EMPLOI DES

NOUVELLES TONDEUSES A GAZON

" QUALCAST "

MODÈLE " D " RENFORCÉ GARANTI 3 ANS



5 Lames mobiles renforcées.
Engrenages à grande multiplication.
Roulements doux.

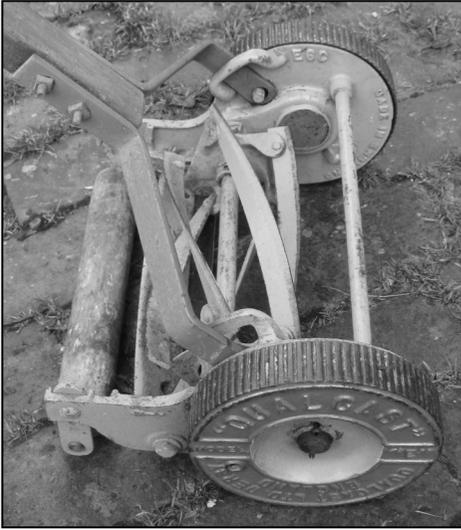
Gratuitement sur demande, nous vous enverrons une brochure pratique, traduite de l'anglais, écrite par l'éditeur de la Revue "The Garden" :

Comment avoir une belle pelouse ?

Demandez. Exigez la Marque **QUALCAST** Chez votre Quincaillier

***** E.-I. MICHON ET C^{IE} *****

46, Rue de la Bienfaisance, Paris (VII^e)



E circa 1930, showing the angular bow irons and plainer spiders, still malleable iron.

must have thought likewise, for the K remained on the market for a few seasons only. One version has only five blades, presumably introduced in acknowledgement of this heavy, high-wheeled machine's suitability for long grass.

The Model E underwent a few changes over the years; the first, after the change of company name, probably came about 1929 or 1930, and concerned the cylinder end spiders, which became solid rather than spoked (the central spider had always been a ring,

joining the knives together but not attached to the spindle). At about the same time, the bow irons lost their 'S' shape and became angular. In 1934, the 12 and 14 inch models acquired adjustable ball bearings, as already fitted to the 'H' and the Panther. The two smaller models got them in 1935. At some time in the thirties, the malleable iron spiders gave way to pressed steel. After WW2, only the 12-inch model was made, and it had bronze bearings again, perhaps because ball races were difficult to come by in those lean years. An updated model, with tubular steel handlebars and rubber tyres, appeared in 1950 as the B1, and in 1951 a version with ordinary iron wheels replaced the 'E', called the 'E1'. A similar replacement for the 'H' appeared, as 'H1' made in the 14-inch size. Painted in pastel green, it is not often seen and probably had a short life on the home market. The B1 outlived the E1, surviving into the early 1970s, when it was replaced by the 'Q7', an updated version of the Follows & Bate 'Magic', which had been around since 1932.

What of the Gamage Champion No 6? Well, by 1930 it had become the No 7, with bronze bearings (but still, it seems, without the distinctive loops round the bow irons in the side castings, so a separate pattern must have been used

Qualcast handles: the Gamage (second left) and the early Model C have a traditional mortice and tenon joint. The cast iron clamp, still with a distinctly shaped hand-grip, was used on late Cs and early Es (third left) On the left is the bolt and box joint seen here on a Model H, but also found on Es in the early 1930s (and again after WW2). On the right is a big boys' version of the same system, found on model K. The clamp system returned on Model Es (inset), but now in pressed steel, in the late 1930s.





Late E details – the pressed steel spiders, and ball bearing housing.

from the contemporary Model E). Oddly, although Qualcast supplied castings to other mower manufacturers, the Gamage is the only example I know of

their producing a complete mower for sale under another brand name. Perhaps they came to regret even this exception, for by 1935, the Gamage Champion was being supplied by the Suffolk Iron Foundry. This firm would become as prominent in the mower market after WW2 as Qualcast, although it was eventually absorbed into the Qualcast empire, and it was the Suffolk factory which ultimately made all Qualcast, Suffolk and Atco mowers before Bosch sold off the names and designs separately. Qualcast is now a 'Catalogue mower', sold in Argos and Homebase only.

See back cover for colour images of the Model H and Model K.



A very posed looking group of people have gathered for this old photo from Clive Gravett, the mower interest being the Archemedian in the bottom left corner. Sadly nothing is known of the location of the photo, but it appears somewhat American. The mower has the very distinctive one piece solid cast cylinder present on so many such machines.

ADVERTISEMENTS

FOR SALE

Cylinder grinder(up to 30"), c1940, 240V, £165

C: Richard Jones T: 01243 575937 E:

lawnmower.jones@hotmail.co.uk

(Chichester)

30" Dennis Z Type motor mower, 1930s, No 101Z5, c/w trailer seat, engine no 162E40.

C: Hamilton T: 0117 9374948 E:

caldewell@talktalk.net (Bristol)#

20" Greens motor mower, c1935, JAP 4 stroke engine, c/w grassbox

24" Dennis "Square Tank" 1926, Blackburn engine, c/w grassbox

24" Shanks Dragonfly Mk3, c1958, c/w grassbox

20" Ransomes Mk10, c1947, c/w grassbox

Various other mowers for sale from 1935-1950,

email for full details. C: Alan Hardwick E:

alanhardwick@me.com (Shefford)

14" Qualcast 35DL, c1970, c/w box, £20 C: David Benson T: 01380 813448 E:

davidsuebenson@btinternet.com (Devizes)#

34" Atco, unknown model, c1950, Villiers engine, £100ono C: Mick Baybutt T: 01704 895601

E: m.baybutt@aol.co.uk (Southport)#

14" Ransomes Minor Mark 6, c1955, Villiers 2S, Offers C: Richard Morris T: 01276 681981 E:

richard-morris@ssesurf.co.uk (Camberley,

Surrey)#

30" Dennis, No 9292, c/w box, Offers C: Garry T: 07917 130916 E:

garyread345@btinternet.com

(Northampton)#

17" Atco, 1948, Villiers Mk V111C engine, c/w box, £275.00 C: John Townley T: 01327

844898 E: j.townley388@btinternet.com

(Northampton)#

Villiers 1.5hp engine, 1930-1940, £30 C: John Jordan T: 01384 872961 E:

jjordan@talktalk.net (Stourbridge)#

Suffolk, Punch, £750 C: John Stobart T: 07984 380040 E: j.stobart@hotmail.co.uk (Grimsby)

)#

10" Ransomes hand mower, c1920s, c/w box, Offers C: Norman Wilson T: E: norman-j-wilson1@ntlworld.com (Watford)#

20" Ransomes MK 10, c/w box, £50ono C: V Hunnisett T: 01323 843405 E:

vhunnisett@hotmail.co.uk (Eastbourne)#

12" Qualcast Panther, pre-1950, Offers C: Peter Green T: 01922 682773 E:

peterpixie@hotmail.co.uk (Walsall)#

12" Hayn-Nutt Engineering electric lawn mower, c1956, c/w box, £25 C: Roger Porteous T:

01962 777342 E:

rogerporteous@btinternet.com

(Winchester)#

30" Dennis, 1930, c/w box, Offers C: Simon Wall T: 01529-302467 E:

simonwall1963@hotmail.com (Sleaford)#

12" JP Maxees, 1961, c/w box, Offers C: Gordon Scott T: 01463 239655 E:

gordondscott@btinternet.com (Inverness)#

Various Suffolk Punch mowers. C: Sam Hogg T: 01763 248113 E: samsotc@gmail.com

(Royston)#

Several old mowers, Little Wonder hedge trimmer, various garden tools. C: Chris Hall T:

07860 233301 E: hall-chris9@sky.com

(Dorking)#

Allen Scythe, 3ft cut, c/w Villiers 2S; 12" Suffolk Colt, c/w B&S 4S engine; 14" Atco, c/w Villiers "sloper"; 12" Ransomes Ajax Mk 5, all

free to collector. C: Ed White T: 01432

860063 E: ed.white1@btopenworld.com

(Herefordshire)#

Sunbeam Lawnkeeper 160, c/w Victa engine. C: Chris Webster E:

chriswebster59@dodo.com.au (Brisbane,

Australia)#

30" Dennis Premier, c/w box. C: Ron Ayling T: 07866 387180 E: ron@rpayling.co.uk (N/A)#

Qualcase Model E, c/w box and deflector plate, £35. C: Leslie Collins T: 07835 198969 E:

leslie.collins03@btinternet.com (Grimsby)#

Atco Garden Sweeper, 1960s, FTGH. C: Jeffrey Bridges T: 01424 772535 E:

j.bridges815@btinternet.com (Battle)#

WANTED

Headlights for Gutbrod Motostandard tractor mower, made by Hella, 4" diameter,

1960s/70s; Headlights, same as Gutbrod

1032 Tractor Mower, 4" Hella flush mounted

headlamps, 1970, must have good lens and

chrome bezel; Large cast aluminium 5.5"

radius throttle lever for "classic" Uni-horse

ride-on mower, 1970. All required for resto-

ration projects. Willing to travel to collect

items. Please call 4.30-10pm. C: Paul Harvey

T: 07979 301283 E:

paul_m_harvey@btinternet.com

(Tewkesbury)

Spares wanted for Atco/Wolseley Clearway. C: John Wickens T: 01959 523793 E: wickens.j@hotmail.co.uk

Spares wanted for Ransomes Junior Triple Gang, 1972, Villiers 45 engine. C: Gary Greig 7891967800 E: GGreig@slb.com (Aberdeen)#

Working Allen Scythe for work in newly planted orchard. C: John Butler E: johnbutler@phonecoop.coop (Pwllheli)#

Ransomes New Automaton 10" scraper plate; Full cutting cylinder assembly for 16" Easi-mow, including side supports, bottom blade etc. C: Clive Gravett. E:clive@adurgardening.com T:07833 306619 (Brighton)

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 W: www.hdtrust.co.uk**

GARFITTS SPARES

Contact Richard Jones on 01243 575937 or by email at lawnmower.jones@hotmail.co.uk to or-

der 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.

NEW WEBSITE PASSWORD

The generic password used for basic access to the website will change a few days after this edition of Grassbox is issued. We change this password once a year so that only current members can log onto the website. The new details are:

Username: olcmember
Password: Climax1869!

Members with their own username and password are not affected by this change. Words must be spelled correctly with the right capital and lower case letters and symbols. If you want to contribute to forums, post comments and submit classified ads etc you must register separately with your own username and password.

HELP WITH WEBSITE

Over recent years we have built up a considerable amount of content on the website but there are still many areas where we could do more. For example, we could add more suppliers, places of interest, events, details of machines, copies of operating manuals etc. The system we use allows anyone with the appropriate permissions to add and edit content and sharing more of the workload in the future will help us to improve the amount of online content. It's relatively simple to add and edit content

(similar to writing emails in the Gmail or AOL, for example). Anyone interested in helping with this can in the first instance contact Keith Wootton (keith.wootton@oldlawnmowerclub.co.uk) for more information.

also email copies to members on request. Members without email or web access can also request a printed version free of charge from Keith Wootton (see inside front cover for address).

NEW MEMBERSHIP DIRECTORY

It's been a while since we produced an up-to-date Directory of Members. Aside from the time spent compiling the directory the cost of production and postage had become prohibitive. At its most recent meeting the committee decided to produce the directory as an online document from now on and to make this accessible via the website. We will be producing the 2014 directory in the next few weeks and will put a note on the website when it's available. We can

THIRD PARTY INSURANCE

We will shortly be organising the annual third party insurance required to attend events and rallies. The application form for this will, as in previous years, be found on the attached sheet.

AUCTION

As in recent years the club is organising an auction for old mowers and related objects and ephemera at the Milton Keynes annual rally, taking place on the Sunday (18th May) of the weekend. Details are on the attached entry form.

THE OLD LAWNMOWER COMPANY

Specialists in post-war Lawnmowers & Scythes (Atco, Dennis, Ransomes, Suffolk, Webb, Allen)

SPARE PARTS SALES RESTORATION OPERATION MANUALS

New blade sharpening kit now available!

See website for details: www.oldlawnmowers.co.uk

T: 07930 314187 Ivor Gregory (Old Lawnmower Club Member)

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(former stock of Geoffrey Brooks)

Engine Parts - Piston Rings - Connecting Rods - Oil Pump Drive Gears

Cutting cylinders for 24" and 30" (not 36") and bottom blades

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Christopher Saunders-Davies (Old Lawnmower Club Member)

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For all sorts of spare parts

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Gaskets - Piston Rings - Ignition Coils - Silencers - Cables - Petrol Taps - Oilers

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HOW FAR WOULD YOU GO?

By Alan Hardwick

It was summer 2012 when I received an e-mail from Jim Ricci about an Ideal Power Mower surplus to his collection. Having wanted one of these machines for several years, I immediately responded that I would take it!

So the scene was set for a “road trip” to get said lawnmower from Jim in Haydenville, Massachusetts to me in Peoria, Illinois. Now, how far would you go to collect a new addition to your collection?

I know many of you have driven the length and breadth of the country to gather up prized mowers, but this trip beats Lands End to John O’Groat’s hands down. In fact, how about driving from the home of the OLC rally in Milton Keynes to Barcelona? Venice? Or even Warsaw? All of these are around 1000 miles from the museum; the same distance the Ideal was from me in Central Illinois!

My (very understanding) wife agreed to the suggestion of a family holiday to the east coast combined with collecting the mower. In so doing, we would also be able to take our daughter, Hayden, to Jim’s hometown of Haydenville! Given that Hayden was 6 months old at the time, it seemed only right to introduce her to lawnmower collecting.

So after almost a year of anticipation, in July 2013, we loaded up and headed east. The journey took us through 7 states, passing Richmond, Indiana, former home to Dille-McGuire and F&N, and self proclaimed “Lawn Mower Capital of the World”. Then we went on through Newburgh, New York, where the old Coldwell factory still stands on

the banks of the Hudson River. Finally arriving three days later at Plymouth... no we did not overshoot across the Atlantic, that’s Plymouth Ma, home of the famous “Rock”. We then toured other familiar named towns in the Cape Cod area – Sandwich, Barnstable, Falmouth to name a few, before heading back to Jim’s “Antique Lawnmower Super Store”.

Of course, to travel all that way for one machine would be silly, right? Especially when you are visiting one of the biggest lawn mower collections in the country! So after a tour of the barns, two other choice machines had made it onto the trailer - An Ideal Model V and a water cooled, twin cylinder Coldwell “Twin Thirty” complete with optional gang units. I could have gotten carried away with many more fantastic machines, but I had to restrain due to it being one of the hottest days of the year and loading these three big mowers onto the trailer had already worn us out. The trip home was uneventful with the exception of a few curious looks and comments at my trailer load of ‘iron’ at gas stations. One guy passing me on the interstate must have known the rarity of the mowers by his beaming smile, honk of the horn and big ‘thumbs’ up as he passed.

In the end, the total trip was just shy of 3000 miles (which did include sightseeing on and around Cape Cod) more fuel than I dare add up. I’d like to hear from anyone who can beat this distance (air and/or sea shipping does not count!). *See top photo, opposite, of Alan’s new machines back home in Illinois.*



Below: Mike Slay, left, with 1952 24in Dennis and Dick Goodall with 30in Dennis Z before the Grand Parade at New Zealand's Hawkes Bay 150th Anniversary Show on 25th of October 2013. Mike's mower was bought new by the N.Z. Govt. and used on various research farms around the lower North Island. 3 of the 6 blades were removed to avoid cutting the grass too fine. Mike used this mower for approximately 25 years when employed as a technician at the Takapau Research farm, and saved this very original machine from being scrapped during 2004.



Next Edition: Spring 2014
Edition 87 - Winter 2014. Edited by William Proudfoot

Published by the Old Lawnmower Club. Email: olc@oldlawnmowerclub.co.uk
Printed by Murrays the Printers, Milton Keynes

Qualcasts in colour: Right: 7 bladed model K, in gold with some green parts. Bottom: Detail of a 5 bladed Model K, this one in green, painted over gold, with silver parts. Note that there are two different mounting points for the handles, the upper ones being described as "terrace lugs" by Qualcast, so the handle can go flat for cutting banks. Below: Model H: this one is 14 inch, finished mainly in green. Some are largely gold.

