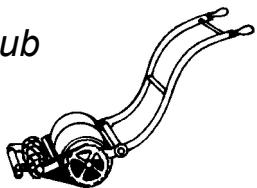


Grassbox

The magazine of The Old Lawnmower Club

Number 91

Winter 2015



BY ROYAL WARRANT

GREEN'S
SILENS MESSOR
1916
LAWN MOWERS

BRITISH MADE

T. GREEN & SONS LTD.
LEEDS & LONDON

EDITORIAL

Welcome to Grassbox 91. There should be another issue shortly before the annual rally in May, however, information on that is provided in this issue, and also the form for entering auction lots is enclosed.

Keith Wootton reports that former club chairman Tony Hopwood is currently downsizing his collection ready for a house move. Many members will be familiar with Tony's mowers which are mostly Dennis machines from the pre WW2 era including "square tank" and "Bradbury engine" models as well as the unique "Shingler" with the brush roller at the front. Tony is keen for these mowers to find good homes among fellow Old Lawnmower Club members. Tony also has a few other machines for sale including the unusual Tarpen generator on tracks. To discuss the machines that are available please contact Tony on 01684 592134

On a sadder note, the wives or two of our members passed away recently, Peggy Miller and Penn Sowerby. Barrie and Penn regularly attended Banbury and Bedford, often with their sons who displayed tractors, as well as numerous shows closer to home in South Wales.

Our thoughts are with the families of both Peggy and Penn.

Peggy Miller

Most members who have met Dusty Miller will have met his wife Peggy, who sadly passed away just before Christmas.

Right from the start Dusty saw something very special in Peggy, and they first got together over a snow ball fight. They were married in 1950, and ended up working together at a local insurance brokers. Sometime after they had their first son Keith and then Steven.

Eventually Dusty left the insurance brokers to start his own business with Peggy at his side, and needless to say with her help the new business went from strength to strength.

Peggy and Dusty have been lucky enough to see their family grow over the years, with two sons, two grandchildren and now three great grandchildren. Peggy supported Dusty in every one of his collecting adventures, from buying second hand Trianco boilers, to clocks and now vintage mowers.

I would like to send him our sympathy, wish him well, and hope to see him at the rallies this year.

Richard Jones

CONTACTING THE CLUB

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Souvenirs/Regalia/Garfitts spares: Richard Jones, 13 The Avenue, Hambrook, West Sussex, PO18 8TZ. T: 01243 575937
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A WEBB OF INVENTION!

By Clive Gravett

Members will be familiar with Henry Webb & Co of Birmingham whose mowers included the Wasp, Witton, Whippet, Windsor and Witch together with the child's miniature mower, with most being fairly common and perhaps not valued by collectors in the same way as early Ransomes, Greens & Shanks. However, Webb's first mower was patented in 1928 and deserves greater recognition in that it changed and improved mower design significantly, amongst other things being the first mass produced hand mower to have side frames of pressed steel rather than cast iron.

Originally sold as the Webb Lawnmower, it also had other significant improvements including a detachable cutting cylinder which could be removed with one hand in seconds by pushing two circular col-



A 12" 8 blade original Webb mower



lars together using finger pressure (see below). The front roller was mounted in a cradle enabling adjustment of height by a single central hand adjuster, and the same type of adjustment for the bottom blade via a central adjuster at the top of the thrower plate. Further additions were sprung loaded handles, (completely differently arranged to Shanks's long established design), oil bath for the chain and a brass grease gun clipped to the inside of the right handle. The man behind the above and many of the later Webb mowers was Frank Walter Taylor (1895-1963) a great inventor with over 140 patents to his credit; he worked at Webb for over 40 years. I had the pleasure of meeting his daughter-in-law at one of my talks and the family are extremely proud of the part

he played in mower design.

The first design only lasted until 1931, and some changes were made the following year, with the complex front roller adjuster being replaced by two handwheels holding conventional roller brackets.

The grassbox also lost its distinctive and inconveniently located handles. Both machines were available with 6 or 8 blades in the cutting cylinder.

Once Webb started to make other less sophisticated models for the mass market, such as the Witch, the original machine was given a gear drive and a model name, the De-Luxe.

Whilst I have read that the early Webb design was said to be half the weight of its competitors' machines, on checking my 10" model, it weighs in at 32kg,



A 10" 6 blade original Webb. Note the distinctive grassbox, and spring on the front end of the handles.

exactly the same as a 10" Silens Messor! As to price the 6 bladed 10" illustrated above sold for £7-17-6 as shown in the 1930 advertisement opposite.

(It is also worth recording that this and many other Webbs have nuts and bolts with the very fine cycle thread rather than the BSW or BSF threads found on other mowers of the time. Ed.)

A 12" 6 blade later (post 1931) Webb. Note the simple roller brackets and handwheel adjusters, while the grassbox no longer has handles. Note also the original black paint on the crossbars, a feature of many Webbs.

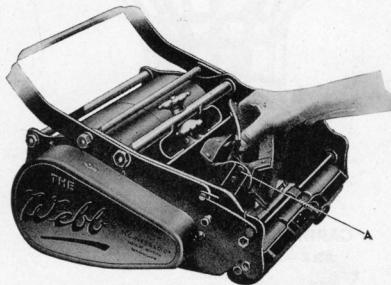


Adjustable handles which are also detachable for storage.

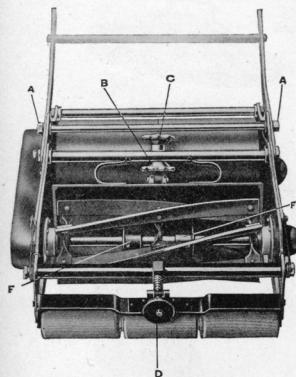
The cutting unit is rust proofed and is easily removed for cleaning.

Transmission by fine-pitched roller chain, running in an oil bath.

The ball bearings are lubricated by greaser nipples.



Showing the cutting unit being removed by pressing collars with the thumb and forefinger. The stud "A" must be on top when taking out or replacing.



Showing principle of adjustments.
"B. & C." Brings cutting blade in contact with revolving cutters.
"D." Adjusts to required height of cut.
"E." Gives clear view of collars which are being compressed in top illustration.
"A." Handle adjustment nuts.



"Webb" mowers are sold complete with grass box, oil bath chain case, and grease gun.

The mowers are fitted as standard with a 6 bladed cutter, suitable for giving a fine finish on the average lawn, but for superfine work, such as putting greens, a cutting cylinder with 8 blades can be supplied to order.

10in.	£7 17	6 each.
12in.	£9 9	0 "
14in.	£11 0	6 "

Carriage paid.

1933 Advertisement PATENT
THE Webb LAWN MOWER.
PRICES.

THE FEATURES.

Detachable Cutters without aid of tools. Grease Gun lubrication. Adjustable Ball Bearings. Rust-proofed cutting unit. Chain Drive Oil Bath. Adjustable Handles. Hand-controlled height adjustment.

AN ENGINEERING ACHIEVEMENT.

A detailed illustration of the Webb lawn mower, similar to the one above but with a different front roller design. It shows the handle, cutting cylinder, and grass box.

	With 6-bladed unit.	With 8-bladed unit.
10"	£6 6 0	£6 13 6
12"	£7 7 0	£7 16 0
14"	£8 8 0	£8 18 0

Subject to 5 per cent. discount.

Webb adverts, above from 1930, while left is the later version shown in 1933. Note the considerable reduction in price over the space of 2 years. The simpler front roller cannot surely have saved that much, and one suspects sales were less than encouraging to make such a cut.

BEDFORD STEAM FAYRE – SEPTEMBER 2014.

By Dick Hardwick

It seems rather late to be writing this report of last September's events during the cold, short and often miserable days of January, but with our hobby very little has to happen in a rush!

It was different this year! Mostly because we had three warm, dry days and we certainly needed it to be dry, because the marquee that we have occupied at the Fayre over last ten years or so is no more! Last year the event organiser voiced concerns on its durability in a strong wind, but we used it and it survived. However, it's used for many events besides this one and apparently, on one of these occasions an offer too good to refuse was made to buy the sides and scrap the rest. There was talk of a new marquee being bought and shipped from Denmark, (I wonder why we don't make canvas products in the UK?) but as the event date neared with no sign of said marquee I had to resort to 'plan B'. You see the result in the picture below, behind the line up of (most of) the Old Lawnmower Club 'Eastern Division display support team' – a borrowed, double width gazebo.

Hardly comparable, more fragile, much smaller, but, as it transpired, much more appropriate, since it forced our precious display mowers to be mostly in the open and thus highly visible to a passing 'Joe Public'. There were lots of those this year too, with a bumper attendance on all three days. A gazebo is great in dry weather, but if it had rained I dread to think how we would have managed. As it was we came to an accommodation with exhibitors in the nearby model tent – with whom we shared in previous years, but now with a new, small marquee on their own, that we could move our display items into that overnight and to sleep in there too, provided we vacated the premises early each morning: Duly achieved, OLC display saved and a good time had by all! Several regular OLC exhibitors were missing this year, including Colin & Celia Stone, Richard Durrant, Robbie & Wilma Robinson, Richard, Bettina & Emily Jones, while the 'northern' Hardwicks were unfortunate in that Jonathan's van had a mishap the week before. 'My mate' from Cambridgeshire,





Charlie Crouchman felt almost fit enough to visit for one of the days, but discretion (and more likely his wife!) prevailed and he stayed home.

It was great to have Daniel Mortimer & James Rudling with us for the first of hopefully more rallies, especially as they are both in the grass cutting business and on the right side of 40!

The collection of machines shown above is about a third of our total display. The Allen Scythe, centre background, was last out of the shed when my son Alan & I took it to our **first** rally, twenty years ago. I remember removing the cutter bar & driving it the half mile

from home to the then rally field and back again at end of day (one day rally, not three at that time.) I suppose it makes the point that actually owning our 'treasures' gives more pleasure than what we do with them!

The mower pictured *below left*, brought by Andy Grout, although mid sixties and American, with its three wheels by design quirkiness got my 'want to

own it' emotions jumping. It's a Swivel Boy made by the Seminole Mower Co. of Sanford Florida. Interesting and fun, despite a standard Briggs & Stratton engine.

As you see, *below right*, Andy Grout caught the 'I want it bug' too and it took him much time and head scratching to pack his new acquisition in with the mowers he brought before he could leave the site. My grateful thanks to all who helped with our display – hopefully, see you again this Sept.



RANSOMES REAR ROLLER RESCUE

By Angus Shapland

If not maintained to the manufacturer's recommendations the rear roller sections on Ransomes motor mowers from the 1920s right through to the present day have a tendency to seize on the shaft. A seized roller will still drive but the loss of differential action leads to difficulty in turning and scuffed turf at each end of a run.

This seizure is the result inadequate or incorrect lubrication, due in part to design, and in part to operator failings. The cast iron roller sections run directly on a steel shaft with lubrication provided via two or four holes giving access to oilers in their bearing areas so that the lubricant can reach and creep along the shaft. This arrangement works so long as the manufacturer's maintenance instructions are observed: these are the use of SAE30/50 oil applied weekly or every 50 hours of use. Quite often these instructions are disregarded and at the best the rollers are given the occasional squirt of grease. Dependant on the grade of grease used there is a tendency for it to dry out in the oil ways and very soon no lubrication is reaching the roller shaft – result a seized roller. Any one who has worked on Ransomes pedestrian motor mowers is likely to have come across this prob-

lem and will know just how difficult it can be to rectify. I was recently given a Marquis 51 that had been run with a seized rear roller for a number of years; so much so that the constant scuffing had worn most of the corrugations off the outer ends of the roller sections. Having "been there before", and knowing that the cast roller sections needed to be treated with respect; a plan was formulated (*see photo below*).

First off the whole roller was dunked in a drum of diesel for several days in the hope that some would find its way into the bearing surfaces of the roller sections and the shaft. While it was soaking I made up two clamps, one secured to the bench to hold one roller section and the other with a four foot lever to apply torsional force to the other section. The



first attempt, after much heaving on the lever and the bench leaving the ground, resulted in a very slight amount of movement between the sections so back in the tank it went for another overnight soak. Next attempt resulted in a quarter of a turn of stiff movement – back in the tank again. Finally as much free movement as the floor and wall would allow, and by pulling outward an increasing gap between the sections. This was followed by the careful insertion of a wide pry bar (cast roller sections!!) to aid outward pressure while twisting – success!

Now with one section removed it was possible to slide a piece of thick wall tube up the shaft to support the bearing area of the other section while applying pressure from a farmer friend's hydraulic press to the shaft. In fact, the pressure gauge on the press hardly moved off its stop, the steady controlled push being all that was needed.

Now for re-cutting the corrugations. I made a moveable guide to clamp onto the roller sections using the remains of the original grooves as a register and re-cut each groove using a angle grinder – tedious but effective! (see below)



Editor's note.

Angus provides a much better answer than mine to a problem that I was faced with last summer when I decided to do something about the seized roller on a 16" Ransomes Mk4. This is the Blackburne engined beast, and is from the same era as the original Marquis hand mowers, so it has steel plates over the ends of the rollers, and oil tubes in the roller drums that have a screw in the end of them to take out when you oil it. The roller contained a huge amount of dried oil and mud, which kept in by the cover plates rolled around inside so the whole thing rattled.

I drilled out the seized screws in the oilers, and managed to unscrew the tubes, then screwed in a long rod, which with a sleeve over it to stop it bending I was able to use to free the rollers with. It took many days of soaking with oil and paraffin, and rocking the rollers back and forth to free them. This whole operation was not helped by the curious and still unexplained fact that although I could undo the grub screws holding the ratchets in place and rotate them, there was no way they would come off the shaft. I can only assume

that they had at some point turned on the shaft and scored such a groove with the grub screws that they would not slide over it.

I'm sure that Angus's clamp arrangement would have enabled me to put a much more even force on the roller, as well as not being limited by the leverage I could exert on a piece of metal that small enough to fit through the oil holes in the drum.

VIPS ATTEND BUDDING CHARITY EVENT

By Clive Gravett

On the weekend of 16th/17th August last year I held a mower weekend at Mid Sussex Golf Club in Ditchling West Sussex to raise funds for The Budding Foundation. On display were around 50 mowers plus other interesting horticultural tools, together with a marquee containing information on Lawn/Lawn Mower history and the charities work. I was assisted by fellow committee members Colin Stone and Richard Jones who were keen to chat to the many visitors and promote the OLMC. We had a varied selection of mowers on display from the 1860s to 1960s including the recently acquired Follows & Bate Chain Tennis in excellent original condition with grass box.

Colin's Budding replica stood proudly alongside a state-of-the-art Jacobson GP400 Triple Greens Mower (cost around £30k) (see *image below*) flanked on the other side by a Mk1 Ransomes Certes putting green mower from the late 1920's. I have tried to encourage my green keeper colleagues to try the Certes but they prefer the Jacobson with, I quote 'Multi position grammer seat with lumber support, backrest adjustment and armrest for operator comfort!' and it apparently cuts

grass too! In the early days of mower manufacture I feel comfort of the operator was not considered a priority!

As the day progressed I was pleased to greet Joanna Lumsden whose late husband David will be remembered by many members, David's mower collection is now on show at Picton Castle (see Grassbox 87 for further information). Joanna enjoyed mower talk with Colin and myself and was pleased to hear that some mowers I had recently obtained from David's original collection were now being well cared for.

Our conversation was interrupted when a lady approached us to say she was a 'Budding' and her father who would be along shortly was keen to speak to me. Having completed considerable research on the Budding family tree I am aware that there are very few direct descendants, some of whom I have been in touch with for several years, so



I was keen to learn more. John Edwin *Image: Clive Gravett, left, with Mr. and Budding presented himself with his wife Mrs. Budding.)*

Joan and we enjoyed exchanging information and I was able to give John the background I had on his great-great grandfather Edwin Beard Budding, we have since exchanged further information to enlarge the Budding family tree.

Before Mr Budding left it only seemed right

that he should pose with the replica of me if you know of any.
his ancestor's invention.



Whilst Sunday did not attract as much excitement, apart from a heavy shower, visitors continued to arrive and over the weekend including our plant sale we raised over £400 for the charity.

Note I am keen to hear from any other direct 'Budding' descendants so please contact

clive@thebuddingfoundation.co.uk



A superb period photograph of what is probably a Samuelson in use.

GREENS MOTOR MOWER RESTORATION

By Rick Gowen



I think it is time to pick up on my 1923 20" 2 stroke Greens Motor Mower that was featured in Grassbox 76. Well she is restored and running and cutting again! She was first started up around March time.

So to back track somewhat, the restoration began in earnest last summer. It was stripped back completely, and all aspects of the machine rebuilt or made. The paint that I found on the machine was not too far from being a match to Hammerite's smooth olive green which is now obsolete from Hammerite range as I found out when I ran out at the end of the restoration. This means that I had to guess a match for the fuel tank. I doubt anyone would notice if I

didn't mention it but I see it clearly. A new fuel tank was made, modifying a Petter A type stationary engine fuel tank by shortening it by about 6 inches and moving the filler hole to the middle of the tank. New tank straps were made of two leather belts courtesy of the Asda George range of clothing!

The machine was missing the magneto and drive coupling so I made my own using a Lucas RS1 magneto with the impulse mechanism removed so then I was able to direct drive it from the end of the crankshaft. I made up an adjustable coupling so that ignition timing is easily adjusted.

The original kickstart mechanism was long gone when I received the machine and was replaced with a homebrewed bicycle crank mechanism which was very crude and unsightly, so this was removed also, now starting is done by rope around the flywheel dog. This method is fine but the engine has extremely good compression so you really have to pull it like you mean it! If you do it half heartedly it will try its best to pull you over!



CLUB SERVICES AND INFORMATION

SPARES

Contact Richard Jones on 01243 575937 or by email at lawnmower.jones@hotmail.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.

WEBSITE PASSWORD

The generic password used for basic access to the website was changed shortly after edition 88 of Grassbox was issued. The new details are:

Username: olcmember
Password: Climax1869!

ANNUAL RALLY 2015

The club's Annual Rally will be held at Milton Keynes Museum on the weekend of 16/17 May 2015 (as always this is the **third full weekend** of May). This will be the 25th anniversary of the very first annual rally held in 1990 (bearing in mind the club was founded in 1989 but the first rally was the year after). To mark this special anniversary the committee recently decided to award all rally attendees a unique souvenir. As always we'll only reveal details on the day of the AGM (the Sunday).

There will be a number of themes for the rally. First, "overseas" mowers which we hope will give members some scope to display a simple "Foreign Made" catalogue mower or something

more obscure. Second, we are hoping to display a timeline of Greens Silens Messor mowers with as many variants as possible present. We hope as many members as possible will bring examples so that we can have a full display and perhaps even spot a few oddities. Finally, to mark the 25th anniversary we want to see mowers with a connection to 25. This could be a mower with a 25 in the name, a 25 inch cut machine, anything with a "jubilee" or "silver" connection, and (dare we say) something made in 1990. Thinking caps on everyone!

The committee also discussed the auction held on the Sunday morning. Although this has become an established part of the weekend the committee felt that too many low-grade lots are now entered. The original objective was to have a relatively small number of desirable lots and provide as many members as possible with the opportunity to bid for them. The current format simply takes up too much time before and on the day to sell many items for a couple of pounds. We have therefore decided that the auction will be limited to 30 lots or fewer (depending on the quality of entries). However, we will also encourage members who previously entered low value lots to sell them on a bring-and-buy stand instead. There will be more about this in the next editions of Grassbox.

Incidentally, the club committee recently decided that members will be able to rejoin at the AGM again next year using the envelopes provided on the day.

For more information about the Rally, contact Keith Wootton.

ADVERTISEMENTS

FOR SALE

- 30" Dennis Z, running order, c/w grassbox and original paint; 20" Atco Special Fine Turf. Kick start, c/w grassbox, no carburettor; 14" HY Atco, restored, no grassbox, working magneto; British Anzani motor hoe, JAP engine. Open to reasonable offers. C: Ian Wal lis. T: 0114 2439172 (Sheffield)
- Sidewheel mower (Antelope?) with BSA engine £45; Atco 2 strokes 14" 1950s with boxes £30 each; Ransomes prewar horseshoe tank £125; Atco 1970s vgc 14" £30; Most of them have been run up to 2 years ago; 2 Small pushmowers 10" £6 each; Qualcast 14" 1950,s £25; Atco rotary rough cut 1960's £10. C: Kevin T: 07885718687 E: mediabus1@aol.com (Romford)
- 12" Webb Witch, series 5 229-27959, c/w box, FTGH C: Ken Atkinson T: 0191 237 3945 E: k.atkinson@tiscali.co.uk (Newcastle-upon-Tyne) #
- Ransomes hand mower, 1946 C: Patrick Bruce T: 07716 691183 E: patrick.bruce7@googlemail.com (Banbury) #
- 24" Atco ride-on, 1950, Villiers, c/w box, Offers C: Dick Tolson T: 01274 864465 E: jtolson@telus.net (Huddersfield) #
- Ransomes Certes, c1964, \$2000 C: Jeff Kennedy T: 001 828-231-2558 E: jeffkennedy86@yahoo.com (Asheville, NC, USA) #
- 24" Webb Motor Mower no. 271, 1983 replacement Suzuki S150/S200 , c/w box, C: Gay Herd T: 01929 421069 E: gay.herd@btinternet.com (Poole) #
- Greens Monitor, 1950s, c/w box, C: F Davies T: 07907 278571 E: happy-nomad@gmx.com (Sutton Coldfield) #
- 14" Suffolk Punch Mark VII, c1965, Suffolk 4S Type 75 G14 Model No 10A, c/w box, £100ono C: Laurie Jones T: 07747 107867 E: lauriejones1@sky.com (Portsmouth) #
- Qualcast Powered Panther (instruction book), c1956, FTGH - postage & packing @cost C: Dave Atkins T: 07974 581718 E: daveatkings@hotmail.com (Hamilton) #
- 18" Atco Model 17L51N, Villiers, FTGH C: Thomas Yeoman T: 01803 524815 E: thomas.yeoman1@virgin.net (Paignton) #

- 18" Ransomes motor mower, Sturmey Archer, FTGH C: Geoff Carnell T: 07860 494848 (day)/01945 780602(eve) E: the.carnells@btconnect.com (Kings Lynn) #
- 12" Webb Wasp, c1940s, c/w box, C: Richard Boon T: E: richardpboon@hotmail.com (Leeds) #
- 36" Ransomes motor mower, 1943, c/w JAP engine, box and roller seat C: Will Odling T: 0121 679 4933 E: will.odling@btinternet.com (Solihull) #
- Dennis Z Type, complete. C: Kate Smith T: 01508 549320 E: kate.smith@specialisteducation.co.uk (Norfolk) #
- Large selection of grass boxes. List and images available on request. C: Steve Gee E: steve2.gee@virgin.net (Birmingham) #
- Dennis motor mower. C: Michael Quinn T: 020 7937 1275 E: michaelquinn@racreamer.co.uk (London) #
- Atco Commodore, 1970s/80s C: Shonagh B E: shonagh08@hotmail.co.uk (Unknown) #

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.
- 14" Ransomes Certes; Correct handles for 16" Ransomes Certes; 20" Greens Zephyr cylinder mower. C: Alan Carter. T: 01992 551221 (Hertford)
- Cast aluminium chain guard for Dennis Bros Premier Mk1 (24", 30" or 36" model), 1960s C: Paul Harvey T: 01242 680972 E: paul_m_harvey@btinternet.com (Tewkesbury)
- Diagrams, pictures, details etc of handles on Troy Brushcutter. C: Tony Lawrence T: 01264 398210 E: anthonylawrence@outlook.com (Andover)

Adverts can be submitted by filling in a form on the Club website, this is by far the easiest method as it helps to ensure that all the necessary information is provided. Adverts are also welcome by post or phone and are free of charge. Non members are denoted by a '#'.

**Next Edition: Spring 2015
Edition 91 - Winter 2015. Edited by William Proudfoot**

SOUVENIRS/CLOTHING	Car sticker £1
Fleece £25	Round
Most sizes available to order.	
Sweatshirt £15	Tape measure £3
XS/Small/Medium/Large/X/L and XX/Large	Exhibit log sheet £0.10
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XS/Small/Medium/Large/X/L and XX/Large	2007
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15"/16"/17&1/2"18"/19"	2010
Overalls £26	Grassbox binder £6
Reg Leg 31" 42"/44"/46"/48"/52"/54" Waist	(To fit smaller Grassbox magazine)
Baseball cap £8.50	Spark plug NGK £4
Sew on badge £5	Large type to fit most Villiers 2 strokes
Pin badge £2	Only two left.
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	Ransomes van £5
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John Cruse (Old Lawnmower Club Member)

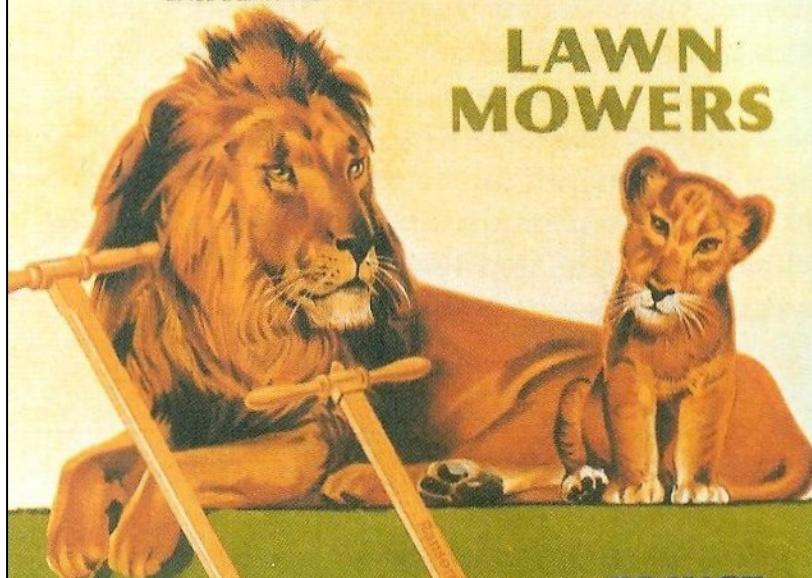
themowercentrehailsham.com

Ransomes

"LEO" AND "CUB"

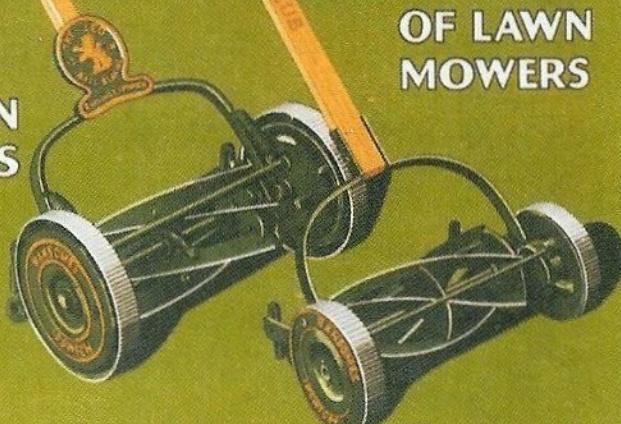
BALL BEARING

LAWN MOWERS



KING
OF LAWN
MOWERS

PRINCE
OF LAWN
MOWERS



EASY RUNNING STRENGTH & RELIABILITY

Rod Child kindly sent in this Ransomes advert from the early 1930s showing the low wheel Cub as described in Grassbox 90.

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