MICHAEL BIRD examines
cylinder mower developments

A nyone visiting the IoG Exhibition at Peterborough hoping to compare the merits of triplex-type greens mowers would have been struggling to spend much more than half an hour at the event. With the exception of John Deere, all of the leading manufacturers of such machines had decided to give the show a miss for 1993.

Their reasons ranged from a dislike of the location to the fact that they had little new to exhibit or had better things on which to spend their money. In the first case, at least, the return of the show to Windsor next year should please a number of companies, particularly those hoping for a more international event.

John Deere's managing director, Alec McKee, agreed that the show needed to attract more overseas visitors and the move back to Windsor would help in that respect. "However, we have the situation in the UK where there are several large events during the year aimed at the grounds maintenance industry," he commented. "All have their slight differences, but they also overlap in many areas. The organisers of each really should get together so that we have just one major show in the country - a truly European event, which could be supported by all companies within the industry."

John Deere's decision to attend Peterborough in 1993 was rewarded by a steady stream of visitors and those on the look out for innovations on the company's stand were not disappointed. Now available with a diesel engine is the John Deere 2243 greens mower. Introduced "to meet user demand", the machine has a three cylinder 18hp Yanmar engine, rubber mounted in the mower's frame. The engine has been set up to meet Californian emission standards, which are among the toughest in the world.
21 - world. The mower has no gearbox. Its transaxle is direct driven from the engine via a two-section hydraulic pump. One section drives the reel motors, the other supplies the steering and cutting units' lift rams. Apart from the 'Diesel' logo, the only visible difference between the petrol and diesel-engined machines is the rear hood which has been raised slightly to accommodate the taller power unit. Available next Spring, the JD 2243 diesel greens mower costs from £12,887.

Two cutting reel options are offered on two new lightweight fairway mowers also launched at the IoG exhibition by John Deere. Labelled the 3215 (25.5hp) and 3235 (32hp), the machines have been designed so that users can select the optimum power output and cutting unit to suit their grass and terrain. The smaller machine is offered only with standard seven-bladed, 5in diameter reels, said to be suitable for any turf type, but particularly the more delicate grasses found in cooler climates. Either the standard units or heavy-duty, eight-bladed, 7in diameter reels, can be specified for the larger JD 3235 fairway mower, the latter being better suited to longer, lusher conditions. Both reel types are 22in wide and feature a patent-applied-for mounting to the rear of the cutting unit. John Deere say that the design maintains a balanced force over the front and rear rollers keeping the cutting unit level and in more solid contact with the turf. Available with four-wheel drive, fairway groomer and verticut options, the mowers are priced from a little under £21,000.

Although absent from Peterborough, both Toro and Ransomes announced new five-gang ride-on mowers to coincide with the IoG show. The Toro Reelmaster 4500-D is based on the RM 450-D, but features some important upgrades including a four wheel drive option, a larger capacity engine, a new cooling system and a four post roll-over protection structure, the latter standard on the four-wheel drive mower and optional on two-wheel drive machines. Four-wheel drive is engaged by a switch on the instrument panel and operates in forward mode only. The engine has been changed from the Mitsubishi 4DQ5 (50hp governed down to 40hp) to the latest Mitsubishi 4DQ7, rated at 55hp. This is governed similarly down to 40hp, but the additional power available throughout the speed range will, says Toro, reduce noise levels and help prevent smoking under heavy load. A new water pump, two speed electric cooling fan and larger capacity radiator provide for cooler running, assisted by a new air intake and cooling system, now drawing air from the rear. Available with 5, 7 or 11 bladed reels, the 3.5m (lift 6in) cut Reelmaster 4500-D costs from £25,725.

Also offering a maximum cut of 3.5m is the new Ransomes Commander 3500DX, a five unit mower suitable for parkland and sports turf. It has full hydrostatic transmission, on-demand four wheel drive and a choice of 6 knife fixed head and 8 or 11 knife floating head cutting unit options. Power comes from a 51hp diesel helping produce a maximum workrate of 3.2ha/hour at 12.5km/hr (8 acres/hr at 7.5mph). Features designed to improve cutting performance and operator comfort include variable cutting speed reel control, a differential lock, articulating mower wing units for work on slopes, a rubber-mounted operator's platform and fully-enclosed engine compartment. An optional all-weather cab with roll-over protection structure is available for the new Commander 3500DX, which costs from £23,339.

Described as a tees and surrounds mower, the Sabo Robertine C400 from Claymore Grass Machinery offers a number of interesting features which extend its versatility for those looking after a variety of grass conditions and areas. The basic machine resembles a triple greens mower having a rear-mounted 16hp diesel engine, hydrostatic drive, rear wheel power steering and upfront driving position. However, the two front cutting units have hinged rear deflectors which, when raised, allow grass to be discharged directly from the rear of the unit. With the deflectors down, grass can be collected in the normal manner in the optional front grass boxes. On the rear cutting unit, the grass collector fits to the rear of the assembly, removing the need for any deflec-
CUTTING EDGE

23 tor. Price of the 1.8m (6ft) cut C400, complete with three-wheel drive, fully-floating 7 bladed reels and de-luxe seat is £12,250. Grassboxes and 5 or 10 bladed reels are optional.

First seen at last year's IoG exhibition, the Green's 20in super-fine pedestrian mower now has a name - Romax. The 10-bladed machine includes a number of detail improvements as a result of testing by selected golf clubs over the past year. Probably the most important is the fitting of an indexing adjuster for bottom blade adjustment, with a quarter turn of the hand wheel giving a thousandth of an inch blade movement. Price of the Green's Romax is from £1,800. Turf combs and transport wheels, yet to be priced, are extra.

Staying with pedestrian mowers, Allett has modified the powered brush on its Tournament 20in greens machine. The fully adjustable brush serves three main purposes: It keeps the front roller free of grass build-up to maintain a consistent height of cut; it brushes the turf, promoting healthy growth; and it helps lift lateral growing and flattened grasses for a complete cut across the full mowing width. Changes to the spiral brush include increasing the number of coils per inch and moving from nylon to polyethylene bristles. The result, according to Roy Allett, is an improved grooming action and extended working life. Price of the Tournament mower is £1,995.

Lloyds of Letchworth is introducing a 24in version of the Rolls Royce Range. Shortly to be offered with a 10-bladed cylinder, the Masport Olympic 500 combines a 'no-frills' design with an economical purchase price.

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24 GREENKEEPER INTERNATIONAL October 1990
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24in version of Lloyds Paladin mower suitable for large, flat fine turf will increase workrate by 15 per cent over the 21in model.

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Finally, one name which would not spring immediately to mind when discussing pedestrian greens mowers is Masport, distributed in the UK by Autocar Equipment Ltd. Although badged as Masport, the mowers are in fact now built by New Zealand company, Steelfort, following the take-over of Morrison by Masport, and the resulting rationalisation.

If price is a major consideration, it could well pay greenkeepers seeking a 'no frills', sturdy-built machine to take a look at the Olympic range, especially when a 10-bladed cylinder option becomes available next year. Estimated price of the Masport Olympic 500 with 3hp Tecumseh petrol engine, 20in cut and self-adjusting chain drive is under £500. Although not seeking to be placed in the same class as the top professional pedestrian greens mowers, it is still expected to cut fine turf very nicely, thank you, at considerably lower cost.

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