Take a look at the range of mowers offered by John Deere, Ransomes Jacobsen and Toro and it is soon clear that, between them, they will offer pretty much every model to suit the mowing demands of most greens, tees, roughs and fairways. But what if you are looking for something different? James de Havilland investigates...

Sitting down and totting up the number of pedestrian cylinder mower models available and you will soon realize that by the time you take every variation into account there are probably nearly 100 different models to choose from. Sounds a lot, but few of these are designed to keep golf greens and tees in trim. In addition, much of the variety will be down to detail specifications, such as mowing width, cylinder size and blade numbers. Not to mention various options to include groomers et al. In other words, once you home in upon key demands your walk-behind mower choices are narrowed. Sheffield-made ATT is one of the newer additions to the walk-behind market with its patented cassette cutting system while certain mowers, such as the pedestrian walk-behind models offered by Lloyds, Dennis and Allett, also tend to be associated more with cricket, tennis or bowls than greens and tees. The ‘big three’ have set a design ‘template’ for pedestrian greens mowers and because of that have come to represent the default first choice for some. That is not to say the aforementioned British built mowers are unsuitable for mowing greens and tees. Far from it. It is more that they just tend not to be considered. The same could also be applied to other alternatives such as the Baroness LM56 greens mowers. The latter have a loyal following with a growing number of clubs but many courses appear not to have given them a try.

So there is perhaps more choice than you may think among pedestrian cylinder mowers. But what about ride-on ‘fine turf’ cylinder models? Once you remove John Deere, Ransomes Jacobsen and Toro Hayter from the equation you are left with Shibaura, imported by PGM Claymore, and Baroens, from Kyoeisha UK. At least these two ‘brand’ offerings are the only ones that spring readily to mind.

What are you looking for?
Where it starts to get more varied is when you look beyond cylinder mowers. Here there is a much more diverse choice to include a wide choice of rotary and even flail mowers. These can include ride-on, pedestrian and tractor mounted variants too. Add sub-categories, such as zero turn, and you soon end up with so much choice it is hard to know where to start looking. As is always the case, choosing the right tool is made easier if you identify your key demands. Take mowing steep banks that cannot be accessed by a ride-on mower. If the area to be cut is relatively small and they are mown to keep growth under control as opposed to be trimmed to a fine finish, you may well use a brushcutter to do the job. But what about smaller banked areas adjacent to a bunker? A mower like the Allen Hovertrim, now made by Hayter, is a bit like a cross between a ‘Flymo’ and a brushcutter, with a mowing width of up to 56cm. Handle extensions allow the mower to be operated down a steep bank, allowing the user to stand on level ground.
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These useful mowers may be a better choice than a brushcutter for this type of work.

Need to reduce labour?

Do you have to keep a driving range mown but find it plays second fiddle to main course mowing due to constraints on labour? A mower like the Etesia ETm Robot can be set up and then left to get on with the mowing with very little input. In broad outline, these models just mow away, following no set pattern. Sensors prevent them bumping into marker posts or other obstacles, including those that may be moved around. A guide wire prevents the mowers straying from a set mowing area, so there is no worry that they will drift off where they are not wanted.

Lateral thinking

Other mowing ‘systems’ can also be worth a look such as the Ama-Baked® and their Tracmaster models. Note the unusual ‘flail’ type blade and the ability of the mower to follow ground contours, as pictured.

As is always the case, it pays to stop and think back to what your mowing needs include. Although there are seldom really new advances, developments such as the Etesia Robot models show there are alternatives to traditional mowing systems.