SPIT OUT THE
REMOVW THE TOOTH
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GRAVEL LOZWNGE
BANHAM
SUBSCRIPTION
ENGINE
1839
BUTTERCR
& EGGS

SPIT OUT THE GRAVEL LOZENGE
REMOVE THE TOOTH FROM THE BRAIN
Reclaim the Commons!
THE LAW Locks Up
THE RURAL IN VOGUE
MODERN MACHINERY

SPIT OUT THE BRAIN
REMOVE THE TOOTH FROM THE GRAVEL LOZENGE
Reclaim the Commons!
THE LAW LOCKS UP
BUT LETS THE GREATER VILLAIN LOOSE

MODERN MACHINERY

At the Royal Agricultural Show in Cambridge in 1951 people flocked to see the Museum's display of Machinery 100 Years Ago. This old equipment sat only metres away from the very machines that threatened its existence. The countryside was steeped in history yet desperately in need of modernisation.

First built in 1946, the Ferguson TE 20 helped to answer the call for change. The letters stood for Tractor England but they were soon called 'little grey Fergies'. Adverts claimed '150,000 farmers can't be wrong'. This innovative design was demonstrated at the Royal Agricultural Show in Devon in 1952, which the Museum also attended.

SEED DRILL —
GEORGE BOSWELL
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During the 1700s and 1800s scientific and commercial developments in farming became fashionable. Many farmers invested in new approaches to improve their harvests and profits. Books like this, Ready Reckoner provided farmers with tables explaining when to drill crops and use fertilisers.
Jethro Tull's seed drill is famous. It sowed seeds in evenly-spaced rows called furrows, which were then covered with soil. It also made weeding easier. Before, weeds had to be killed one by one but now a horse hoe could weed quickly between rows without damaging the crop.
Before seed drills crops were sowed by hand or 'broadcast'. A sower(a) held the seed (hopper) up a hand to throw it. A seed holder threw a set amount of seed left and right when the bow was pushed in and out. Holders spread the seed faster and more evenly.

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Jethro Tull's ideas about sowing crops in rows, called drilling, revolutionised farming but his seed drill was expensive and unreliable. In the late 1700s some farmers tried building drills of their own. George Boswell (1735–1815) of Dorset had read about seed drills and seen drawings of them but may not have seen one before making his own.

Large estate owners often experimented with new machinery and were interested in scientific developments but Boswell was not wealthy. Was he motivated by possible profits or interested in technology for its own sake? His expensive experiments did improve harvests but he also loved debating improvements. In a letter from 1793 reproduced in the case below, he wrote that nothing gave him 'greater pleasure than to exchange mutual knowledge'.

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Plate 4
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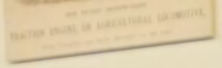
DANDELION LEAF
EMULSION

THRESHING MACHINE — JOHN WILDER
NOTICE
TWYFORD
BERKS

THRESHING MACHINE — JOHN WILDER
TRACTION ENGINE, OR AGRICULTURAL LOCOMOTIVE.
TWYFORD MILL
BERKS

THRESHING MACHINE — JOHN WILDER

NOTICE



in the letter below that rep
exaggerated' and everyone was 'ludicrously frightened
taking 'the crowing of a cock for the distant cheering of the
mob'. John was sufficiently worried that he destroyed his idle
threshing machines to avoid becoming a target for the mob.

Threshing machines varied greatly from hand-operated boxes to large water-powered machines. From the mid-1800s portable examples like this Edward Humphries thresher became common. Contractors hauled them to farms, driving them by steam engine. They fell out of use in the mid-1900s as combine harvesters both cut and threshed the grain.

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Getting the best out of
Your Tractor
THE FARM TRACTOR