

Grass and its organisation into lawns is a particularly English obsession. If an Englishman's house is his castle, then his lawn is most certainly his estate. Occupying a place in the national psyche comparable to that of afternoon tea, the English concept of the ideal lawn has evolved and altered almost beyond recognition since its first mention in the time of Henry III. Now Tom Fort traces its history, through famous lawns, to the present day. The English are universally acknowledged to be the lawn creators, coming up with most of the games played on grass, as well as the original grass-cutting machines. The lawn has aroused the wonder of the rest of the civilised world, and the Americans have fused to their conception of suburban bliss the ideal of the impeccably manicured lawn. This social history of grass is further enlivened by an introduction to the creator of the first lawnmower, Edwin Budding, by discussions with contemporary lawnsmen, and by witnessing the author's own attempt to create his perfect lawn.

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