

WHEN MOTORING WAS FUN

Tom Tyler

*"Glorious, stirring sight! The poetry of motion!
The real way to travel! The only way to travel!*

*Here today - in next week tomorrow!
Villages skipped, towns and cities jumped
— always somebody else's horizon! O bliss!
O poop-poop! O my! O my!"*

*Toad discovers the joys of motoring —
from Wind in the Willows*

Tom Tyler is a self-confessed auto-nut, at least as enthusiastic as Mr Toad, and a good deal more knowledgeable. In this book he has selected over 270 photographs of the golden period of motoring, when the open road beckoned the intrepid motorist and when motoring truly was fun! In part humorous, but always historically accurate, the author charts the Golden Years of the motorised vehicle from 1885 to the 1950s, after which traffic regulations and overcrowding saw the joy of motoring disappear in clouds of smoke.

Subjects include: The Veterans 1885-1904 • The Car Comes of Age • Cars Go to War • Sporty Boys at Play • The Car Goes on Holiday • Bits the Drop Off and Other Accidents • The Second Hand Car Dealer • The Garage in Town and Country • Luggage and Other Cargo



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Tom Tyler was born in South Devon just before the Second World War, and was always keenly interested in all forms of transport. After studying history at university, he has been fascinated by the rapid and at times extraordinary development of transport down the centuries, and in particular during his own lifetime. An interest in vintage cars, models of all sorts, and a collection of wooden transport jigsaw puzzles helps to keep the subject always under consideration. Memories of transport past, with major challenges and minor mishaps, bring an element of humour to the subject, only some of which could be recorded in this book!

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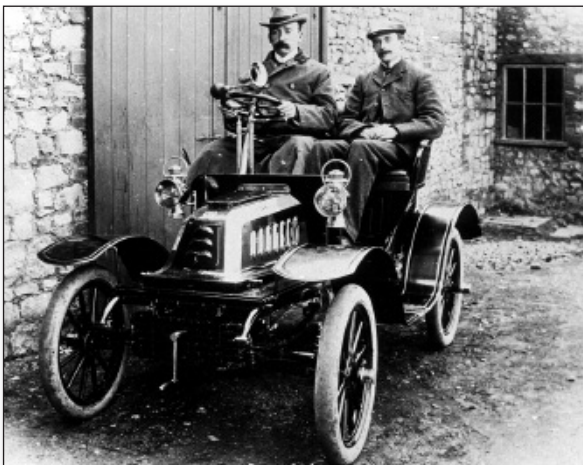
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The first car in Lyme Regis, Dorset, a De Dion-Bouton of 1902 Vintage.



Drawing a great deal of local attention, two splendid Chauffeur driven Edwardian cars stop at the Anchor Hotel in Burton Bradstock, Dorset, for refreshments.



An AA patrolman phones in from the box at Churston, Devon.



Example of a double page spread

Chapter 11

FIRST CARS AND LEARNING TO DRIVE

High Calamity, with five excited passengers, wade for help off the Park, Devon, 1904. A grandmother looks on helpfully!

I suppose that in a way it all starts in the garage. That feeling of drifting effortlessly through town or country, riding to great comfort, propelled by a transport of delight that at once offers a splendid view of the passing scenery, and at the same time seals those tired limbs tight!

In my case I was fortunate that at the moment of choice along side here footpaths had just about worn out their grace. I therefore was endowed with a new piece, and it is the course girl my hands-on the old one, which I christened 'High Calamity'. As fate in Devon we had a steep bank leading down to a large sea wall, about the same height, and High Calamity tumbled down the bank in a series of games.

In time the problem of propulsion occupied me, and having acquired a surplus seven pound machine, I watched it, and then carefully arranged a number of bottom-logged tires inside. I hit that given the right formula it would go. To clear it all color burst produced that that I set fire to it. The desired result would have been, and were left with no sign of movement. But a small pile of ash where the day-logged tires had been suggests remedy!

I knew indeed the value of the long fall to the base outside the house, which made a motor necessary, but which did require steering, as there were two sharp corners. High Calamity was given a rethink, with a lengthened chassis, wheels from a motor bike and track suit, and metal strap across and long pins taken from another derelict piece. For a steering concept I had the handle of a discarded all-terrain, with a gear wheel for steering, which I then did not really notice at all, and the basket was an old metal lampshade.

All in all it worked pretty well, and gave hours of pleasure. There was, however, a small job to give a spin of adventure. The last was sponsored with per holes of happy spin, and it a three wheel

dropped late over the shoulder of those the shock to the system could cause partial disintegration of the steering assembly, and a rapid dive into the ditch beside the road. In fact that happened! and after the glass opposite was broken, but was not captured on camera as the photograph was laughing too much!

Many years later, when I had children of my own, I got a childhood to end the image of chaos, with better steering and pedal down chairs to the back wheels, and I made further changes to holden her there, as I had certainly been limited the amount which pedal car wanted to be. These proved very popular, and now seem to be holding for grandchildren!

I have watched children driving such cars a good deal, and I am convinced that they learn control of the car, including steering and parking, and even how to achieve a neat two-point turn.

So I could be looked with a good deal of longing at the 'Tang' and other pedal cars of the day. But were far too expensive to be considered. I remember one incident on the Ayrle left Devon which I would have given almost anything to witness.

If you had enough money then you were already a very wealthy man, and you could buy, and I remember an exhibition of the National Motor Museum at Beaulieu, which included a battery-driven 4x4 law mower. However, I have never seen or heard of the children's car shown in the following picture, and I remain certain it is a very old

Early Days on the Open Road

A young Michael Gough from Peterborough in his pedal car in 1914.

Children of Loph Stron, Wincoburn, in the 1980s.

A handbuilt made child car taken to the streets of Ashbourne, in the 1980s.



Above left: Colin and Margery Sampford of Thorley, with their first car, a Morris Minor, in the 1960s.

Above right: A very smart Ford Popular, flanked by two scooters, provides complete family transport for a Llangain family, in Wales c.1960.



Left: John Surtees, one of the greatest ever, in action on a 500cc Augustus.