

BEYOND THE GRAVES

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HAPPY MOTORING



ADVENT OF THE CAR

Motor Cars – Over 300 motor cars were transported across the Solent from Lymington to Yarmouth last year. Practically all these cars would have come to the Island via Portsmouth and Ryde, but for the fact that cars can only be landed at high water. (*Isle of Wight Observer* 6 June 1908)

Not everyone was happy with the arrival of cars on our roads:

THEY WERE A HAZARD FOR CYCLISTS

Cyclists Union - The Council stated in a letter their willingness to place notice boards in the district at places which cyclists thought to be dangerous. The Union further pointed out that by the Motor Car Act, it was the duty of highway authorities to do this, and that the responsibility for any accident would rest on the Council for not carrying out their statutory obligations.

(*Isle of Wight County Press* 29 September 1906)

THEY WERE A DANGER TO CHILDREN

Motors and Children - Councillor Loader asked the Mayor whether the Watch Committee would consider the advisability of placing a constable on point duty at the junction of High Street and St John's Road at the time that children were coming from and going to school, with a view to minimising the possibility of an accident. The Mayor said the committee would consider the matter.

Accident - An alarming motor accident occurred at Haylands causing serious injuries to two small children, Ethel and Pat Hawkins, of Salters Road. A good number of children play in the streets there. The children were run into by Captain Meares' motor car, driven by his chauffeur. The children were taken to the IW County Hospital in the car. The girl sustained slight concussion and internal injuries, while the boy's thigh and rib were broken.

(*Isle of Wight Observer* 17 January 1914 and 14 March 1914)



HORSE BREEDERS WERE CONCERNED

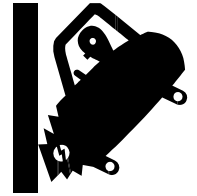
Motor Traffic - The rapidity with which mechanical traction is displacing the horse, even in the Isle of Wight, is rather alarming to those interested in seeing the breeding of horses kept up. In a few years, if the present rate of increase of motor traffic is maintained, there will not be a horse left, except for sporting purposes.

(*Isle of Wight Observer* 4 July 1914)

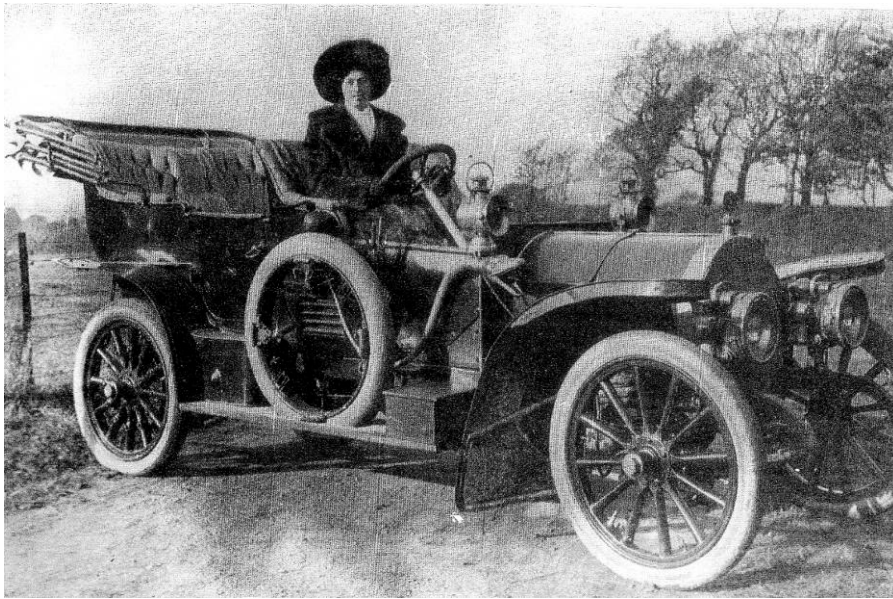


Images: Wikipedia

A RUNAWAY MOTOR - On Sunday morning Dr Pridmore was paying a visit to a patient in Well Street, and left his motor unattended. By some means the motor started off down the road, and ran into a lamp post at the corner of Prince Street, which it smashed, but the collision stopped the car.
(Isle of Wight Observer 10 July 1909)



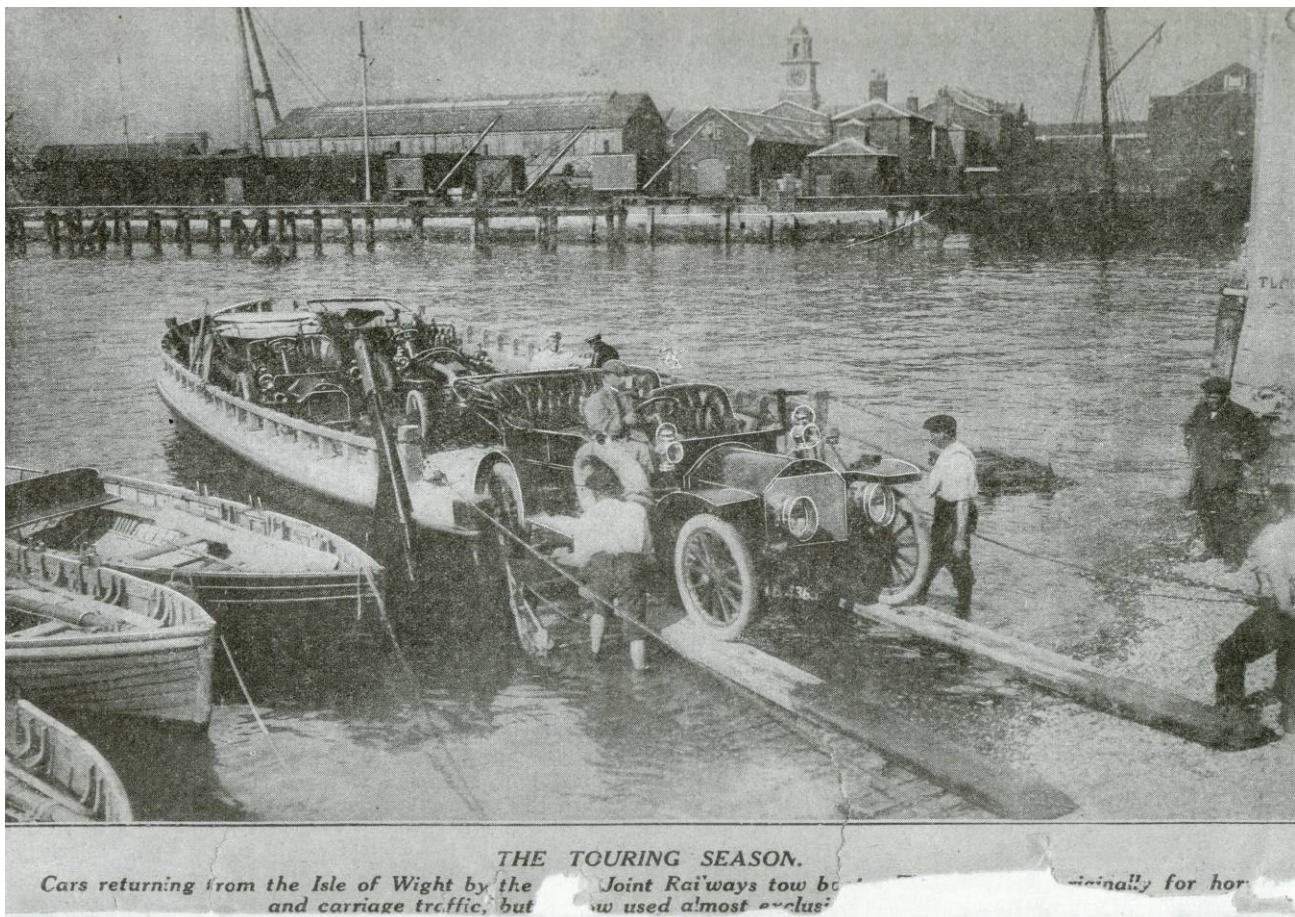
LADY MOTORIST ACQUITTED



In April 1910, Cleone de Benest, a young lady residing at Holly Mount, Queens Road, was summoned for driving a motor car at St Thomas' Square in a manner which was dangerous to the public. PC Warne said that at 6.20 p.m. he saw defendant at the top of Union Street driving a car at the rate of 20 miles an hour. There were several witnesses, including Alfred Notton, chauffeur to Dr Davies, who was with his car and estimated the pace at from 18 to 20 miles an hour and considered it dangerous. Mr Hiscock, defending, said that the speed at which the car was travelling had been over-estimated. Owing to the rattle made by the exhaust "cut out" it might be easily assumed that the car was going faster than it actually was.

Mervin Hoskins, son of the proprietor of the Crown Hotel, who saw the car pass through the Square, said there was no danger to the public. The case was dismissed.

CAR FERRYING



Photographs and newspaper cutting 19 April 1910 from Cleone de Benest papers

MOTOR FARES - All owners of motors plying for hire in the Borough are informed that the following scale of charges be adopted within the borough:- For the first mile or part thereof 1s.; for additional quarter of mile or part thereof 3d.; for every package of heavy luggage 3d. and for every additional passenger over three 6d. The scale to be exhibited in the motor cars.
(*Isle of Wight Observer* 15 June 1912)



MOTOR CAR ON FIRE - A fire, which would have proved very disastrous to a large valuable motor car owned by Mrs Benett Brigstocke, Saxonbury, West Street, was promptly averted by the Borough Fire Brigade, under Superintendent Hammond, on Saturday evening. A telephone message was received at the Station at 10.1 p.m., and the Brigade were on the scene within five minutes, to find the car, a landaulette, on fire. They quickly extinguished the flames with chemical apparatus after the car had been drawn outside and clear of the garage. It appears that the fire was caused through a leakage of petrol beneath the car. The chauffeur (Warren) had put the car away at 8 o'clock, which was ordered again at 10. He went to the garage and struck a match to light the lamps, which caused an explosion of the vapour arising from the leakage, and so ignited the car. The explosion knocked the chauffeur out of the garage, but fortunately did him no serious injury. The forepart of the car and the underpart of the engine was set fire to and considerably damaged. The damage is covered by insurance. (*Isle of Wight Observer* 6 June 1914)

THE CAR EFFORT FOR THE WAR EFFORT

ARRIVAL OF WOUNDED AT RYDE - The three score of convalescent wounded men who arrived at Ryde on Wednesday had a grand reception. The Mayor, who, with other people in the town and district, lent his motor car, and took away the first batch to Hazelwood amidst enthusiasm. The men, who wore their now familiar blue hospital dress, were in the best of spirits and thoroughly appreciated the kind reception.
(*Isle of Wight County Press* 7 November 1914)

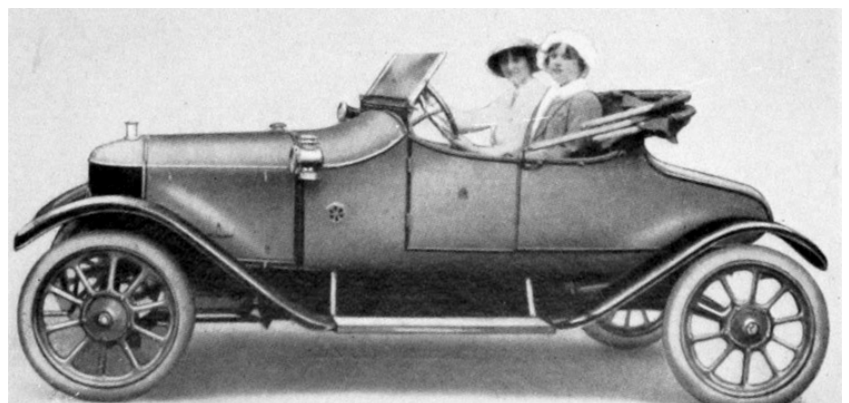


Letter to John H Oglander, Nunwell House, Brading from Mrs Rachel Vernon Harcourt, St Clare, Ryde.

I have read in the *County Press* an account of the convalescents at Northwood, of which the following is an extract. "When the weather has been favourable the patients have been taken for motor-car trips by kind friends living in the district, and these drives have proved beneficial and pleasant".

At the Red Cross Hospital in Ryde - Hazelwood- the patients are not allowed to go beyond the little square enclosure behind the house. We have heard this from friends who would gladly take them for a drive, and the men themselves long for a change. I am told that if an offer is made to take them for a drive it is refused on the ground that they might misconduct themselves! Surely a few drives would freshen the invalids up, and would help to bring health back again.

My daughter, Isabel, who has a genius for managing men and boys, would like much to arrange for some of her friends to bring (in their motors) half a dozen or a dozen men, to this place, give them a time in the garden, tea in the racquet court (which can be heated) and perhaps a little music or a recitation. Between ourselves, Red Cross matters are not very pleasant here, and I am not fond of curt rebuffs. Do you think anything can be done?



(*Oglander Letters* 5 December 1914; picture from www.lightauto.com)

THE FIRST DRIVING LESSONS



The first official driving lesson was given in 1910 in London by Stanley Roberts. He realised that motoring was going to be big business and set up his own driving school naming it the British School of Motoring (BSM). Roberts's early driving courses lasted just four days, placing special emphasis on "correct procedure, discretion and behaviour". The cost of a lesson was 10 shillings (50p) per hour.

Learning to drive 100 years ago when cars often resembled horseless carriages, was hard work. There was no power steering, you turned the wheel using the laborious "push-pull" method. Starting the engine required a combination of mechanical understanding and brute force (starting handles were the order of the day) and brakes were rod-operated, heavy and pretty ineffective. Changing gear required skill, timing and the ability to master double-declutching. Traffic however was light, so learning how to negotiate roads still dominated by the horse and cart was fairly easy.

Early driving lessons focused on basic car control, elementary hand signals - and common sense. There was no such thing as a government-administered driving test; that didn't come for another quarter of a century. Drivers simply applied for a licence and, if they could prove they had undergone instruction, it was issued automatically.


It was the introduction of the 25-minute L-test in 1935 - five years after the 30mph speed limit was introduced for urban areas - that gave driving schools the boost they'd longed for. When it was introduced in 1935 the examination cost 7 shillings 6d (37.5p). (www.telegraph.co.uk 19 August 2010; picture source: www.derf.org.uk)

APPROVED DRIVING INSTRUCTORS 2,000 ON TRANSPORT MINISTRY REGISTER

"From last week, learner drivers throughout the country were able to take tuition from any of 2008 instructors who, the Ministry of Transport say, are the best available. These instructors are those who have passed the searching tests of theoretical and practical knowledge which formed the examination for registration, and have now been notified that they are included in the Ministry of Transport's first Register of Approved Driving Instructors.

Among the successful instructors who can now put "approved" after their name is Bryan Greaves Driving Academy, Ryde."
(*Isle of Wight Times* 29 October 1964)


As well as the Bryan Greaves Driving Academy at 82 Pellhurst Road, the local press in the early 1960s displayed adverts for "expert tuition" at the John Good Driving School, 12 Melville Street and the Ryde Garage School of Motoring was in Victoria Street.



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Adverts Isle of Wight Times 20 March 1952



'THE ESSO SIGN MEANS HAPPY MOTORING'

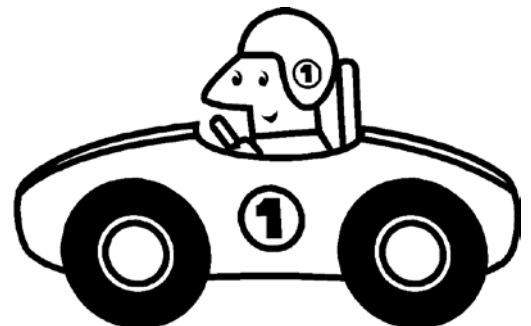
Who remembers the advertising jingle from the 1950s? All you had to do was -
'Call at the Esso sign!'

YEAR OF ISSUE BY CODE LETTER

"From 1 February a new type of vehicle registration number will be issued on the Island, which will show which year the vehicle was registered.

The new plates will start with ADL 1 B and are similar to the type already adopted by some county councils. This year the majority of authorities will start the new system, and by next year all new vehicles in this country will have plates with a letter after their number. The system has been devised because sequences with just one set of numbers and letters are fast running out.

The letters DL denote the vehicle is registered on the island, and the letter B after the number means the year of registration, in this case 1964. Authorities which started last year used A after the number, but this year have turned to B. Next year the last letter will change to C and will jump one place up the alphabet every 1 January. It is expected to be at least 22 years before the plates will be reversed to give A 1 ADL."



CAR BOOM

"Already more than 1,000 new cars have been registered on the Island this year. Half the annual average. The Island has 25,000 vehicles and already a shadow of a problem has been cast."

(Isle of Wight Times 16 January 1964 and 11 June 1964)



THE CAR THAT NO-ONE WANTED

The old, old car that nobody wanted brought no end of trouble to its young owner. For a start, it wouldn't - the engine was useless. Then there was the problem of parking - no-one would let him. Even scrap merchants were not interested.

So with the help of five friends, the owner put his shoulder to the wheel (literally) and pushed it...and pushed it - from Binstead to St Thomas' Street car park in Ryde, but a policeman said it couldn't be left there, so finally to a resting place at Buckingham Close. That might have been the end of it but for a policeman noticing that the expired road fund licence on the windscreen had in fact been taken off another old car.

"It's been a real bother," said the owner appearing before the Borough Magistrates where he received a £10 fine. (*Isle of Wight Times* 5 November 1964)



PLEASURE OF MOTORING - All the joys and pleasures of motoring are completely realised in the wonderful "Singer Six". A stirring example of British motor supremacy. The spirit of the age expressed in a modern motor car. So supreme in its beauty and performance that it leaves all competitors behind. Equipment includes Triplex glass, chromium plating, wire wheels, bumpers, leather upholstery, hydro-pneumatic shock absorbers. Six Saloon £275. Super Six £350. (*Isle of Wight County Press* 1929)

DRIVER'S SUCCESS - Ryde driver Bryan Greaves, driving an Austin Mini-Minor, won his class in the Guildford Motor Club driving tests on Thursday near Hindhead. He recorded the fastest time in a class which attracted 28 entries. There were a total of 50 entries in four classes. (*Isle of Wight Times* 20 April 1961)



CAR PARKING LIGHTS - Police Inspector F L Allan told the Ryde Borough Magistrates on Monday that at 10.55 p.m. on 24 June, PC Smith saw a stationary car without obligatory lights in Alexandra Road. Inside the car was a lighted hurricane lamp. The owner was fined 10s. (*Isle of Wight Times* 20 July 1961)

VETERAN CARS - Sixty nine veteran cars assembled at the Canoe Lake, Ryde, on Saturday for the Veteran Car Club (South Western Section) 1962 Concours d'elegance, which formed part of the club's two-day rally. The car which swept the show was a 1904 four cylinder, 12/16 h.p. Talbot Tourer. (*Isle of Wight Times* 19 April 1962)



VAN-DALISM - When Mr Stanley William Nye, of South Street, Ryde, went to collect his van from the George Street car park on Monday morning, he found that someone had removed the two rear wheels of the vehicle and left it resting on the rear axle. (*Isle of Wight Times* 19 November 1964)