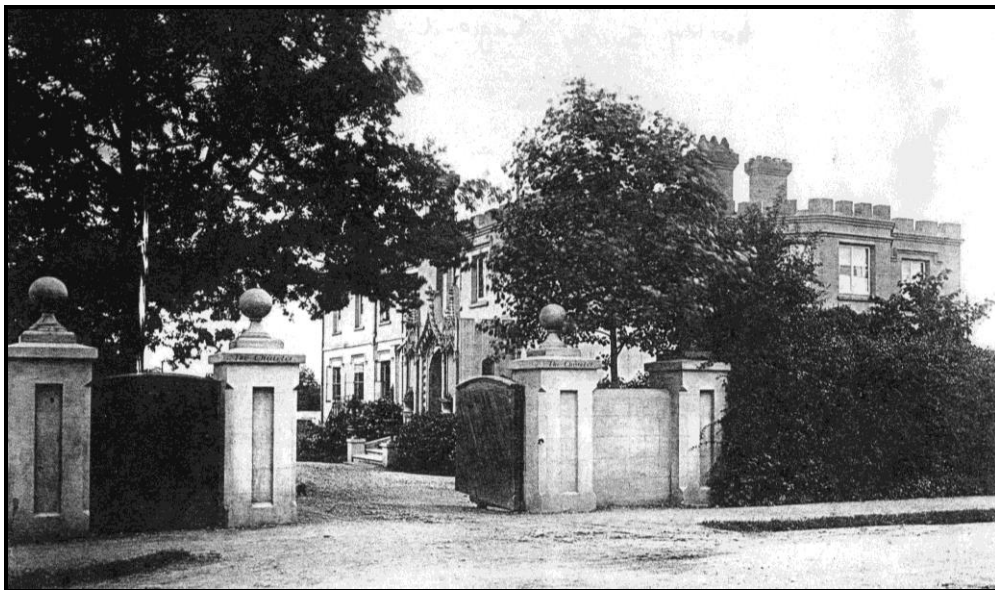


THE FIRST CAR & THE FIRST GARAGE IN HORLEY

Dr Muter FRS who lived in a large house called "*The Chatelet*" at the northern end of the Balcombe Road was believed to be first person in Horley to own and run a car. It was said that he was extremely interested in the early designs of self-propelled vehicles. Perhaps he had witnessed the emancipation of the motor car by the run of some 33 vehicles from London to Brighton on Saturday 14 November 1896, as the route did pass through Reigate.

It is known that he bought a car built by a Mr Hodgson that he had seen when visiting an exhibition in the Agricultural Hall, London between the 4-11th May 1901. Mr Hodgson who had been awarded a Gold Medal for his design, had since his apprenticeship devoted his time to the study of petroleum engines and their application to road transport.

Following the delivery of the car to Horley, Dr Muter asked Mr Hodgson to visit him to undertake one or two additions to the car he had recently purchased.



The Chatelet that stood where Chatelet Close is today

Liking his work, Dr Muter asked why he was not producing the car in some numbers only to learn that Mr Hodgson did not have facilities to do so. Immediately, Dr Muter offered him part of his own land facing the Balcombe Road. On seeing that the site was half way to the coast and surrounded by residences of so many gentlemen, he accepted the offer and a wooden garage was soon erected. Furthermore, Hodgson said that he would build a number of cottages to the north of his garage for his workers. While these cottages were built and remain there today, it is not known whether Hodgson was actually responsible for their initial erection.

The car that Hodgson placed in production in his Balcombe Road site was known as "The Horley Car" as shown in the advertisement below.



(HLHS)

The above photo was the cover for the 1905 brochure. By studying the design of the radiator it suggests that the car depicted in the photo in Chapter 1 was the same or very similar and hence it might just have been the one purchased at the 1901 exhibition.

Ref 4 reports on a visit to what it says was to the “*New Horley Motor Co Works*” though other headed note paper for the company did not include the word “*New*”. In fact, headed paper after 1905, as shown below, called itself “*The Horley Motor And Engineering Co*”. The reported visit, gave the impression that the works was extremely busy because it listed the following activities:-

“Machines in stock included a little Victoria, upholstered in Morroco with leather hood and the carriage being Parisian. The engine was known as a Benz driving the wheels by belts and chains. Price 120 guineas, weighed 5 cwts, tubular frame and ball bearings. Second was a De Dion Voiturette, not a Horley product but sent in for adjustment by a gentleman in Felbridge, but powered by a drive shaft. The third was Mr Hodgson’s “Top Fruit” which he called the Horley Country Gentleman’s Motor. 7½ hp using electricity or by blast lamps heating a platinum tube thus avoiding a breakdown on the road. The whole thing is a sort of truck as several different bodies can be made. A Marlborough Phaeton body can carry 7 people under a large hood, cost £335. Mr Hodgson can undertake to teach any intelligent man to drive.

Dr Muter,s Panhard was just over from Paris and making an open Phaeton and Coupe Brougham. MMC Iveagh Phaeton belonging to a Streatham gentleman was also in the garage.”

Within 50 yards of the "Chequers Hotel,"
half-way between London & Brighton.

Balcombe Road, Horley, Surrey,

Henry Reynolds Esq. April 11th 1905 -
Dr. to THE HORLEY MOTOR AND ENGINEERING Co.

MOTOR CAR BUILDERS, and Agents for M.M.C. Daimler and Panhard Carriages.

VOITURETTES.

MOTOR QUADS AND CYCLES.

Petrol, Repairs, Charged Accumulators and all Accessories always ready.

Attendance on Sundays in Urgent Cases.

Cars always ready for delivery from Stock.

Official Repairers to the Automobile Club.

Official Repairers to Messrs. De Dion Bouton, Ltd.

Official Repairers to Messrs. The Motor Manufacturing Co., Ltd., etc., etc.

1905-

Apr. 14

8 H.P. "Horley" Car with American
Body including Accessories as per
List.

130 - -

14

Credit Cheque on A/c

65 - -

65 - -



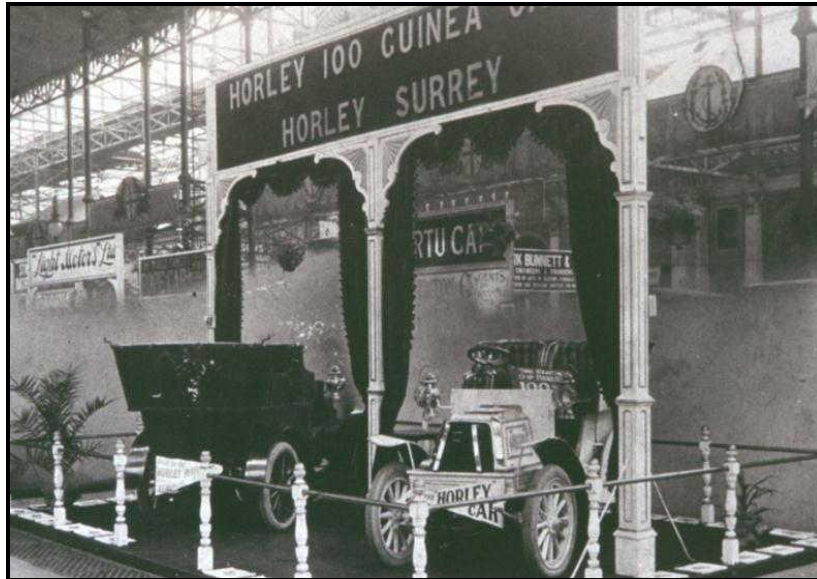
by cheque
Horley Motor

Hodgson

The receipt for the purchase of possibly the first "Horley Car" made in the Balcombe Road
Garage for a resident of Horley.

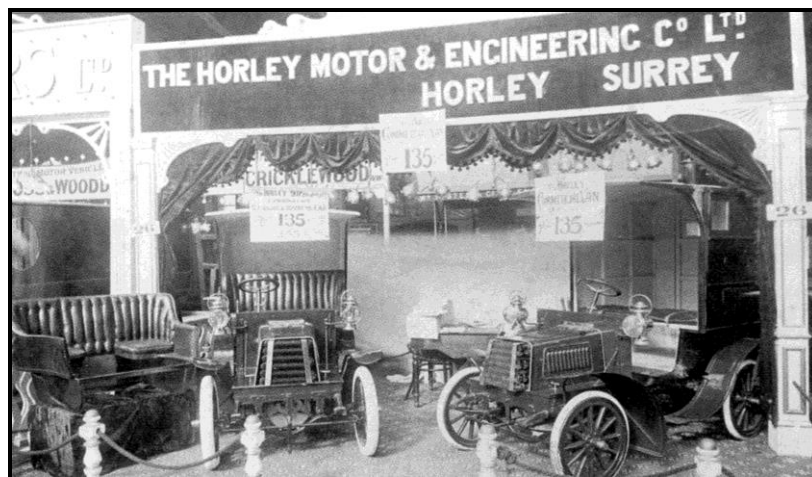
Note the detail in the headed paper. (D Metcalfe)

Ref 1 states that Hodgson's garage works survived from 1904 to 1909 starting with an 8 hp
Motor Manufacturing Co of Coventry single cylinder engine priced at 100 guineas for a 2 seat
vehicle. At the 1904 Crystal Palace exhibition 4 seat versions with a rear entrance were shown,
as seen below.



The 4 seat "Horley Car"

For an extra £30, a van version was offered as shown below



The "Horley Van Version"

The company were also agents for the French company Lacoste et Battman who supplied many car components as well as complete cars. From the above brochure, etc, it is likely that Hodgson used many such components in the production of the "Horley Car". For some unknown reason it was also called the "No Name" car

Horley Motor Co.,
BALCOMBE ROAD,
— NEAR THE CHEQUERS

ALL PERSONS INTERESTED IN

MOTORS

ARE INVITED TO VISIT OUR

GARAGE

Where they can inspect absolutely Up-to-date Cars on
the

“DIAMLER,” “DEDION” & “BENZ” SYSTEMS
Either completed or in course of erection.

OUR SPECIALITY—

→ THE HORLEY ←
Country Gentleman's 7½ H.P. Motor

With Changeable Body, available either as a Carriage
for 4 or 7 persons, or to convey luggage, &c., to and
from Station. A most useful and economical adjunct
to a Country Establishment.

— — — — —
ACCUMULATORS CHARGED. MOTORS
FOR HIRE.

Carriages Specially Built to suit Individual
Requirements.

N.B.—Gentlemen may send their Horses for training Free
of charge.

*An advertisement that appeared in the
Surrey Leader & Horley Advertiser Almanac
c.1907*

Note the item N.B.

Research to date has not revealed that any of the cars or vans produced in Horley have survived. What made Hodgson cease trading is not known. Perhaps as none of his cars have survived it could indicate that very few were actually sold and/or competition around this period was intensifying. Also as implied above, he was not a true car designer, but an assembler of parts made by others. He might have preferred to remain in the field of engine development. Whatever made him leave Horley, he did make his mark as the very first man to put Horley on the map in producing a car by that name, along with what is thought to be the building of the very first garage in what was then just a village.