

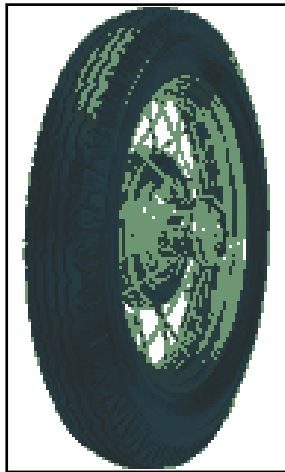
## **A Better Tire for Your Model a Ford**

I finished the restoration of my 1930 Tudor Sedan over fifteen years ago and have used it extensively for Model A events and also have participated in multiple tours with the Model A Touring Club. After more than 20,000 miles, the tires I originally installed on the car were getting very thin and it was time for replacements. While I was generally happy with the tires that I had on the car, I felt there may be a better alternative so I started to investigate.

I liked the looks of the Goodyear Diamond Tread tires but they make a noticeable humming noise at certain speeds and they were really expensive. I considered replacing with Firestones but I do not like the appearance of the tread pattern and they are too fat to fit in the fender wells. I knew if I took my time and looked hard enough I could find just what I wanted.

I talked to other Model A owners and everyone has a different opinion about the best tire for the Model A. Some owners only considered the initial purchase price but cheap tires usually did not wear well and almost always performed poorly on the road. Other Model A owners were adamant about whitewall tires to which I responded "Henry never put whitewall tires on the cars and I wasn't about going against what Henry did". Remember, I am the guy who still runs a six volt electrical system with a generator on all of his cars so whitewall tires were definitely not an option.

I had just about given up and was ready to replace the tires on my Tudor with the same brand that I had originally purchased for the car when I remembered a conversation I had with a Model A owner at the Horseless Carriage Club Holiday Excursion event back in December. Robert was from England and was visiting some of his family who were living in Arcadia. During our conversation, the subject of tires came up and Richard told me about a new tire for our Model A's that was being made in the UK. He had recently purchased a set for his car and said he could not be more satisfied. He said they looked good, were the proper size, drove very well and were considerable less expensive than the Goodyear or Firestones. I took his name and contact information and filed it away for future reference. I decided before ordering new tires of the same kind that was on my Tudor, I would find out more about the new tyres that were being made in the UK.



I contacted Robert and he remembered our conversation about tyres. He passed my name on to the distributor for the new English made tyres and suggested they send me some information. In about a week, I received a big packet of stuff which included specifications, dimensions, illustrations, performance data and a price sheet. After carefully going over everything, I decided to purchase a set of these new British tyres for my Tudor. I placed the order and transferred the funds and waited with great anticipation for my new tyres to arrive.

The first problem I encountered was when the distributor sent me an email that said they were temporarily out of stock on blackwall tyres in the size I had ordered but as they had plenty of whitewalls in stock and because he wanted to get these new tyres into the hands of Model A owners in the U.S., he was sending me whitewall tyres at no extra charge. I immediately emailed him back and explained that whitewalls would not do at all and I only wanted blackwall tyres because that is what Henry originally put on the cars etc, etc, etc.

The next email advised me that it would be about 4 to 6 weeks before blackwalls would be available. I told him that was fine, I was willing to wait. Almost 6 weeks later, I got another email explaining that because of the Coronavirus situation, the factory had to temporarily shut down for a month and it would be a little longer, hopefully no more than another 3 to 4 weeks.

After another 5 weeks, I got tired of waiting and was just about to the point of canceling my order when I received an email saying my order had been filled and was being forwarded to the shipper. It now looked as if I would not be that much longer before I was able to put new tyres on my Tudor.



Because of the cost of express shipping, I had elected to have my order shipped at a cheaper rate but I did not realize that would be by "surface" which meant "by boat". I was told it should take only about 3 weeks so I was not concerned but after more than 4 weeks and no tyres, I started to investigate. The distributor confirmed the tyres were forwarded to the shipper and the shipper confirmed they were put into a container and loaded on a ship destined for the port of Long Beach. He even gave me the identification number of the container that I could use to track it, just like tracking a UPS package.

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After a little investigation I found the container did arrive in Long Beach but was being held in customs. After several phone calls, I was able to talk to a customs agent who explained that they had found counterfeit sports merchandise in the same container and all the contents were being held for further investigation. I told him that there was supposed to be 5 new tyres for my Model A Ford in that container and ask if there was any way I could get them released from customs. He said it did not appear that my tyres were part of the counterfeit merchandise and if I came down in person and brought originals of my purchase and payment documents and a picture identification or a Pass Port, he would see what he could do.

The next morning, I made the trek to the Port of Long Beach and found the Customs Building. I went inside and talked to the person at the front counter. She looked at my ID and made copies of my paperwork and directed me to a waiting room.

After waiting for what seemed to be a very long time, an agent came out and asked to see my identification. He then took me inside this huge warehouse and sure enough, there were my tyres. After signing several forms I was able to take my tires and leave.

The next day I got my new tyres mounted and balanced and installed on my Tudor. The tyres looked good and seemed to be true and round and required very little weight to balance. That evening, I was looking forward to taking my Tudor, with its new tyres, out for a long drive.

After breakfast the next morning, with great anticipation, I was ready to try out my new tyres from England. The ride was smooth and quiet and all seemed well until I realized that there may be a couple of problems, the car continually wanted to steer itself to the left side of the road and it would pull in and stop at every corner pub.

