

Gedee Car Museum – India's New Landmark

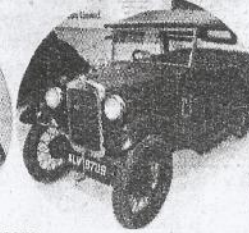
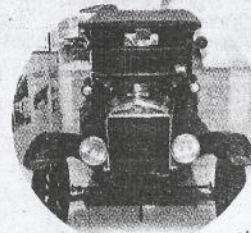
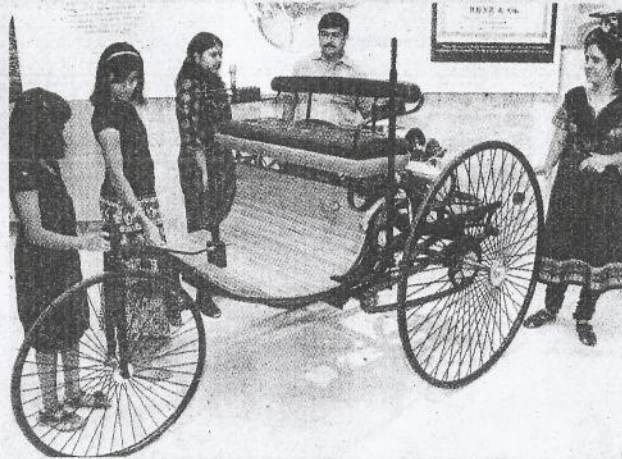
Coimbatore, the Manchester of South India, will now start attracting the attention of globetrotters who have a passion for wheels. It is interesting to note that the ingenious mind which produced the first indigenous motor in India had a passion for automobiles.

Although he added a number of cars to his collection, his dream of establishing a vintage car museum remained elusive all his life. As this project had remained close to the heart of his son G.D.Gopal, the gargantuan task of refurbishing vintage and classic cars to museum status was undertaken by GD Naidu Charities. Apart from those cars owned by GD Charities Trust, many vintage car enthusiasts of Coimbatore have benevolently donated and shared their pricey possessions to inspire and ignite young minds at work.

GD's First Motorcycle

In the year 1921, at the age of 17, G.D.Naidu was awestruck by the first motorcycle he had ever seen while working in his father's farm at Kalangal Village, a suburb of Coimbatore. He had absolutely no idea of how the man on the motorcycle moved with relative ease. He was so enamored by the motorcycle that he lost his sleep at nights. He was curious as to how something could move without any physical effort. With purchase of the motorcycle from a British Revenue Officer named Lancashire began his journey in mechanics.

The reconditioned motorcycle which once kindled the young mind of G.D.Naidu has a place in the museum. There would never



steam-powered carriage capable of reaching a top speed of 3.6 kmph.

There is also a noteworthy mention of how Cadillac's internal combustion cars led to a decline in steam-powered cars, including Stanley and Locomobile Steam Cars.

You could get a glimpse of those cosmopolitan electric cars, including Flocken Elektrowagen, Bersey Taxi, and 1913 Detroit Electric Car powered by Nickel-iron batteries. It is interesting to learn how Porsche's design of the VW brought down the cost of the car drastically to that of a motorcycle. The VW used an air-cooled engine which replaced the copper radiator, one of the most expensive car components till then, an independent torsion bar suspension which replaced leaf springs, and an aerodynamically designed body for more fuel efficiency and easy mass production, plus a rear engine configuration which placed the entire weight of the engine on the rear wheels to increase torque.

Rolls Royce in India

Throwing light on imported cars owned by the Indian royalty is a poster featuring Maharaja Jai Singh of

Alwar. Having been insulted by a salesman during his visit to a Rolls Royce showroom at Bond Street in London, Jai Singh officially ordered six Rolls Royce cars and deployed them to the municipal department for carrying around the city's garbage. In response to this, Rolls Royce apologized and presented the King with six new cars in exchange for the six garbage cars.

Another interesting piece of information is a snippet titled 'Doing a Mysore.' Rolls Royce was so accustomed to the idea of the Maharaja of Mysore, Krishna Raja Wodeyar IV, ordering 7 cars in a row that they coined 'Doing a Mysore' to indicate the delivery of a bulk order.

It is no wonder that G.D.Naidu himself was fascinated by Rolls Royce as these cars were precisely engineered to perfection.

Winning a Race

There is more to Coimbatore when it comes to car racing, let alone Narain Karthikeyan. On display is a Formula Ronon designed by

B.Vijayakumar in 2010 with a Suzuki 1298 C SOHC MPFI engine and a transaxle-type dog ring gearbox. This car with a fiberglass body has been built by L.G.Sports Ltd. It is this car which is the first single-seater racing car built indigenously with a racing gear box.

Kari Motor Speedway is a racing circuit in Coimbatore named after S.Karivaradhan. In 1991, he successfully designed and fabricated McDowell 1000, a car with fiberglass body, Maruti 1000 cc SOHC engine and a Maruti 800 gearbox. "Following the great success of Formula Maruti, this car was introduced by the legend S.Karivaradhan for racing as a single make series. UB group sponsored the entire batch of cars and hence named as McDowell 1000," reads a note at the Gedee Car Museum.

Silas Sebastian
Photo: Shajudeen

have been a world-class museum like this if it had not been for this motorcycle which sparked an interest in the mind of the one called the 'Edison of India,' Gopalaswamy Doraiswamy Naidu.

The Big Picture

What makes the museum special is the wealth of information available about cars, designers, engineers, and manufacturers. It is said that there were four extraordinary persons who played a pivotal role in the development of cars in the past 130 years. They were inventors who received no formal education.

If you are a keen observer, the flex banners featuring some of the world's most popular car advertisements would transport you back in history and take you down

the lane which you have never set foot upon. Do not fail to witness the replica of original sketches by Alec Issigonis featuring Morris Mini Minor. Having conceptualized the car at a restaurant in 1956, he only had serviettes in his possession for sketching!

While touring, you could learn everything about automobiles and carriages, including facts about how Sumerians reinvented the wheel in 3200 B.C. and how Egyptians introduced spoke wheels in 2500 B.C. There is a mention about how King Tutankhamun, the Pharaoh of Egypt, 'rode at a great speed over the desert dunes on a Formula One-like chariot.'

You might be surprised to learn about the French Cugnot Fardier -1770, which was a three-wheeled