

100 YEARS AGO

(October 15 1908)

On Tuesday last, before Sheriff Mackenzie, John Alexander Boyd, motor car driver, Uppat, near Golspie, was, at the instance of the procurator-fiscal, prosecuted for driving his car at a rate exceeding the speed limit, on the 8th instant, on the road between the Mound and Golspie.

Police Sergeant Polson, Golspie, was the first witness and stated that he was on the road on the 8th October for the special purpose of timing motor cars. Constable Mackay, Brora, was along with him. After comparing watches, Mackay took up his station at the third milestone from the Mound, and he took up his station at the second milestone. They adjusted their watches at half-past one o'clock. Near three o'clock he saw a motor car coming from the Mound direction, and it passed him at 2 hours 50 minutes 41 seconds pm. After the car passed, he mounted his cycle and joined Mackay, when they again compared the time and found the car had taken 2 minutes 19 seconds to run that mile, which was equal to a little more than 25 miles an hour. He was quite positive the watches agreed to a second. He had his watch for 20 years and he found it to vary very little. It was last repaired about two years ago. He had no hesitation in saying that the car had travelled the distance in 2 minutes 19 seconds. He went to Uppat and charged the accused. He had a speedometer on the car and pointed to it, and said he did not think he exceeded the limit. When the car passed him there were three ladies in it. He stated, on oath, that the accused exceeded his time by 41 seconds in traversing that mile. ...

The accused then went into the box and, examined by Mr Macaulay, stated he was chauffeur to Mrs Milburn, Uppat. There were four ladies and himself in the car, and not three as was stated. Mrs Milburn and party went out on that day to have a picnic lunch near the Mound and do some shopping in Dornoch. He remembered meeting Polson and Mackay. He thought they were out for trapping purposes. His strict instructions from Mrs Milburn were not to drive over 20 miles an hour, and he did not do so on that occasion. There was a speedometer on the car. It was new and absolutely reliable. It had only been on the car for about six weeks or two months. He was quite sure he did not during the whole afternoon exceed the 20-mile limit. He heard several times that the police were laying down traps at Kirkton. When they went to Uppat he told them there was a speedometer. They examined it and took down the name of the maker. The instrument was quite reliable.

Sheriff Mackenzie then proceeded to sum up, and at the very commencement put aside the stop-watch as no consequence in the case, and taking the two ordinary watches alone he stated he thought these were running sufficiently close to enable the police to take the time at the trap sufficiently accurately, and he therefore found the accused guilty of a breach of the Motor Car Act and sentenced him to pay a fine of £2 2s.