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FIVE FOR THE PRICE OF FOUR.
The image above is an example of comparative advertising that reflects the fierce competition between Dunlop and Michelin for supremacy in the British market. In the image, a satisfied Bibendum leaves the authorized Michelin establishment carrying five Square Tread tires. In contrast, the customer of an establishment identified as a seller of "X-Grooved Tires" departs in a bad mood, because he has only been able to acquire four tires for the same price. Evidently, the X-tires depict Dunlop’s Grooved Tread.

92. A symbol used by Dunlop in 1915 in a New Zealand price list of British import tires.
PNEUMATIC TRANSPLANT. In the above image, the controversial Michelin advertisement in which Bibendum rescues a British Red Cross ambulance, triggered ire and protests and led to an intense trial instigated by Dunlop.

94. Photograph of a sanitary vehicle, the 16-22 Hp 4-cylinder Napier, from the firm D. Napier & Son, Ltd. in an advertisement published in *The Sphere* magazine, December 7, 1914.
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LIGHTING THE FUSE.

Among the continuous riffraff generated between Michelin and Dunlop, this series of advertisements inserted in British newspapers and magazines stands out. The above image portrays the advertisement titled "The Contrast" in which foreign tire manufacturers are accused of not contributing to Britain's war effort. The text breaks down the contribution of the French company to the Allied cause, refuting the accusations of Dunlop and seizing the opportunity to cast doubt on the untainted patriotism espoused by the British firm in their advertising campaigns.

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One of the paragraphs in Michelin’s advertisement against Dunlop contained the statement of support made by the mayor of the town of Hanau to the British subsidiary of Dunlop—with British shareholders—based in that town: “The company has locked up a large capital here in buildings, machinary ... all of which have been supplied and built by German firms ... The amount of profit that Germany has received—and still receives—from this enterprise is far greater than the amount which goes to England by way of dividends.” One more claim of those put forth by Michelin to demonstrate Dunlop’s disloyalty in their rival’s own accusative crusade.

98. Illustration on the backside of a pocket mirror, a promotional gift from the German division of Dunlop, c.1910.
THE ADVERTISMENT OF DISCORD.

The advertisement shown above was published by the British company and seemed to respond directly to the controversial advertisement published a year before which had provoked the legal battle between Michelin and Dunlop. If in the first ad, the mascot Bibendum had been offered as an effective replacement for the damaged Dunlop tire of an ambulance in the midst of battle, in the second advertisement, the corporate advertising character, the impeccably dressed Mr. Dunlop, was occupied assisting a military health caravan with his tires. In the image on the left, Mr. Dunlop greets another convoy, circulating through French territory without mishaps thanks to British Dunlop tires.


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Motorists will be

Overlooking a Good Thing

If they neglect to obtain a copy of the

Michelin Guide to the British Isles

Everything you want to know about anywhere you want to go is fully set out in this handy volume.

Little John Day
Had lost his way
And didn't know how to find it;
Now he takes on his ride
A new Michelin Guide,
And, like me, he is always behind it.

Note.—In view of the enormous number of recent libel notices, I hereby do solemnly declare that the said "JOHN DAY" is no unknown to me as "LITTLE BO-PEEP."

The British Guide can be obtained from the Michelin Touring Office on receipt of a $6. Postal Order to cover postage, packing, etc., or a copy can be procured from any Michelin Stockist.

MICHELIN TYRE CO., LTD.,
81, FULHAM ROAD, CHELSEA, LONDON, S.W.
GUIDES AND TIRES.

In Britain, the constant struggle between Michelin and Dunlop for control of the domestic tire market had numerous open fronts. One of them was the edition of guides and road maps of the country that featured their respective mascots. The first British Michelin guide was from 1911. In contrast, Dunlop’s did not appear until 1921. This rivalry was also portrayed in the British poster shown below. As one would expect, Mr. Dunlop—in the background behind Bibendum—is shown facing the Michelin mascot and in a proportionally larger size than his opponent.

102. Dunlop’s full-page advertisement published in the British magazine *Punch*, January 5, 1921.
103-104. Lithograph poster and detail for the Underground Electric Railways Company Ltd., 1920, 127 x 100 cm. Illustrated by Frederick Charles Herrick (1887-1970).
FIGHTING AGAINST WINDMILLS. Dunlop’s “patriotic” campaigns against British commercial spending on imported tires—mostly those supplied by Michelin from its production hub in Turin, Italy—employed the corporate character of Mr. Dunlop as spokesman. In this case, while contemplating a portrait of the writer Don Miguel of Cervantes in the tercentenary of his death, the character reflects: “I very much doubt whether so great a satirist as the creator of Don Quixote could have found a theme more to his liking than the picture of this country engaged in a gigantic war, urgently impressing upon its people the necessity of restricting unnecessary imports and of retaining gold in the country, and yet allowing the importation without a murmur of unneeded tyres at the rate of £3,500,000 worth a year!”

The importation of foreign tyres is proceeding at the rate of £3,500,000 a year and there are ample supplies of British tyres—above all, Dunlops—to meet all contingencies.

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FRANCO-PRUSSIAN WAR.

Germany constituted a historically complicated market for Michelin’s aspirations of European expansion. Despite this, they had an agency, The Deutsche Michelin-Pneumatik-A.G., with headquarters in the city of Frankfurt. In the years leading up to the Great War, the French firm dared to confront the hostile territory of their other major competitor, Continental, using the same comparative advertising strategy they had developed in France and England. In the above image, a cheeky Bibendum advertises the Michelin Guide to Germany in a local publication, showing Germans themselves the routes, places and services proposed by the Michelin Tourism Service in Paris, and competing with the Continental Guides elaborated by the German tire firm. In the image on the left, Bibendum displays a tracking register—free of charge to customers—to compare in a detailed way, the different parameters that evidence the lower quality of tire “X” as compared to those offered by Michelin.

106. Advertisement published in the magazine Sport im Bild, in 1913.

Hören Sie hier den Dialog zwischen Stein und Nagel, denen der Fabrikant des verzierten Pneus die Mühe verstrichen wollte, indem er die Lauffläche mit Vertiefungen verzierte, wodurch das Eindringen erleichtert war.

Hie haben Sie Steine, Nagel u. besondere A.
A VEHMENT SPEAKER.

The direct competition against “sculptured” pneumatic tires or with all-rubber treads was also reflected in the German Michelin campaigns. The images shown here portray the virtues of the tire brand Course—known as Carpe in France and Compressed Tread in America—, featuring several ribs in the tread in contrast to the conventional smooth and sculptured treads offered by rival firms.

The Bibendum Conference.

1. Ladies and Gentlemen! Here you have two tires. The first, brand X, has been baptized with the nice name “Triple Course Extra.” The second, brand Y, is decorated with beautiful embellishments.

2. Here you have a film projection where you can see that stones, glass and nails have the audacity to not respect the expensive Triple Course Extra tire.

3. Pay attention now to the dialogue between the stone and the nail, to which the manufacturer of the “decorated” tire has wanted to facilitate their work by having spaces in the surface of the cover that allows for their penetration.

Character 1—What are you looking for?
Character 2—I’m just looking for a space in these beautifully decorated covers, to be able to penetrate better.

4. Allow me to introduce you now to the Michelin tire, made with Michelin’s unique quality. This is the “Type Course,” with which Michelin has won in most races around the world. Its thick, regular and resistant rubber layer makes it difficult for foreign objects to penetrate. It is cheap, other tires are 35 to 130% more expensive; every motorist tries to reduce their expenses now that the price of gasoline has risen so much. This is why Michelin is recommended as a good and cheap tire.

108. Advertisement in the magazine Allgemeine Automobil Zeitung, 1913. Illustrated by Joh Opitz (?).
A BUCKING HORSE. Right before the Great War, the German company Continental responded in this very graphic way to the advertising onslaughts of their great rival, the French Michelin. In this scene the equestrian protagonist of Continental’s emblem—the horse derived from the shield of Hannover, the city where the company was established—comes to life in a duel of mascots, in which Bibendum ends up bursting as a result of a strong kick. The text accompanying the illustration is a direct response to the arguments Michelin used in their comparative advertisements published in the German press:

“Seriousness versus defiance. Our policy:
1. Our advertising and publicity work conforms to honest behavior that is common in businesses. We have as a rule to tell the truth and not to lie.
2. In our range of special measures for pneumatic covers we offer our customers an extra benefit in material that corresponds to the difference in price, an extra in duration, safety and comfort that benefits the driver. Long and thorough tests and daily use have shown us that our special measures offer the right result.
3. It is easy for anyone to check the truth of what we claim. We respond to the mathematical juggling of figures and data practiced by the French competition by employing logic: our competitor’s measure of 820 x120 is not comparable with our special measure of 815 x125. The weight, volume, thickness of the cover and the number of layers used in our manufactured product make them better for the end consumer than the competitor’s measurements of 820 x120.”

SINGLED OUT. Two years before the creation of the famous British recruitment poster, Michelin introduced the general public to this inquisitorial character. He is a wealthy man—he does business at the expense of our ignorance and good faith—a tire salesman who, as evidenced by the tire design of his hat, represents the greed of the Dunlop company and their grooved tires.

112. Advertisement in newspaper The Scotsman, June 1, 1915.

MICHELIN AGAINST GREEDINESS.
The battle against Dunlop’s grooved tires is the subject of the advertisements shown here. In the above image, a chart portrays the price increase—between 22 and 38% as explained—which “grooved tires” pass on to the consumer as compared to Michelin’s smooth treads. The advertisement is completed by a scene in which a customer deposits his money inside the top hat—whose cylindrical form is shaped by a stack of Dunlop tires—of a character, which is clearly a representation of the British firm. The accompanying phrase, “He passes the hat for Mammon’s sake, and you pay, pay and pay!”, refers to the incongruity of having to bear an excess share of the manufacturer’s greed.

In the second example, with the excuse of saving in times of war, it is exposed that the price—5% cheaper—and quality of Michelin tires are more attractive for the conscientious consumer than the grooved option offered by so-called “tires Y” [Dunlop].
TOP HAT. In 1913 the Michelin Tire Company of Milltown initiated a campaign against rubber non-skid pneumatic covers, utilizing as a spokesman the character created in Great Britain for this purpose, but with certain adaptations. In this case the top hat was made up of a stack of the most recognizable cover models in the American market—Firestone’s NON SKID design, U.S. Rubber’s Nobby and Chain, Republic’s Staggard, the Zig-Zag model of Lee, etc. The hat refers to a popular English phrase: “to be talking through your hat,” which applies to someone who gives an opinion on a topic without background knowledge or when they argue that something is true when it is not. It is suggested, therefore, that the arguments in defense of tires with non-skid patterns are really covering up for consumers being swindled.

Iconographically, the representation and imperative attitude of this character from 1913 with his arm outstretched and pointing at us in a striking foreshortening, reminds us of two famous military recruiting posters from the Great War, both subsequent to Michelin’s proposal. First, the lesser known British poster from 1914 with a portrait of the Secretary of State for War Lord Kitchener, by Alfred Leete—initially published as a cover for the weekly magazine London Opinion. Secondly, the image of Uncle Sam used in 1917 by James Montgomery Flagg—based on the design of Leete—, first reproduced as the magazine cover for Leslie’s Weekly on July 16, 1916 and subsequently disseminated as a poster with more than four million copies between the years 1917 and 1918.

113. Illustration of an American Pamphlet for Michelin, 1913.
Michelin’s American advertising openly blamed various local companies—including the Russian Prowodnik, in their bid to position themselves in foreign markets—of deceiving the consumer with rubber non-skid models. There were no grey areas and the illustrations that accompanied the smear campaign portrayed, clearly and without any possibility of confusion, several of the best-known tires commercialized in the U.S. market. Surprisingly, this accusatory campaign did not provoke any reactions from the aforementioned companies, apart from certain editorial commentaries in magazines representing the motor sector.

116. Description of the companies and models portrayed by Michelin in their 1913-1914 American campaign against non-skid tires with rubber treads.
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- **Knight Tire & Rubber**
  *Motor Age, January 30, 1913.*

- **BF Goodrich, Safety tread**
  *The Automobile, December 25, 1913.*

- **Republic Rubber, Staggard tread**
  *The Automobile, April 25, 1912.*

- **Firestone Tires, Non-Skid tread**
  *Country Life in America, May 1914.*

- **U.S. Tires, Nobby and Chain treads**
  *The Literary Digest, January 11, 1913.*
SQUEEZING MONEY OUT OF THE CUSTOMER.

The blistering campaign against “sculptured” tires employed the image of the arrogant businessman, eager to pass captive consumers, enslaved by the monopoly of the new technology, through the wringer and squeeze money out of their pockets. The text of the pamphlet shown above specifies that customers are paying an increase of up to 17% for “sculptured” tires, a meaningless expense when Michelin’s “Plain Tread” tires provide the same service and offer better quality.

117. Michelin advertising brochure, 1913-1914.
118. Detail of an illustration for a Michelin advertising brochure, 1913-1914.
ALCHEMIST. The tire manufacturer appears as a stereotypical ruthless entrepreneur, who transforms the customers’ money—the metal derived from coins—into rubber with designs of non-slip covers, resources that could be invested with greater profitability and guaranteed satisfaction in Michelin’s Plain Tread tires.

119. Illustration of an advertising brochure, 1913-1914. 120. Advertising brochure, 1913-1914. 121. Advertising brochure, 1913-1914.
According to Michelin, the non-skid designs of other manufacturers did not respond to a correct technological criterion, and were comparable to possible humorous and laughable variations that the imagination could generate, such as tires with treads that identified one's political orientation, Democratic or Republican—with donkey or elephant-shaped patterns.
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For artists and musicians, patterns in the shape of a painter's palette or forming a pentagram with musical notes. And for wealthy entrepreneurs and architects, tread designs using the dollar symbol as well as set squares and right triangles.

122. A double-page advertisement published in Life magazine, April 11, 1912.
MARGARET AND JACK GO SHOPPING.

The Michelin Tire Company opposed the "sculptured" tires in an exemplary story of sexist content. A couple is shown going shopping in two different establishments. The first scene takes place in a hat shop where the woman is attracted to the style and beauty of a model without paying attention to the price, while the husband looks at her with a gesture of disgust.

The second scene takes place in an automobile spare parts and components store, where the man is interested in the tires X, Y and Z—all with patterned treads—while the woman draws their attention to the smooth tires offered by Bibendum. Faced with the shocking situation where the woman decides which tires to purchase—in a change of roles typical for each gender—the message conveyed is: do not act like a woman—without practical criteria and attracted by appearances—but as a wise man who values the quality, economy and profitability of the items he buys.

123. Mail distribution brochure, folded as a triptych with the backside serving as a postage paid envelope, 1915.
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This page shows two humorous cartoons set in a background scenario of the tire business. The above image shows the "anti-skid Wedding Ring," an engagement ring with a design that refers to that of the non-skid treads, supposedly to avoid "slips"... The image on the left portrays the opposite situation: employees on the inside of a business are glued to the display window, admiring the passage of an attractive woman. Painted on the glass is a claim stating, "Guaranteed 6000 Smiles," a play on words referring to the warranty offered for the tire's duration, estimated at a mileage of 6000 miles.

124. Illustration in the magazine Judge, March 25, 1916.
125. Cover of Judge magazine, May 19, 1917.
Illustration signed by James Montgomery Flagg.
THE PATENT. The above image portrays the side and top views of the new tire cover model on the official patent sheet requested by Jules Hauvette-Michelin, Vice President of the Michelin Tire Co., on July 10 and granted on September 28, 1915.

126. First illustrated page of the two that make up the U.S. patent of Michelin’s Universal Tread, 1915.
THE BIG BANG. Michelin’s “Universal” solution was brought to market early October 1915 through press releases issued from Milltown offices and published as news in various newspapers and specialized magazines in the automotive sector. The above image portrays one of the first—if not the first—Advertisements in the launch campaign.

Michelin gave in and decided to invest in their own non-skid rubber tire model known as Universal Tread, in which the tread blocks formed a letter ‘M’—the initial of the company name. It was repeated vertically to create a pattern that covered the entire tire tread. The advertisement above depicts the Michelin tire acting as a stamp imprinting the initial ‘M’ on the road, in “botinne imprimeuse” fashion. On the right, Bibendum holds a Universal Tread tire transformed into a gigantic megaphone, ideal for properly announcing the qualities of the article.

128. Advertisement in the magazine Motor, February 1917.
129. Detail of an insert in Motor Age magazine, December 27, 1917. Both are unsigned illustrations.
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FANFARE. The Universal Tread tires, initially created to compete in the United States, were widely promoted in different markets. The above advertisement is from a Michelin dealership on the coastal town of Savanna-la-Mar, capital of Westmoreland Parish in the then British colony of Jamaica. The same advertising model was also utilized in American newspapers.

130. Michelin’s advertisement in the Jamaican newspaper *The Gleaner*, March 27, 1918.