

Leonard Lord

Forgotten Hero of the VCC

Martyn Nutland



Leonard Lord alongside famous broadcaster, Richard Dimbleby, in an Edwardian single cylinder, seven-horsepower Austin – no connection, of course, with Sir Herbert Austin's celebrated creation of some years later.

Leonard Lord is best remembered as the dynamic, outspoken, chairman of the Austin Motor Company, founding father of the British Motor Corporation and the man who, in about five minutes flat, 'signed off' on the production of the original Mini. Few would associate him with the veteran car movement.

Born in 1896 and growing up beside his widowed mother on Coventry's Foleshill Road, he would barely have remembered the dawn of the motoring age, and certainly not been in a financial or social position to have had any contact with the 'horseless carriage'.

Yet many years later, in 1946, when Lord was an established captain of industry, he provided the Veteran Car Club of Great Britain with a comfortable and commodious home in central London.

Why is one of the many mysteries in this enigmatic character's life.

The rent-free deal was first revealed in a piece of flowery prose by the club's new President James (Jim) Allday in the *Gazette*: 'I am convinced that dreams one daydreams *can* be made into realities, always provided that one tries hard enough, and now at long last, we have reached reality, and thanks to the