

Book Reviews

***Brick by Brick: The Biography of Leonard Lord - The Man who Really Made the Mini* Published by Authorhouse, Bloomington, IN. USA, October 2012. 330pp, paperback, 210x280mm, UK price £15.04. ISBN 978-1-4772-0318-7. Available through www.martynnutland.com; also available in electronic form**

Leonard Percy Lord (1896-1967), later Lord Lambury, was one of the leaders of the British motor industry for more than thirty years, from his early days with Morris Engines and Wolseley, then as Governing Director of Morris Motors from 1933 to 1936, and most famously, as Managing Director and later Chairman of Austin and subsequently BMC from 1938 to 1961. Lord was an outstanding production engineer who had a hugely beneficial impact both on Morris in the 1930s, and on Austin after 1945, when he reorganised and modernised the factories and production programmes of these two companies. He has, however, been given a rough ride by many later commentators who have often concentrated on what they saw as the negative sides to his personality, and has even to some extent been blamed for the later misfortunes of the BMC and BL companies.

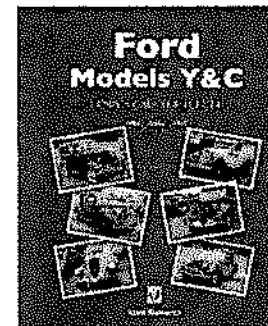
It is most welcome to have a full-scale biography of Lord, and one in which Martyn Nutland furthermore successfully redresses the balance, by examining the evidence afresh. From his description and analysis, Lord emerges as a more complex and nuanced personality than many other writers have described; if as a less colourful one! While the author is clearly a Lord partisan, he does not shy away from discussing opposing views. In the process, he explores, questions, and dismisses quite a few myths. One of these concerns the remark that Lord allegedly made to Miles Thomas when he left Morris in 1936, that he was going to tear the Cowley factory apart, "brick by bloody brick", hence the book's title, if less bloody.

The book provides much additional context, even if the author does occasionally go perhaps further off on tangents than is necessary, but in the process he produces what is often as much of a company, not to say business or industry history, as it is a biography. The bulk of the book deals with Lord's time at Austin and BMC, but there is much interesting material on his earlier years, such as his role in getting Woollard's transfer machine at Morris Engines to work in 1923, and his involvement with the 1930s Shadow Factory scheme. It is particularly welcome that the often overlooked and difficult subject of the troubled industrial relations in the post-war period is well covered. Lord's role in product development similarly merits close attention, from the Morris Eight of 1934, through early post-war Austins, to the Mini. While one may quibble over the assertion contained in the sub-title of the book, clearly Lord made the Mini possible, and arguably had the greater vision for a baby car.

Martyn has read and researched widely, and has made good use of some first-hand personal information; he misses very little, and the book has few errors (although HRH Prince Philip, the Duke of Edinburgh is referred to variously as "His Majesty" and "His Highness"). There are some references to various sources in the text, but footnotes or endnotes giving accurate citations would have been of welcome assistance in a book of this importance. There is a somewhat haphazard and I suspect incomplete bibliography, quoting only a few primary sources. There is an extensive index. The few illustrations are grouped at the end of the book and are slightly disappointing, as the subject figures in only two of them. A more exhaustive photo gallery can be found on the author's website. Martyn writes in a very readable style, with the journalist's flair. He had a great deal of trouble actually getting the book into print and I am delighted that he succeeded; the format is on the basic side, but the book is excellent value.

Anders Ditlev Clausager

***Ford Models Y and C. Henry's Cars for Europe 1932 - 1937* by Sam Roberts. Available only from: www.fordyandcmodelregister.co.uk. ISBN 978-1-845844-44-8. 272 pages, 326 photographs. Price £35 plus £6 UK p & p.**



The Model Y Ford, the first of the small Fords produced at Dagenham, was, for Ford, a ground breaking car and possibly one of the most important models of its time. Sam Roberts is well qualified to write such an overall history as he bought his first Model Y when he was an engineering undergraduate. He has been Chairman of the Model Y and C Register for 14 years and continues as Editor of their excellent Club magazine.

The book starts with a lead-up to the building of the first car and covers the various models including the commercials. In 1934 Ford announced the Model C, which was slightly bigger than the previous model, with a wider engine block which allowed for the capacity to be increased to 1172cc and 10hp by RAC rating. This engine was to remain in production until 1959. The end of production for the model was 1937, and as Harry Edwards says, "the competition from the more roomy big Austins and Morrises was too great, so an early cessation of the marque was agreed."

This is a most interesting book which has been carefully researched here in the UK and in the Ford Archive at Dearborn. Personally, I would have liked to see the 1172cc engine story taken forward to post-war years, with just something said about the various makes other than Ford which have used it so successfully. Please note that though this book has been designed and published by Veloce, it is only available from the Ford Y and C Model Register.

Michael E Ware