



Morris, Triumph and Rolls-Royce, whilst commercials include Vulcan, W&G, Saurer, Peerless, Karrier, Trojan, Garrett (steam), Marshall (steam) as well as Thornycroft, Model T Ford and Bedford.

Motorcycles include a locally-made Teagle, Bradbury, New Hudson, Sun, Radco, P&M as well as BSA, AJS, Excelsior and other well-known makes.

The attraction for me, however, is the glimpse it gives us of life in Cornwall as it was then: the shops, the signwriting on the vans, the costumes of the riders, drivers and by-standers, the state of the roads (mostly unmade) – none of which can now be recaptured. There is a sprinkling of restored vehicles in colour, too.

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Brick by Brick: The biography of the man who *really* made the Mini – Leonard Lord

Author: Martyn Nutland

Publisher: AuthorHouse.

www.authorhouse.co.uk

Price: £15.04. Softback (8.3 by 11in).

300 pages with 10 b&w illustrations

ISBN: 978-1477203187

On the shelves of the biggest motoring libraries around the world there exist many gaps in the biography sections for the thousands of fascinating characters who make up motoring history, quietly waiting for an obsessive enthusiast to come along and champion their cause.

Martyn Nutland has spent the last two decades researching Leonard Lord, the much maligned Austin and Morris executive who has become an easy target for those wishing to ascribe blame for the failings of BMC and the ruinous effect the death throes of that company had on the reputation of British industry as a whole.

Nutland is a lifelong fan of the products of Longbridge and Cowley, and makes no attempt to hide his bias towards the products and their creators. His attempt to set the record straight with regard to his subject's achievements and flaws is admirable, and Lord emerges from the book a much more sympathetic character than one might expect: a gruff, likeable but intensely driven man whose determination and singlemindedness would become his undoing.

The problem with Lord as a subject for biography becomes clear immediately. He was an incredibly private man who turned his back on his childhood and, as the author puts it, 'covered his tracks' after all his business dealings. This lack of available firsthand material perhaps explains the tangential nature of the book, which feels less of a biography and more a potted history of the entire British motor industry. Nutland takes us from the minutiae of the Coventry weaving industry to the inner workings of the MG factory race team with hardly a moment to catch breath. Lord can occasionally be glimpsed through this densely woven web of ephemeral information, jumping out through the unwieldy prose here and there for a well-timed gruff aphorism or some mild industrial intrigue.

One feels that a volume half this length could satisfactorily cover all the salient points with room to spare, and with some heavy pruning (and a good proof reader) *Brick by Brick* could be an interesting read. But it would not change the fact that Lord's life and career, like most of the cars he was involved with, were comparatively unremarkable.

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