

BOOK REVIEW

Brick by Brick

The Biography of Leonard Lord, the man who really made the Mini.
Martyn Nutland, Authorhouse 2012.

This is a 328 page A4 soft cover publication using very wide text lines and is well set out. From humble origins, we find a young man with great energy and industry, educating himself and others during very long days. From 12 till 14 he studied to the dawn. In adolescence it was 6am to 6.30pm at Courtaulds textile mill, with a night class to teach after that and more of his own studies into the early hours. An extremely gifted draughtsman with a brilliance of intelligence which he used to great effect in the motor manufacturing industry. He was a skilled designer of machine tools. On his arrival at Hotchkiss (soon to be Morris Engines), he found the most advanced transfer machines in the world languishing. With his knowledge and inspiration he soon got them to work productively

Morris's Wolseley plant soon experienced his ability and then he saved Morris from financial ruin by pushing through the Morris Eight in very short order. This car saved the company as it was so advanced, popular and well made. William Morris was notoriously hard on his best staff, which had to put up with him interfering in their decisions and authority. Lord moved on to Austin where he found a poorly performing but excellent factory which needed exactly the skills he brought. The shadow factory scheme for war production was one he fought for and Austin under his command produced more war materiel than any other organisation.

The story continues through to BMC and BLMC. Well worth a read!

Alan Gulleford, Kaikoura 2020