

Is there Lead in your Morris? – Yes, lots of it!

The following excerpts are from “Making Cars, A history of car making at Cowley . . . by the people who make the cars” published by the Television History Workshop in 1985.

‘We were working a few yards away from the lead and right close into the vicinity of the compressed air hammers, and the noise from those you couldn’t hear yourself speak. The lead was in the air . . . it was really filthy . . . The men were given free milk . . . they were forced to attend the hospital unit at certain times in rotation every day . . . for checks on their lead intake. . . All the weld spots were covered with lead: lead-filling . . . the chaps doing that were absolutely covered in lead from head to foot . . . we used it not in ounces or pounds, but in hundredweights.’
Les Gurl, Morris Motors 1935-81

‘I was there all those years and I never had no lead poisoning but lots of people, you would gradually see them turning pale there.’
Bill Honour, Pressed Steel 1926-69

‘The Morris 8 line was a deadly affair actually because you were working in all the lead dust – you talk about lead in petrol – you was eating the damn stuff in those days. And one chappie on a particular line, the frontal bone in his forehead had just rotted away, and they reckoned it was caused through lead. Arising from that, we did demand from the management that we had to have a blood test on everybody. I think about 93 per cent of the men on the Morris 8 line were susceptible to lead poisoning of some form or the other.’
Norman Brown, Pressed Steel, Radiators 1935-47

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