

Morris through the Years

After the upgrades to the Morris factory by Leonard Lord in 1934, Cowley had five parallel tracks in the assembly area. They were fed by twelve miles of conveyors, bringing in parts made on the premises and by suppliers (122 of whom were acquired by Morris in the 1920s and 1930s). *Morris was very astute in many ways, and his suppliers had to produce large quantities at prices he demanded. No wonder so many ended up being bought out by him. Not only could they then concentrate only on his supply, which could be increased in many cases, but he denied his competitors access to those components as well.*

If we look at Daimler in 1913, their reputation for quality hand-built cars was actually a necessity. The castings were not regular and so needed extensive fettling before use. The assembled engine had to be partially dismantled before it could be fitted into the frame. Even the gearbox had to be ratchet drilled by hand in situ. By comparison, Morris was assembling quality parts made to fit together reliably due to dies, templates and measuring tools used at manufacture.

As an aside, there was also later on in 1925, the Willys-Overland Model 91 which they named the Overland 13.9, which had all Morris running gear. That's a big step for Morris, from being a customer to becoming a supplier. 1925 was also the year that Morris purchased Léon Bollée in Le Mans in an attempt to sell his cars to the French. The Morris Léon Bollée lasted only until 1931 when he sold up having made a loss on his private investment. As a retired Master Printer, my more personal interest in 1925 with Morris was the formation of The Morris Oxford Press Ltd, which was established at Cowley as a subsidiary of Morris Motors Ltd to print sales and service literature and the 'Morris Owner' magazine. Our Handbooks, Workshop Manuals and Sales Brochures came from here as well. It was renamed The Nuffield Press in 1942