



Coventry's Motorcar Heritage

Damien Kimberley

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Coventry, home of the cycle industry, was also to become the birthplace of the motor industry when the Daimler Company became the first in Britain to mass produce cars in the late 1890s. Spearheaded by H J Lawson, Coventry soon became a hub of motoring activity, and by the early 1900s was teaming with small and large companies, testing cars, motor-bicycles and tricycles around the local streets and surrounding country lanes. Many of these companies had previously been established as cycle manufacturers, yet introduced engines to their cycle frames in various forms, as well as producing safer three- and four-wheeled experimental machines. Other companies were established solely as motor manufacturers, many were short-lived, but others would survive and prosper. This new-found industry soon attracted a new type of worker to Coventry, specialised in mechanical engineering. These men and their families came from all parts of the UK and beyond, and made new lives for themselves in the city. Coventry has been home to well in excess of 100 independent motor manufacturers, but in recent years the city has suffered greatly with the loss of huge companies like Jaguar and Peugeot. The legacy of many of these historic cars can, however, still be enjoyed through museums and private collections. This outstanding volume is illustrated with 200 archive photographs and ephemera from the collection held at Coventry Transport Museum, and is a valuable record of the motor companies and their machines, as well as the individuals who both founded and worked for these manufacturers.

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