

A Good Read

The David Brown Tractor Story Part One 1936–1948

by Stuart Gibbard

Published by Old Pond Publishing, 104 Valley Rd, Ipswich IPI 4PA. www.oldpond.com

This may seem an unusual book to review for AM magazine, but it is significant for those of us who own so-called 'Feltham' Aston Martins. (Yes, I already know they are somewhat agricultural, so a David Brown tractor book does have a certain resonance for us.) I found this book a wonderful read, with lots of information to satisfy the historians amongst us who want to know more about the David Brown Family.

The book starts with how the David Brown business came into being and the significant leaps it made along the way in engineering terms. Did you know for instance that David Brown made a car before they owned Aston Martin and Lagonda? They entered into an agreement to make the 'Lucas Valveless Car' around 1901 and made some 800 until production ended in 1915. So those of you who thought it all started with our Lionel, think again.

Now, I know all you southerners like to think of David Brown Astons being manufactured in the refined area of Feltham.

Sorry, lads, they were made 'up north', where tha's reet proper engineering, not nancy boy southern stuff.

The book contains the best photos I have ever seen of Meltham Mills and Park Works in their heyday.

I do, however, take issue with the author over the assembly of 'Feltham Astons'. He states that the engine and chassis were manufactured at Farsley Road in Leeds and that gearboxes were manufactured at Park Works, but then makes the assumption that they were assembled at Feltham, whereas my sources tell me that they were assembled at Meltham Mills, near Huddersfield.

I shall, however, readily forgive any transgression because this is the most significant book on David Browns I have read so far and, yes, this is only Volume 1 which takes us to 1948: I can't wait for Volume 2, which will be published next year. The cost is a snip at £24.95. **Q Paul Hindle (aka 'The Cad')**



On the Road: Driving Adventures, Pleasures and Discoveries

by Peter Schindler

Published by On the Road Editions Ltd, 11D London Court, 41 Conduit Road, Hong Kong, at £16.99

ISBN 988-98256-1-9 (192 pages, exciting pictures on almost every page: most in colour)

As one who has driven thousands of miles, year by year, over every sort of road and terrain, the thought of reading about someone else's driving experiences did not thrill me. But I was wrong to delay the experience because I enjoyed this book from cover to cover. As a motoring book it must be unique: not a motoring historical note, specification nor detailed description of some exotic car; at best, you get to know on which side is the steering wheel.

Peter Schindler has experiences as a racing driver, but we get none of this. Though it must be recorded that much of the driving was in cars with good performance, it is not always so and we get to hear of his very first car, acquired the very moment he was 18 and was able to drive. It was a well-used green Renault 5GL called 'Kermit'; what else? Living in Austria and his birthday being in February, there was a lot of snow, so this car

visited many a ditch as Peter gained experience. His method of extracting the car on one occasion was so graphic that I had to stop reading in order to recover my composure. The skills gained in those early days gave him a love for driving on snow and he tells of further, more controlled, experiences.

We get to experience journeys all over Europe, the USA, Gullup, New Mexico (of Route 66 fame) to Flagstaff and some off-road driving in Arizona; and a high speed run, starting in Austria, early in the morning, darkness arriving in Calais at 4.30pm, continuing two days later through England up to Scotland and passing along roads that I have often driven but never noticed. I will be sure to look now.

His account of a journey from Barcelona to Andorra and back in a DB7Vantage – finished in Rothsay red with white interior, like "a strawberry cheesecake: heavy on the strawberry, light on the white cream" – keeps you involved throughout the drive. Within this story is a picture from the AMH Trust collection of DP216/1 before it became the 'Bond Car'.

Peter also describes his first journey with the lady who was to become his wife: 'gripping' one might say, as she spent a good part of the journey gripping his shoulder in apprehension as he undertook some overtaking manoeuvres on narrow roads. We have all been there, I am sure.

The pictures well illustrate elements of the journeys – roads sweeping across open country, along coast roads, curving round cliffs, good days, stormy days, dramatic vistas. Roads we would all like to experience. As one who now spends much of his time reading through rather dry archival material, this book was quite refreshing. **Q Neil F Murray**

Available in good UK bookshops from 1 November 2005 and direct from the publisher via www.ontberoadeditions.com at £18.99 (signed)

