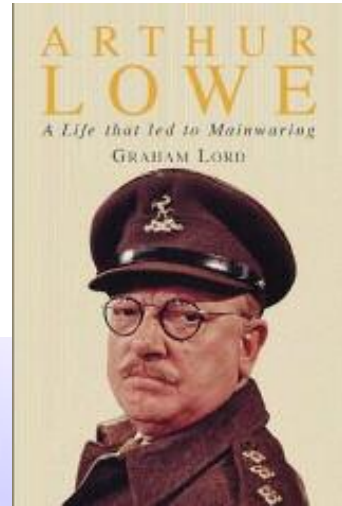




Walmington-on-Line book reviews

Arthur Lowe by **Graham Lord**

It cannot be easy to research the life of a relatively undocumented, if prolific, actor like Arthur Lowe. Lowe's life story has been written before by his son Stephen but in the form of a personal memoir rather than a full biography. Graham Lord's book is a true biography charting Lowe's life from birth in the Derbyshire village of Hayfield to his death in a dressing room at Birmingham's Alexandra Theatre.



For those who have read Stephen Lowe's book the outline of Arthur's life will be familiar – his humble origins, serving in the army before and during WW2, his first steps in repertory, meeting and marrying Joan Cooper, Coronation Street, film roles, Dad's Army, failing health and an early death. However this book fills in many details less well known: personal accounts of his time in the army, the enigma of his relationship with Joan, his obsession with work and strident political views all receive in depth treatment.

It is probably true to say that the true life of Arthur Lowe will never be known. Lord quotes many friends and contemporaries who say that Lowe was extremely shy and difficult to get close to. This book suffers a little in this respect. The lack of primary sources available twenty years after Lowe's death means that Lord is forced to quote at length from existing commentary. The early chapters are littered with forward references to Dad's Army, which lead to the impression that the first half of Lowe's career was merely a prelude to the series that was to make him a household name.

The book can be criticised for lacking any form of bibliography or footnoting of its sources. Nevertheless Lord's meticulous research and careful analysis ensures that this will probably remain the definitive work on the life of Arthur Lowe and as such is highly recommended.

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Arthur Lowe by Graham Lord can be purchased at [Amazon](#)