

BMC-Leyland Heritage Group

Re-Union & Luncheon - Oct 25

I attended this event at Ryde-Eastwood Leagues Club and travelled there by Morris Minor of course. Members are encouraged to bring along a car with an association to BMC/Leyland. This was easy for me as my Low-Light was a CKD assembled at the Zetland plant.

It was a rainy sort of day, so only about 11 old cars were on show in the covered car park of the club. The products ranged across Morris 1500 OHC, Austin Kimberley, P-76, and Vanden Plas Princess, Morris Marina, Austin Freeway and others - including one Morris Minor.

Our MC for the event was motoring guru Will Hagon. He worked at BMC in the PR department. He has a story about just about anything car-related that you put in front of him. So, of course, Will kept us entertained with endless stories. The lunch was also excellent.

One regular event at this luncheon is to auction some car memorabilia and sometimes BMC/Leyland factory memorabilia. This year it included a number of model cars from Kay De Luca's collection.



The 'Rara Avis' Trophy ('rare bird'), awarded to the rarest car attending - won by John in 2019



The only Minor to attend, John's blue low-light is pictured next to an interesting green Marina. The Marina's engine? It was sourced from a Rover 75, turned 90 degrees from east-west to north-south; something quite different.



There are still some members attending that worked between 1955 and 1974 at the Zetland plant. Roger Foy spoke about his days there in 'Experimental'. Part of their brief was to solve problems with the product and alter Production accordingly. Roger also drives an Austin Freeway (what loyalty!).

The *Rara Avis* trophy (given to the rarest car at the show) was awarded this year

to the only Austin Kimberley in attendance. It is 50 years since the launch of the Tasman/ Kimberley range, so was very appropriate, the Kimberley being the first car in the world to have an East/West 6 cylinder engine (so they say). The trophy is created from car parts, so therefore is unusual and heavy.

There was a good story told about how any 'foreign orders' were made, they had to be up to a high standard before they were allowed to be taken home.

The only down side for me was a drive home in the rain with no wipers - now fixed after finding a wire had disconnected from the switch, duly tested on a rainy drive to Cataract Dam the following Sunday.

John Bowmer



Ray Selby

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