‘Factor Us In’ local motor industry exhibition opens at the British Motor Museum

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Kevin Timms, Chairperson of the BMIHT.

Celebrating the local West Midlands motor industry, the new ‘Factor Us In’ exhibition at the British Motor Museum has just opened, and

will run until summer 2022…

This new exhibition from the British Motor Museum ‘Factor Us In’ opened on 22 July and is the culmination of a two year-project to uncover the fascinating stories behind the motor industry and of the people who worked and lived around it. In a year where the sense of community is more important than ever, the Museum wants to encourage local people to engage with the history on their doorstep, the history of an industry that has dominated the West Midlands for more than a century.

‘Factor Us In’ puts the spotlight firmly on how the motor industry in the West Midlands affected people, the local landscape and surrounding businesses. The exhibition looks at the societal impact of the factories, the highs and lows of their production, as well as everyday life and reflect on the legacies they left behind.

The exhibition primarily focuses on recollections from the communities of Canley in Coventry, Longbridge in Birmingham and Lode Lane, Solihull. It explores the community response to key moments across the industry including manufacturing booms, strike actions, the subsequent loss of industry and recent efforts for redevelopment and diversification in employment.

Above: Contributors at 'Factor Us In'.

Seen in the photograph above are: Alan Woodier (left foreground, wearing a cap) – Contributor/ Carolyn McLaughlin- Contributor/ John Batchelor – Contributor/ Tom Caren – Contributor and BMM Staff member/ Giovanni Esposito – contributor.

Next table – BMM Staff Catherine Griffin – Curator/ Mark Bradbury – Archive Volunteer/ David Bellamy – Exhibitions Officer/ Jim Ellison – Costumed Explainer / Claire Broader – Costumed Explainer – alias Ray & Shirley

Below are short biographies of the four contributors who attended the press launch:

John Batchelor – worked at the former Standard-Triumph factory at Canley in the 1980s

after its closure, and then transferred to Longbridge. He runs LinkedIn groups for former Rover employees.

Alan Woodier – was a third generation Standard-Triumph apprentice, starting at Canley in 1968. He excelled and won apprentice of the year in 1969. He worked on trim, and still makes motorbike seats to this day.

Spoz (Giovanni Esposito) – is an award winning performance poet, singer / songwriter, film maker, playwright and is the poet-in-residence at Birmingham City FC. He worked at Longbridge on the track and many of his poems reflect on the end of production at Longbridge.

Carolyn McLaughlin's dad worked at Solihull, going to evening classes at night to transfer from production to engineering. Carolyn grew up with trips to the factory for children's parties and special tours, days out at panto put on by the workers and helping her dad with the horticultural show.

How the exhibition works...

'Factor Us In' uses a combination of the Museum's rich collections of archival material, artefacts and oral history videos and recordings to illustrate those themes. Its style is very much of overheard conversations, celebrating the people that helped make the factory communities what they are today. The exhibition will evolve continually throughout its run and so the Museum is very keen to engage with more people to incorporate their own recollections during its lifetime, unlocking more stories of motor car communities.

The exhibition will run from 22 July 2021 until summer 2022. Alongside the physical temporary exhibition, the Museum will also have an online counterpart. 'Factor Us In' has in part been made possible by generous funding of Arts Council England.

The exhibition is included as part of a normal Museum entry. Museum entry is £14.50 for adults, £12.50 for concessions, £9 for children (5-16 years) and under 5s are FREE. There is

also the option to Gift Aid or donate your entry fee and get an Annual Pass in return, at no extra cost.

To find out more information about the exhibition please visit the website at www.britishmotormuseum.co.uk/factor-us-in

If you have a factory community story that you would like to share, or perhaps some artefacts you would like to loan for display then please email museum@britishmotormuseum.co.uk

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