



Press release
28 March 2013

MINI plant celebrates 100 years of automotive production in Oxford.

British Transport Secretary opens centenary exhibition in the new Visitor Centre at MINI Plant Oxford – Recognition of the production facility’s significance and multi-million-pound investment – Final stop on the MINI Europe Tour.

Munich/Oxford. MINI Plant Oxford is celebrating 100 years of production. And to mark the occasion, a centenary exhibition was opened at the plant’s new Visitor Centre on 28 March 2013 by Britain’s Transport Secretary Patrick McLoughlin and Member of the Board of Management at BMW Harald Krüger. 100 years ago to the day, the plant’s first car – a “Bullnose” Morris Oxford – was built just a stone’s throw away from where the current MINI production facility stands.

Back in 1913 weekly production stood at 20 vehicles, but over the years that followed the factory’s output was to grow rapidly. To date, the plant has produced over 11.65 million cars bearing the badges of 14 different brands. Some 500,000 people have worked here over the years, the workforce peaking at 28,000 in the early 1960s. Today, Plant Oxford employs 3,700 associates and builds up to 900 MINI cars every day. More than 2.25 million MINIs have rolled off the assembly line since production began.

This historic occasion also elicited congratulations and best wishes from arguably England’s most famous address: 10 Downing Street. “The substantial contribution which the Oxford plant has made to the British economy over the last 100 years is something all involved should be proud of,” said Prime Minister David Cameron. “MINI’s worldwide success has gone hand-in-hand with a rejuvenation of the production facility. Indeed, the state-of-the-art production equipment here provides an excellent example of how intelligent investment and British manufacturing can come together to great effect.”

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A helping hand from a British philanthropist.

It was the plant’s founder William Morris, later Lord Nuffield, who got the ball rolling. Morris was one of the country’s most respected philanthropists



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– in a sense, the Bill Gates of his time. In total he gave away around £11 billion (€13 billion) in today's money. Other legacies of his work include three wings of the University of Oxford that bear his assumed title and the iron lungs he manufactured and subsequently donated to local hospitals.

These ventilators did not represent the factory's only foray into unfamiliar territory. Far from it: Tiger Moth aircraft, ambulances and parachutes were all manufactured here at various times. However, its main business was always automotive production, and a large number of important models have rolled off the assembly line in Oxford over the course of its history – cars such as the Morris Minor, Morris Marina and Austin Maestro, as well as the classic Mini, of course.

Today, the Oxford plant is home to the core of MINI production. The MINI Hatchback, Convertible, Clubman, Clubvan, Roadster and Coupé are all built here. Plus, major new investment is making its presence felt, funding the installation of around 1,000 new robots in a new bodyshop and other existing areas of the plant. This accounts for the lion's share of the £750 million investment programme that came on stream last year with the aim of preparing the production facility for the next generation of MINI models.

A significant contributor to the future of British industry.

The prospects for the future also formed a major part of the address by Transport Secretary Patrick McLoughlin: "The automotive sector has a key role to play in the government's strategy of creating growth and jobs through the export of products 'Made in Britain' to markets around the world. And so, as well as offering us a moment to indulge in a little nostalgia for the achievements of the past, these celebrations also represent a great opportunity to highlight the immense contribution of this production facility to the future of British industry."

His words reflect a commitment to extending a long and successful tradition which has already earned the United Kingdom several billions of pounds in export earnings. In the mid-1930s Morris products made up almost 30 per cent of all British exports. And the Oxford plant continues to



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generate impressive export figures to this day, having shipped no fewer than 1.7 million MINI cars to over 100 countries since 2001.

Member of the Board of Management of BMW Harald Krüger added his voice to the celebrations: "We have ambitious plans for growth and are currently preparing for the launch of the next-generation MINI family. The BMW Group will expand the MINI range from seven models at present to 10 in 2014. Our sales expectations for the medium term are considerably above MINI's current level of 300,000 cars per year worldwide."

Among the special guests attending the opening of the exhibition was former employee Eric Lord, who celebrated his 93rd birthday the same day. Eric joined the factory in 1940 at the age of 20 and remained a loyal servant of the plant until his retirement in 1979. He therefore made an active contribution to 20 years of MINI history from the founding of the brand in 1959.

MINI Europe Tour recalls the continent's industrial history.

The celebrations in Oxford followed the final chapter in another automotive journey: the MINI Europe Tour. It was fitting that Oxford – the home of the brand past and present – would be the final destination of a transcontinental voyage that ran from 13 – 27 March. However, the Tour's main goal was to bring back to mind the cross-border nature of Mini production. Up to the early 1990s, the classic Mini and its off-shoots were also assembled in other locations from CKD (Completely Knocked Down) sets. The MINI Europe Tour took in all eight of the brand's former assembly facilities, covering a total of 10,500 kilometres (over 6,500 miles) in the process; the convoy stopped by in Novo Mesto (Slovenia), the Italian city of Milan, the former production plant in Malta, the Portuguese town of Vendas Novas, Pamplona in Spain, Seneffe in Belgium, Amersfoort in Holland and the Irish capital Dublin. Only three of these eight locations are still home to car production today. But all of them count the Mini as an important part of their local industrial history, one that roared back into the public consciousness as the MINI Europe Tour rolled into town.



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A classic Mini built at the Longbridge plant led the convoy on the final leg of its journey from Longbridge to Oxford. Longbridge produced the classic Mini up to 1999 and can itself look back on decades of history, having produced its first cars back in 1905.

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The BMW Group

The BMW Group is the leading premium manufacturer of automobiles and motorcycles in the world with its BMW, MINI and Rolls-Royce brands. As a global company, the BMW Group operates 28 production and assembly facilities in 13 countries and has a global sales network in more than 140 countries.

In 2012, the BMW Group sold about 1.85 million cars and more than 117,000 motorcycles worldwide. The profit before tax for the financial year 2012 was euro 7.82 billion on revenues amounting to euro 76.85 billion. At 31 December 2012, the BMW Group had a workforce of 105,876 employees.

The success of the BMW Group has always been built on long-term thinking and responsible action. The company has therefore established ecological and social sustainability throughout the value chain, comprehensive product responsibility and a clear commitment to conserving resources as an integral part of its strategy. As a result of its efforts, the BMW Group has been ranked industry leader in the Dow Jones Sustainability Indexes for the last eight years.

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