



AMOC/Japan Autumn 2013 Meeting Report

AMOC/Japan marked Aston Martin Lagonda's centenary with a May meeting in Yokohama that included an exhibition of pre- and post-war cars in Yokohama's historic Yamashita Park in conjunction with Aston Martin Asia Pacific (AMAP). Yet the main event in this celebratory year took place during the autumn meeting – on November 16 at the Fuji Speedway.

This date coincided with the widely read *Autocar Japan* magazine's popular Car Festival, and the day started under clear skies with about 60 cars in the speedway paddock. From AMOC/Japan, this fleet included prewar Aston Martins, DB-series cars, V8-series cars, and more – more than two dozen cars in all. It was an impressive display of motorsport power.

Once the preliminaries were over, it was out onto the track, with the newest Aston Martin setting the pace and other cars following in order of vintage. Aston Martins dominated the track for fully half an hour, and drivers found it a very satisfying run. When the track run, the show-off exhibition, and other outdoor events were done, the AMOC/Japan people adjourned to the Laforet Yamanakako spa and resort hotel a short drive away on the shores of Lake Yamanaka for a dinner party. Children included, about fourscore AMOC/Japan members, family, and friends took part in the dinner.

Club representative Yasuhiko Shimazaki opened the evening with short welcoming remarks and introduced the new members (Kazuhiro Suzuki and his wife, Yukinobu Saito, and Akihiko Matsunaga). Following him to the podium were AMAP's Shoichi Terashima and Hiromi Sakamoto, Les Goble from AML headquarters in the UK, and Kevin Wall, who had also joined the May meeting on behalf of the Australian dealership. Formalities completed, Sunji Sako proposed the toast and people got down to the serious business at hand.

About halfway through the meal, Shimazaki asked Gyoten Kuwabara and Kunisuke Sadakata to MC the auction and other awarding of the vast array of luxury and novelty goods from AMOC headquarters,

supporting firms, Club members, and other friends. It was a most impressive performance involving everyone in the gaiety. Among the many items awarded were:

What	Courtesy of
Apparel	Official supporter British Luxury Brand Group (BLBG)
Model cars	Spark Model
Clothing and other goods	Atlantic Cars
A radio-controlled miniature 007 Bond Car	Member and regular contributor Masao Sakai
British sparkling wines	Member Yukinobu Saito
Several Autoglym sets	Toru Sakuma, a skilled mechanic who doctors a number of members' cars
Complimentary gift certificate for a one-night stay for two	The hotel
Teddy bears for the kids	Member Yasuhiko Shimazaki

While most of these fine products were awarded as prizes to people who won drawings, the Bond car, the magnum bottles of bubbly, and a number of other ooh-and-awe items were auctioned off in a flurry of enthusiastic bidding, raising some JPY100,000, which was then donated to a special fund established by the Tokyo Metropolitan Government to support the people of Oshima as they struggle to rebuild after October's devastating typhoon.

When it was finally time to vacate the dining room and let the hotel staff clean up, a few people started off for home or bed, but the vast majority adjourned to the karaoke room or to the bar to continue the festivities. The next morning, there was a chill in the Fuji foothills and there a light frost on the cars in the parking lot. Yet this was gone by the time everyone finished breakfast and set off for home. First to the road around Lake Yamanaka and then to the highway, with Mt. Fuji resplendent in the distance.

While AMOC/Japan had two meetings with AMAP in this centenary year, it will revert to its regular schedule next year. Everyone cooperating and working together in the Aston spirit, we look forward to – and wish our friends worldwide – another good year of Happy Motoring in 2014.

(November 30, 2013)