



# The "Priceless" Blur

April 1986

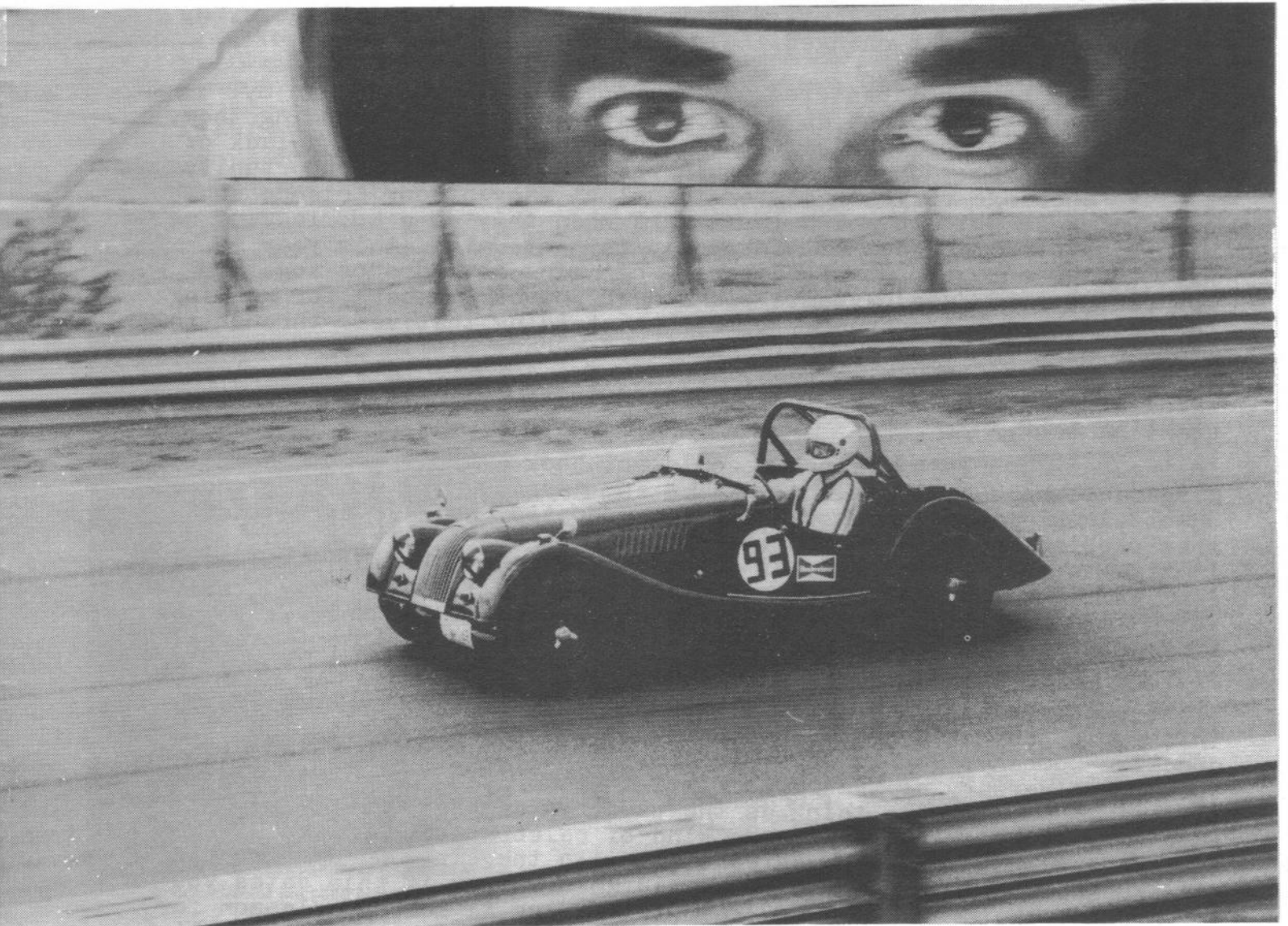


PHOTO BY STEVE BEER

We hope a good calender of events has been set up for you for this summer with a couple of changes to stop us getting too set in our ways, starting with a weekend away, and a change of venue for the August Picnic, IF I can pin my Son Steve down we shall also include the Vintage Racing calender as well as the East Coast US Morgan club events.

The biggest problem arises from setting up the Meets well in time to get to print or bookings needed only to find they clash with other clubs dates, sorry but it cant be helped, for the past 2 years our Meets have clashed with the European Sports Car Picnic, this year Watkins Glen Vintage Weekend clashes with our Niagara, my only defense is THEY changed their date not us.

DUES: We have not pestered any of you for any dues though my thanks to those who sent anyway or called to ask about sending them, Two reasons brought our decision for a change, we conceded a lack of Blurbs in '85 so thought this would present the perfect opportunity to make a change of year end for the club; Many of our friends south of our border join the club in Niagara when they come up, leaving us with 2 sets of records for membership payment dates, this year we will change our year to September 1. bringing both groups together for remainder of dues payments plus thank you our members for keeping the faith during our problem times by extending that year through to Sept 86 at which time we shall hit you for your \$15.00 on top of your Niagara registration fees. New Members joining this year plus those who sent in dues will be listed as fully paid up for the year starting Sept.

In the past couple of years we could not book any parking lots in Niagara to hold a Slolom or Gymkhana as insurance was required and un-obtainable as our club was not incorporated, we have now settled that problem and the club is incorporated as a recreation club, just in time to face the problem of souring rates in all liability insurance, Jeez you cant win can ya, we struggle through all the do-it-yourself forms get it accepted and the next problem arises, no sweat, we now shop around to find if we can get the insurance if needed for any events, knowing one problem has been iliminated.

Last but certainly not least I have Al Sands chasing up confirmation info as to just when he lived at a specified address and worked at a specific Company, for we have pinned it down to either 1987 or 88 being the 25 Anniversary of the first listing of Morgan Owners in Toronto if 87 is correct as we think, as the paper is dated 1962 then plans should be made for at least some kind of celebration, dont you agree? there are 3 known members listed still with the club, Al Sands, Peter McCowan and recently dropped out David Ross, sorry if this dates you fellers but thats what the records state. Plus Al learns a lesson for useing company paper and listing his address on the bottom of the list.

# Nostalgia

by PHILIP SINGERMAN

## A CHANCE MEETING WITH AN OLD LOVE DRIVES THE AUTHOR TO DISTRACTION

It was a flawless morning in late spring. I was driving north along Highway A1A, the coast road, not far from Daytona Beach, Fla., when the low-slung roadster, traveling very fast, passed me from the opposite direction. It was a yellow Morgan, frog-eyed and sassy, the first one I had seen on the road in years. I pulled over, got out of my car and sat down on a sand dune, awash in a sea of memories nearly 20 years old.

I had owned a Morgan once, a red one, a 4/4 Competition, built in 1965. It had chrome wire wheels and a thick leather "bonnet strap" pulled tight across its long, louvered hood. Like every Morgan, it was idiosyncratic and ornery—a conveyance that demanded accommodation. You might one day leave it, wild, unpre-

dictable lover that it could be, but you would never stop loving it. Morgans have been called the first and last of the real sports cars, and in terms of bouncing, jouncing and high-spirited performance the title is accurate. The only air conditioning is the wind in your face, the only cruise control a powerful right foot.

The wooden body frame of my Morgan was attached to a steel chassis. The floorboards were really *boards*. You could peek through the spokes of the spare tire, which was set in a round opening in the slanting rear deck, and see honest-to-goodness English ash. Each spring, for as long as I owned that car, I would crawl underneath, poke for dry rot with an ice pick and then brush on wood preservative wherever I could reach. The firmness of the black leather seat cushions could be varied by inflating or deflating their rubber bladders. The front suspension, designed in 1909 by H.F.S. Morgan himself, was lubricated by a shot of oil, which one could release by briefly stepping on a button before setting out for a ride.

Whether you stepped on the button or not, my Morgan had a certain speed at which a mysterious vibration occurred. At precisely 48 mph the steering wheel transformed itself into a jackhammer, while the tires did an independent flamenco dance on the pavement and the front fenders rattled like a tin roof in a hailstorm. At 51 mph the car rode as smooth as could be. I rebuilt the front end twice and succeeded in adjusting the parameters of the seizure to 46 and 49 mph, but I was never able to get rid of it.

When it rained, water dripped under the windshield and under the doors. The windows, or side curtains, as they were called, were removable. But even when fastened in place, they flapped like the wings of a crazed goose. The gearshift knob was beside the driver's right hand, as one might expect, but the lever bent at a right angle and disappeared under the dashboard where it dropped down into the transmission. This made shifting the car a push-pull operation much like playing shuffleboard.

But don't get me wrong. Discomfort

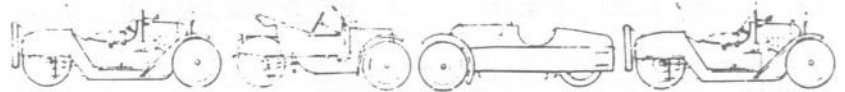


Wooden frames are piled high at the factory.

and weirdness aside, my Morgan was a dream. It was lithe and quick. The faster it went, the better it hugged the road until 46 mph. Its Weber carburetor hissed like an angry python. Its snarling exhaust set my body aquiver from toe to throat. On a

moonlit night, with the top and windows tucked behind the seats and the pavement rushing by at 100 mph inches from my elbow, I felt more at one with a machine than at any other time in my life.

I bought my Morgan in 1966 for \$2,300 from a young couple in New York City. They had just had a baby and needed a vehicle with more room. Both of them cried when they handed me the keys. I was living on eastern Long Island in those days, and as I drove the car home on a broiling summer afternoon on the jammed-up Long Island Expressway, a middle-aged woman in the next lane, riding in a chauffeur-driven Rolls-Royce, handed me a chicken-salad sandwich and an ice-cold Coke. "Thanks," I shouted. "How about a ride?" she yelled. I said fine, and as neither the Rolls nor the Morgan was moving, she walked over and climbed in beside me. I followed the Rolls to her home in the Hamptons, which was only slightly smaller than the American Muse-



um of Natural History. "Young man," she said, "I haven't had this much fun since I flew a crop duster on my grandfather's farm."

My Morgan was that kind of car. It seemed to do something to people, make them act crazy, throw caution to the wind and have a little fun. Two weeks later I was doing about 75 in a 40-mph zone. I came around a corner, and there was a cop, leaning against the fender of his cruiser. He had me cold. I didn't even bother to hit the brake. Then, out of the corner of my eye, I saw him smile at me and wave. He never moved.

Once I missed the turn for the public beach in Southampton. I turned around in the driveway of an oceanfront estate and a man came running toward me, waving wildly. I thought I was going to be arrested for trespassing. Estate owners had little patience with the longhairs, or "freaks," as we were called then. The next thing you know I was driving this man to town for cigarettes and hot-dog rolls, and then I spent three days cavorting with him and his friends.

**THE TIDEWATER INN**

Easton Maryland, 21601  
(301) 822-1300  
15 minutes from Meet Headquarters  
120 rooms  
\$66 double, \$48 single  
Highly recommended.

**THE INN AT PERRY CABIN**

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\$49 single, \$53 double  
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Recommended

SPECIAL! For those registering before Friday the excellent rate of \$50 per night, at this elegant inn. Book now to be sure. This attractive, colonial style inn with restaurant, lounge and swimming pool is a most attractive place, and may very well become our "second headquarters" for MOG XVI.

This exceptionally beautiful historic inn has been meticulously restored and offers three elegant dining rooms with a spectacular view of the Miles River. Complimentary bicycles provided. Exceptionally beautiful, relaxed and gracious setting, a dream spot for a honeymoon (1st or 2nd!)

A "country inn" of considerable charm, located along the main street of St Michaels, an outstanding "bed and breakfast" inn with several beautiful dining rooms sharing an excellent kitchen. The rooms are not quite as spectacular as those above, but are clean and pleasant. You'd be "in town" at this one, but that means the shops and marina and sea food restaurants are a short walk away.

A "small Dulles Marriott," clean, modern, quite attractive, with a pool and restaurant and very attractive grounds, much in the style of the Marriott. This is on the main route into Easton, and so lacks the "water view," but the rates are moderate and would be an excellent choice for the family with kids and a budget. Near fast-food row, movies, supermarkets

A true motel, not a country inn. Clean, good service, but lacking the charm of the "water view" places. On the main road into St Michaels. For the budget minded who do not demand country charm. Very similar to the motels used at Mog South Spring meet and Morro Bay. Pool.

A typical Econo Lodge, not a country inn, but clean, with a restaurant next door, TV in the rooms and some with water beds! Right along fast food row, so good for the kids. Not much atmosphere, but the rates are hard to beat! If you're saving up your dough to buy all those goodies and spares from Penny and Bob and Melvyn, here's your place.

Another time, I came out of a restaurant and found a note under the windshield wiper. "Lordy, what a car!" it read. "Can I have a ride?" There was a phone number and a woman's name at the bottom. I called her up. We went for a ride one beautiful fall afternoon, and when I dropped her off she took a small camera from her purse and had me take a picture of her sitting behind the wheel. I never saw her again. I wonder if she saved the photograph.

I left Long Island shortly after that and moved to Gloucester, Mass., where I tended bar. People came from all over to see the Morgan, which had assumed legendary proportions, in part because it beat a GTO in a race between Gloucester and Rockport. "Hot damn," said an enormous Finn who ran a fishing boat thereabouts. "A four-cylinder engine and it beat that big monster? Lemme buy that car a drink." One night everyone in the bar sang a song to the car. It was to the tune of *Down by the Old Mill Stream* and, as I recall, began, "Down at the High Line Bar; In my Morgan car." Think of it. Twenty-five or 30 adults standing in a parking lot at 1 a.m. singing to a car.

I sold my Morgan one spring to pay a debt. I put an ad in *The New York Times*, and the first person who saw the car bought it. He drove 250 miles to my front yard, took one look at the car and said, "I'll take it." "Don't you want to drive it?" I asked. "Sure, I'll drive it," he said, "but I'm going to buy it anyway." After it was gone, a number of generous friends and relatives told me they would gladly have put up the money I needed and kept my Morgan in storage until I could afford to buy it back. "We wouldn't even have driven it," they all promised. "It would have been enough just to have it around." But they were too late, and the man I'd sold it to wouldn't sell it back, not even for \$1,000 more than he had paid me; an era in my life was over.

Since then I've owned cars that were faster, handled better and were more expensive than my Morgan, but no cop has ever smiled at one of them, no woman has ever left a note on one of their windshields, and no bar full of people has ever burst into song at their presence.

In 1978, nine years after I sold the car, I traveled to the Morgan factory in England. I wanted to see what kind of people build a car that combines contemporary

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FOR SALE

SERIAL NUMBER: B1071

1964 MORGAN 4/4 SERIES V ROADSTER

FRAME UP RESTORATION PARTIALLY COMPLETED ON A 27000 MILE CAR. NEW ASH BODY FRAMING PROTECTED BY CUPRINOL WITH ORIGINAL SHEET METAL PROFESSIONALLY ASSEMBLED TO IT. PAINT WAS REMOVED FROM THE BODY PANELS BY DIPPING RATHER THAN SANDBLASTING. NEW MORGAN-FAB CHASSIS AND NEW FACTORY DOORS. ORIGINAL 1500CC CORTINA ENGINE AND GEARBOX. IN ADDITION, A 1600CC CORTINA GT ENGINE AND GEARBOX ARE SUPPLIED WITH THE CAR (50% MORE POWER AND BETTER GEAR RATIOS). SOME RECHROMING DONE. SOME STAINLESS STEEL FASTENERS INCLUDED. MANY MINOR COMPONENTS HAVE BEEN BEADBLASTED AND PRIMED. NEW REAR SPRING AND SHACKLE BUSHINGS. FIVE NEW AVON TIRES (MORGAN OPTION) ON DISC WHEELS THAT HAVE BEEN WIDENED ONE INCH. KONI FRONT SHOCKS. NICE ORIGINAL BLACK LEATHER AND GOOD BLACK BROOKLANDS STEERING WHEEL. REFINISHED ORIGINAL MAHOGANY DASHBOARD AND ZEBRAWOOD DASHBOARD. MOST OF THE DIFFICULT AND EXPENSIVE WORK HAS BEEN DONE. CAR NEEDS PAINT, ASSEMBLY AND TLC. INTERESTING PARTIAL TRADES CONSIDERED.

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swiftness with manufacturing techniques that were abandoned by the rest of the auto industry before WW II. I found the Morgan Motor Co., Ltd. housed, as it has been since 1910, in an interconnected row of barnlike brick buildings. There were no robots, no conveyor belts. Morgans are built by hand. In the dispatch bay two long rows of new Morgans sat awaiting shipment. Above them, a stuffed owl presided, as it has for 30 years. It was placed there to ward off any sparrows that might fly down and scratch the new cars' paint.

Down the line were the various assembly shops. The wood shop, where the rolling chassis is taken to be fitted with handcrafted sections of ash and where the coachmakers carefully hang the wooden doors after the rest of the frame is in place; the panel-beater shop, where men with special hammers beat the steel panels and nail them to the frame; the area where the cars are wired by hand; the place where they are painted. There were around 100 employees at the factory, almost all of them trained on the job. Turnover has always been virtually nonexistent. Tuffy Burston, foreman of the machine shop, has been there the longest—since 1916. "Yes, they're wonderful autos," he said. "Of course, I've never owned one. I don't know how to drive." [Burston died recently, making Tony Brough the senior employee, with 45 years of service.]

The next day I met Peter Morgan, son of founder H.F.S., and now the owner of the company. Morgan, a handsome, well-dressed man, sat warming himself by the ubiquitous coal stove. "We make 350 or so cars per year," he told me. "I'd like to get production up to between 400 and 500, but not by sacrificing the way they're built."

Morgan, who learned automotive design as a child sitting in his father's study next to the company's machine shop, is saddened by American regulations that have kept him from directly exporting his cars to the U.S. since 1972. The engine in the Morgan does not conform to U.S. exhaust emission standards, and the cost of developing an engine that continues to meet changing U.S. specifications is prohibitive for so small a company.

But you can still buy a Morgan in this country. An enthusiast named Bill Fink, proprietor of Isis Imports in San Francisco, brings in 24 or so each year. In his shop he fits them out to run on propane

continued

# From Edwardian Tricycles...

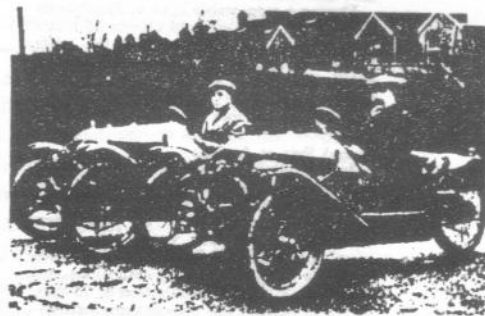
**S** SPREAD-EAGLED over the sunny side of its own range of hills, Malvern in Worcestershire is a discreet and gentlemanly place, noted for spa waters and a public school.

In character with the town, its small but significant contributor to the world's motor industry is so outwardly modest that one might drive straight past the factory without noticing it. There are no vast name boards to identify it, nor wrought-iron gates guarded by uniformed commissionaires; merely a small tablet on a green door in the red-brick building, which reads: *Registered office of The Morgan Motor Co., Ltd.*

This history begins in 1881 with the birth of a son in the rectory of Stoke Lacey, near Hereford. The father was the Rev. Prebendary H. G. Morgan, the mother, daughter of a former vicar of Malvern Link, and the son H. F. S. Morgan, founder of The Morgan Motor Co., Ltd. H. F. S. began his professional career as a pupil, and later as a draughtsman, at the G.W.R. Works in Swindon.

In 1906 he left to open a motor business at Malvern Link, from which he pioneered two successful local bus services. He became district agent for Wolseley and Darracq cars, but found time to design and build, in 1909, a lightweight tubular chassis for a three-wheeler, in which he installed an air-cooled vee-twin Peugeot engine—the direct ancestor of over 15,000 Morgan three-wheelers, and of the four-wheelers in current production.

That tiller-steered, single-seater prototype had the same type of coil-spring independent front suspension as today's Plus Four. Its working components were mostly machined in the workshops of Malvern College under the friendly eye of its Engineering Master, Mr. Stephenson Peach. Transmission was through a cone

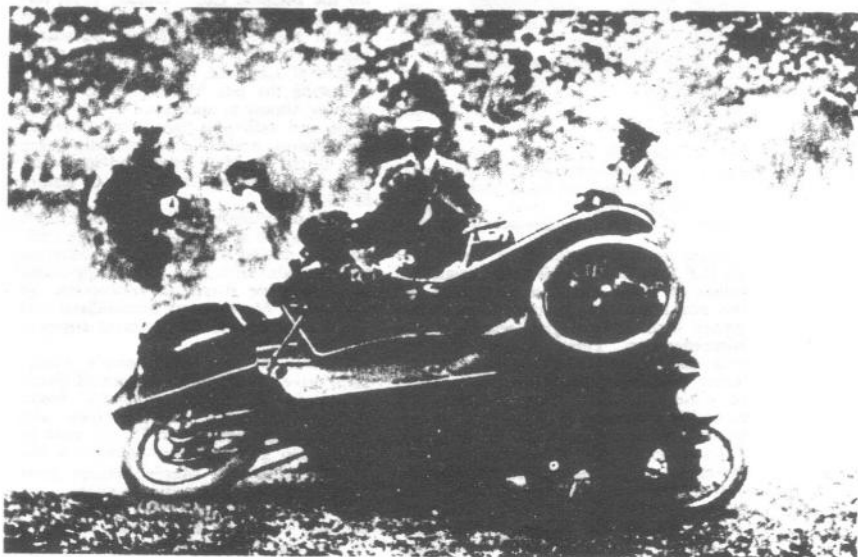


Keen father-and-son owners of Grand Prix Morgans in 1913 were the Frys, chocolate manufacturers of Bristol

clutch to alternative chain drives, engaged by dog clutches to give two forward ratios—a system common to all Morgans until the early 'thirties. With a very high power-to-weight ratio, it could out-perform most contemporary vehicles and so impressed Morgan's friends that he was persuaded to put it into production.

His father, who remained chairman of the company from then until his death in 1936, supplied capital to extend the garage and equip it with machine tools. Patent drawings were produced by a youth who later became Sir John Black, of Standards, thereby initiating an association which continues to this day with the use of Standard and Triumph engines. Two single-seaters were exhibited at Olympia in 1910, with alternative J.A.P. engines—an 8 h.p. rwin and 4 h.p. single.

Embarrassing posture for a two-seater run-about in the 1914 A.C.U.'s 6-Day Trial



First of all the four-wheelers was this Coventry-Climax engine 4/4 of 1936 (right) it was an immediate success, and the present-day cars are directly derived from it.

About a dozen were made (none of which is known to have survived), and with one of these H. F. S. gained a Gold Medal in the 1911 London-Exeter-Land's End Trial of the M.C.C. During this year a prototype tiller-steered two-seater was shown at Olympia, and in 1912 Morgan made his first J.A.P.-powered long-wheel-base four-seater.

During a memorable hour at Brooklands in 1912, H. F. S. covered almost 60 miles in one of his products to break the 1,100 c.c. record, and in 1913 Harry Martin won an International Cyclecar Race at Brooklands. Another 1913 landmark was W. G. McMinnies' victory for Morgan in the three-wheeled section of the Cyclecar Grand Prix at Amiens.

Just before World War I a prototype four-wheeler with Dorman four-cylinder engine was made, but never put into production. Manufacture of munitions occupied the wartime years, but thereafter the demand for Morgan's three-wheelers called for factory extensions and a step-up in weekly production to 50 cars. In fundamentals the vehicle remained unchanged, but progressive development brought electric lighting and starting as well as front-wheel brakes—introduced as an extra (for £6) in 1923. By 1931 there was a three-speed-and-reverse gear box.

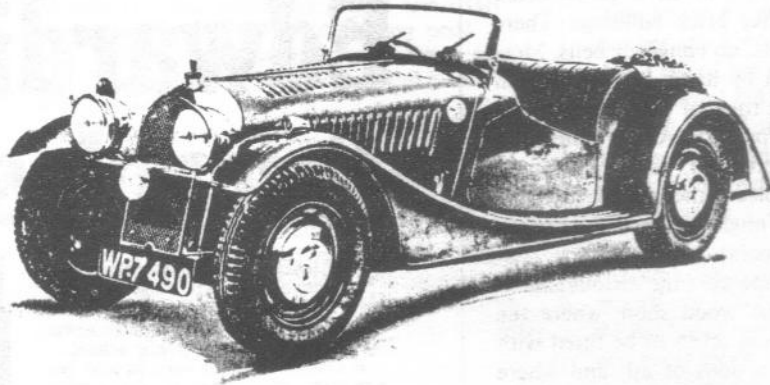
In 1925, H. Bear covered a flying kilometre at 104.68 m.p.h. in an unsupercharged Morgan 1,100 c.c.—a world record; and in 1930 Mrs. Gwenda Stewart covered 101.5 miles in an hour at Montlhéry, driving a Super Sports model.



This is essentially a family business: the present works manager, Jim Goodall (left), is the son of a previous works manager and Peter Morgan (right), today's managing director, is the son of the Company's founder

Right up to the outbreak of World War II, H.F.S. took part in frequent trials and rallies on three and four wheels, as did the works manager, George Goodall, together with his son Jim, who has now succeeded him. Peter Morgan, who took over management of the firm when his father died last year, competes regularly in rallies and club races, as does his second-in-command—surely the finest way of testing and proving one's products.

To conclude the three-wheeler story, the range was supplemented, in 1933, by a family touring four-seater (the F.4), powered by Ford 8 or 10 h.p. engines. This had a pressed steel chassis and remained in production until 1951, when the last of the three-wheeled line—twelve Super Sports models with Matchless twin engines—were shipped to Australia.



## ...to Elizabethan Plus Fours

In 1935 the scheme to make a four-wheeler was revived. When production of the famous 4/4 began in 1936, the current-type frame with Z-section longerons, based on that of the F-type, had been adopted, and the production engine was an 1,122 c.c. Coventry Climax with overhead inlet and side exhaust valves, producing 38 b.h.p.

For 1937 an alternative four-seater body was introduced, and later a convertible. In this year, too, a few special cars for racing were produced, having 1,098 c.c. engines developing 42 b.h.p., one such qualifying at Le Mans in 1938 for the Biennial Cup. During 1938, following a friendly arrangement between H.F.S. and Sir John Black, Standards began providing Morgans with an o.h.v. engine of 1,267 c.c.

During the late 'thirties Morgan 4/4s became almost as successful in the major trials and rallies as their three-wheeled stablemates, a notable contribution being that of the Goodall father-and-son team, who won their class in the R.A.C. Rallies of 1937-8-9.

After diverting attention to anti-aircraft gun parts and aircraft undercarriage components during 1939-45, car production began again with the Standard-engined 4/4 and a few F-type three-wheelers. In 1947 Peter Morgan was demobilized and entered the firm as development engineer and draughtsman.

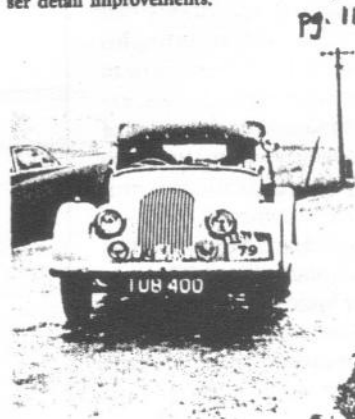
Because of the government's export sales drive, the company appointed distributors in the U.S.A., Canada, South America, Australia, South Africa and Europe, and today over 75 per cent of production goes overseas—mostly to the U.S.A., where the Morgan enjoys great popularity and competition success.

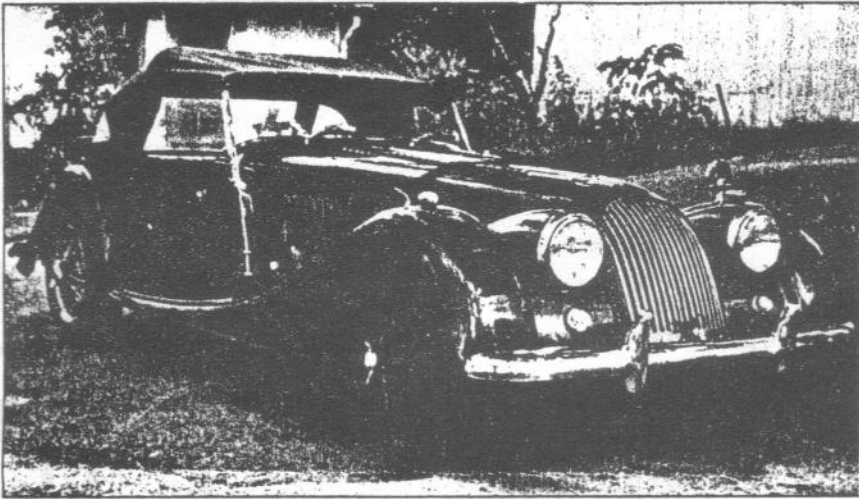
During the last decade the car has changed very little in essentials, since this is the way the customers like it, and demand still exceeds the weekly output of nine or ten cars (they take a lot more space, time and money to make than the

old three-wheelers). Nevertheless, Peter Morgan is quite aware that no market is fully predictable, and he is prepared to meet a change in demand at any time.

After 1949, Standards concentrated production on the Vanguard, whereupon Morgans fell into line by introducing, in 1950, the 2-litre high performance Plus Four. For this the frame was strengthened, the front suspension improved and Girling hydraulic brakes fitted. The new car was an immediate success with its exceptional combination of speed and road holding, and the demand from overseas increased greatly.

For 1954 the 90 b.h.p. Triumph TR2 engine was fitted and the body modernized by fairing in the head lamps and radiator element. Next year the Plus Four was supplemented by the inexpensive 1,172 c.c. Ford-engined 4/4 Series II. For 1956 the 100 b.h.p. TR3 engine became optional, and the car remains still in this form except for one major innovation—Girling disc brakes—and some lesser detail improvements.





Although it is long gone, the red Morgan with the bonnet strap will never be forgotten.

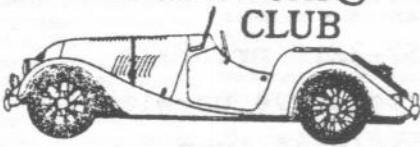
instead of gasoline. He also does all manner of structural modifications—about 100 hours' worth for each car—to bring them up to government safety standards. There's a six-month waiting list for his cars, which cost \$22,000 for four-cylinder models and \$26,000 for those

equipped with V-8s. Doctors, lawyers and bankers buy them. They have ceased being affordable to aspiring writers tending bar for a living.

I had been sitting in the sand 10 minutes or so when I decided to find that yellow

Morgan. Maybe, I told myself, it was one of Fink's conversions. I had never seen one of those. Maybe it was an old one, completely restored, stripped down and repainted. Maybe, by some astounding coincidence, it was mine. I jumped into my car and began driving furiously south on A1A, looking down every conceivable turnoff as I went. Finally, I spotted the car in the parking lot of a 7-Eleven. I zoomed into the lot, jammed on my brakes and leaped out. Suddenly I got a glimpse of my own foolishness. What the hell was I doing? What was I chasing? What would I say to these strangers, who might take me for a lunatic? I walked over to the Morgan. A man and woman in their early 30s sat sipping orange juice. In the luggage compartment behind them was a large Irish setter. The three of them eyed me warily. "I had a Morgan once," I said. "It was red." The man looked at me silently for a moment. Then he raised his left hand, made a circle with his thumb and index finger, and smiled. "Yes, indeed," I said, and I got back into my car and drove away. **END**

MORGAN CAR CLUB

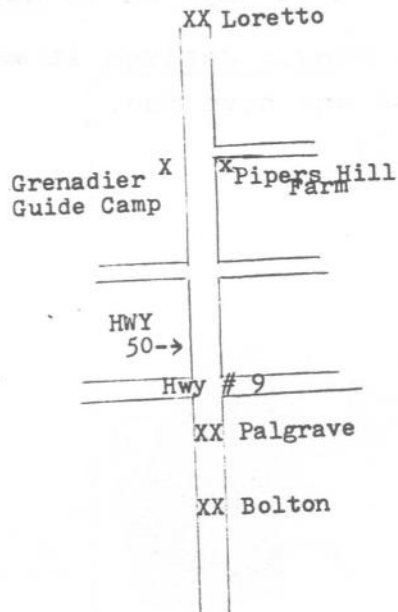


PIPERS HILL FARM  
JULY 12

Picnic & Swim. Hosts Al & Marlies Sands  
BYOB MIX & POTLUCK DISH along with any  
Meat you wish to BBQ. DONT FORGET YOUR  
UMBRELLA, We have learned to ignore the  
rain at this event,

Time; 2pm, Get lost call 936-4341

Look for private farm trail entrance through  
the trees just befor crest of the hill  
oposite the Grenadier Guide Camp and hope  
they remember to put a car or sign out.



# SPRING RUN

## May 24

Blow out the cobwebs from your car on our spring run, a weekend away in Kincardine Hotel, Pool, Sauna, good company, what else ? good food added. Marg and Dick Edmiston have arranged our stay at the Sutton Park Inn for the Saturday including roast beef dinner plus Sunday Brunch. a convoy run has been set up to meet at the donut shop in Bolton 9-30 Saturday 24th of May, leaving at 10am, next stop lunch at Pepi's Upper Crust Restaurant in Collinwood approx 12-30 to 1pm, then along the shore road and down into Kincardine to relax and enjoy ourselves. Sunday after Brunch each can decide their own route home and time.

### RESERVATIONS A MUST:

Please get your reservations in to the Sutton Park Inn by May 2. and make a note of being with the Morgan Owners Group.

Address; Gus Coopers, P.O. Box 209 Kincardine Ont. for Credit card phone reservations call, 1-519-396-3444.

PLUS: Lunch at Pepi's enroute, call Audrey 416-857-3210 prior to leaving date to ensure tables and adequate staff to serve us without annoying delays as to how many in your party/car/what-ever.

If your Moggie decides it wants a longer rest bring the Detroit iron but come and have fun.





RON AND JERRI Montroy show off their Morgan. A new one would set you back \$35,000

# Car's beauty puts them in millionaires' company

By Bob Meyer  
Star Business Reporter

At noon hour on Concours d'Elegance day, the award-winning automobiles pass in review on the judging platform before thousands of spectators. Each car is singled out by the master of ceremonies, who interviews the owner over the public address system.

Ron and Jerri Montroy, of Forest Glade, are standing beside their entry, pale and nervous. They had read about Concours d'Elegance, and such names as Lee Iacocca, F. James McDonald, W.P. Tippett, Jr., Donald Petersen and Pete Estes who are connected with it. Now it's Sunday afternoon at Meadow Brook Hall and they are among a chosen few to be invited to show their car — a 1957 Morgan 4-4, they found as a pile of junk in an old house in Parkhill.

UNLIKE OTHER vintage and classic car shows that place their emphasis on an automobile's condition and restoration, the Meadow Brook Concours d'Elegance looks at the automobile as a work of art. By evaluating each entry's body design, engineering concept and construction, a distinguished group of judges spotlight those automobiles that incorporate the finest elements of style and elegance. Meadow Brook is the only meet in which an original car can compete side by side with a freshly-restored one.

Concours is able to draw upon the enthusiasm of the heart of the auto industry — Detroit — from designers to engineers, to marketing directors, publishers and collectors, to assemble the most knowledgeable group of judges of any auto event.

Jeri always wanted to own a Morgan. Then one day about six years ago, they saw an advertisement in the Globe and Mail about an old Morgan for sale in Parkhill. The following Sunday they were carting it back to Windsor, piece by piece. The ash wood frame was so rotted that they had to tie it together with rope. The doors were missing. There was no radiator, the motor had a split in the block. There were no headlights or bumpers. And the windshield was in a thousand pieces.

"REBUILDING A Morgan with original parts is extremely difficult," Ron said in an interview after receiving their personalized Concours d'Elegance invitation, "because no two Morgans are alike. They may have the same model number, but the doors could be a different size, they might have a different motor, the radiators differ from year to year,

some have windshields, others don't." He and Jerri spent many weekends travelling across the country following leads about parts that might fit their two-seater Morgan 4-4. The complete restoration took four years, working on it whenever they had time. Both work full time at General Motors Trim Plant as well.

To their surprise, they found that the longer they worked on the car, the more they enjoyed it. Eventually, they caught "Morgan Fever." The Morgan is one of the few real traditional sports cars available in the world today and is truly from another age. It is available thanks to a Peter Morgan, for carrying on his family's work in England, and Bill Fink, of Isis Imports Ltd. in San Francisco, America's largest (and only) importer of the oldest (75 years) ultra-low-volume (400 to 500 cars per year) manufacturer in the world.

FINK'S undaunted persistence is making the Morgan legal in North America.

He fought long and hard to make the Morgan available. When it looked like they were going to be kept out permanently because of emissions, Fink switched his imports to propane. Upon arriving in the States, the cars are also partially disassembled and bracing is added to the doors and the rear compartment as well as five-mile-an-hour bumper shocks and an assortment of lights, reflectors and other gadgets to keep governments happy.

Chris Charles, of Kitchener, is believed to be the only Morgan dealer in Canada and imports them from the U.S. through Fink.

Not being a mechanic nor an expert in Morgan nostalgia, Ron's restoration began with a pile of books. The chassis literally started life on a pair of saw horses. With Morgans, ash wood sub-framing is used beneath the coachwork and a total-loss oiling system for the front suspension is standard equipment. The lubrication for the sliding pillar suspension is taken from the engine, Ron said, and applied by push button on the firewall known as the "One Shot": one shot every morning on long trips or one shot every 200 miles or so under everyday driving conditions.

THROUGHOUT ITS 75 years of production, Morgan Motor Car has relied on outside suppliers for its engines, and consequently the timing of the introduction of new models, and their specifications, has been to a large extent dependent upon engine suppliers. Sometimes a model has been changed simply because its

engine has ceased to be available. Morgan's major engine suppliers have been Ford, Triumph and Rover.

Ron said he found there have been many minor changes in design, "so many, in fact, that it has not been possible to list them all and link them to specific chassis numbers." No such information exists, he said, even at the factory.

The older Morgans still don't have a heater, turn signals, large running lights or grease-fitting.

For those to whom "all Morgans look the same", Ron has something to say. He never dreamed how different each one is. When you are starting from the chassis up, you have to be pretty lucky to find every part. The search begins in Ontario but moves across North America and then to England where the car was built, he added.

"BUT WE were lucky. Morgan owners are so closely knit they know where every Morgan is in the country. If there are parts available, they know about them too," Jerri said. "We joined the Great Lakes Morgan Club. By attending Morgan meets, we were able to talk with a lot of Morgan owners."

"They were really impressed the first time we arrived at a meet driving the Morgan," Jerri said. "We entered a number of Morgan competitions in the past two years and won the first prize at every one."

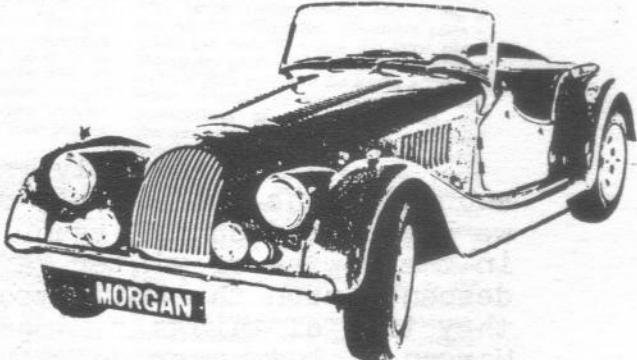
The Montroys are truly hooked. They attend nearly all Morgan. "If you like to drive, like the nostalgic thought of zipping down the lane with that long, louvered hood stretching out in front, and you don't mind getting your hair blown and being bounced around a bit, if you don't mind everybody staring and every other body asking, "What is it?" and "What year is it?" and you have an extra \$35,000 (Canadian), call Bill Fink or find one you can rebuild," she said.

IN THE MINT condition their car is, Ron expects it would sell for close to \$30,000. But that won't happen, he added. After Concours d'Elegance, they are going to drive it all summer like any other car.

The gavel suddenly slammed on the podium. The judges had made their decision.

"We didn't take first prize but that was a forgone conclusion the minute we saw the competition. Most of the cars were owned by millionaires who have the money to keep their cars in mint condition. But, we were delighted to be invited," Jerri said. "It's a pretty big league."

Small is Beautiful



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"What's a good hand signal for backing onto a freeway?"

Snelgrove, Winter, " Remember You Have A  
Morgan," Meeting.  
( For Those Who Remembered! )

It's actually rather nice in Snelgrove, when the snow has gone, but rarely does a Morgan pass by. Just as well we have a resident Morgan. However, with unfailing regularity, in the depths of winter, a crowd of purported "Morgan Owners", descends upon the Smith abode. They wear things " Morgan "; they talk of things " Morgan "; they even drink " Captain Morgan "; but never do they arrive by " Morgan ". I understand that this is due to an incredibly successful, 75 year, factory development programme, which has ensured that the Morgan can be neither cooled in the Summer, nor heated in the Winter, thus rendering the vehicles completely unusable, year round, whilst giving the world it's only, genuine, factory fresh, 75 year old cars!

Be that as it may, almost two dozen " Purported " arrived on the evening of February 22nd., skulked behind snow-banks, to hide their assorted Domestic and Rice-grinders, then dashed in to warm themselves before the typical Snelgrove non-flammable log and kindling pile! The Roden's came furthest, and arrived first, which would have won them the door prize, if we'd had one, and if Sharron could have made the doorbell work!

Chris Charles arrived with sundry pieces for people, claiming they were all genuine Morgan bits. However, your observant correspondent noticed Reg Beer slipping out later with something suspiciously like a set of lawnmower blades; probably Rolls Royce items! Brian and Linda, on the other hand, seemed quite excited about a series of black leather items, with straps and buckles; something to do with badges, he mentioned: you have to wonder what goes on Downtown these days!

The main event of the evening was a video on the History of Grand Prix Racing. The Beers loaned their V.C.R. for the occasion. Some splendid vintage motor racing footage was viewed, with the odd Morgan even making an appearance, to prove that they do go! The audience addressed rude comments at the screen, although some of the action was reminiscent of many Morgan Group outings. However, as there is some three hours of action in this splendid set of videos, and there was not time to view the whole thing, we must hope that the raucous audience will return for the final reel at a future gathering.

A " Pot Luck " spread was provided to round out the evening. The incredible Al Sands, " Eat anything, while fading away to nothing ", diet, was observed in action. Don't ask how it works; it's probably done with mirrors! Then the gathered faithful went once more into the cold, Northern night, snuck behind the snow banks, back into anonymity, and wended their weary ways into the distance, their final sad parting being marked by the rattle of a G.M. Diesel, c/o Peter Pfahl.

Thankfully, in spite of the slowly increasing pressure of modern thinking towards stunning uniformity, Britain continued to produce individuals who resolutely refused to conform to contemporary convention during the 'sixties. Peter Morgan was one of these. It may be that a grille now settled in the place where a real radiator had recently been; that headlamps had sunk themselves into the front bodywork (Lucas could not or would not continue to supply the old sort); and that that same front end now hid the famous - if by now less than comfortable-front suspension. But in a sports-car world which was saying goodbye to elbows resting nonchalantly on rakish cutaway doors and more widely recognising that, done properly, a relatively soft-riding, all-independently suspended car could out-corner beam axles with leaf springs bound tightly with string to prevent them springing, Morgan continued to build very much the same sort of sports-car they had always built, and continued to sell them, increasingly successfully.

In another sense, several senses in fact, Chris Lawrence is a resolute individual. In the early 'sixties, he made a great name for himself, and for Morgan, by racing a highly tuned, cleverly (further) lightened Plus Four which regularly beat much of its more modern opposition on British circuits. The Company had many times before offered, at extra cost, light alloy bodywork for owners interested in competition, and in 1961 Lawrence helped them with the development of the Plus Four Super Sports - a well-loved name revived - under whose aluminium bonnet was a twin-Weber carburettor'd Triumph TR engine producing a claimed 128 bhp; it was fitted with an oil cooler to prove it meant business and was reputed to do 130 mph.

The French have a name for appreciating the individual but could not help laughing incredulously at the Morgan entered for the 1962 Le Mans 24-hour race by Chris Lawrence and co-driven by Richard Shepherd-Barron. A due regard for aerodynamics had been the thing there for more than a decade, so when the Lawrence car, streamlined only by the standards of three decades back, won the 2-litre class at an average speed of 94 mph, it was really rather shocking.

Morgan have always produced true sports-cars with one undeniable virtue towards the top of their range; they have throughout their near-70 years of existence made at least one or two models with a good power-to-weight ratio, and therefore entertaining performance. That has been the single common denominator of Morgan demand. It would be interesting to establish exactly when another reason for

the make's popularity began to be important - what the eager Americans might call its "antique appeal". Well before Panther began perpetrating their very expensive pastiche-distortions of the SS 100 in 1972, before too the pseudo Mercedes SSK of Excalibur in America, people started wanting Morgans because of their increasingly old style of body, rather than despite it.

As a starting point for whenever that reason became important, one can say that it was probably so by October 1963. That was when Peter Morgan announced the idea that his late father, H.F.S., had thought should wait until Morgan were ready for it - a modern, all-enclosing, reinforced glass-fibre body for the Triumph-engined car. Called the Plus-Four-Plus, it looked a little like a Jaguar XK 150 in front and the contemporary Lotus Elite at the back, and with its undeniably better shape, was claimed to be 10 mph faster in top speed and obviously just as accelerative, since it was little heavier than the traditional model. Whether because it was built on the same chassis - noted for little stiffness in torsion and too much in ride - and didn't do what a sophisticated modern two-seater would do on unsophisticated roads - or because its looks were a little quaint, or, as one suspects, because of a combination of these things plus the by-now entrenched romanticism of the Morgan buyer, it was not a success, and disappeared from the catalogue after fewer than 100 had been made.

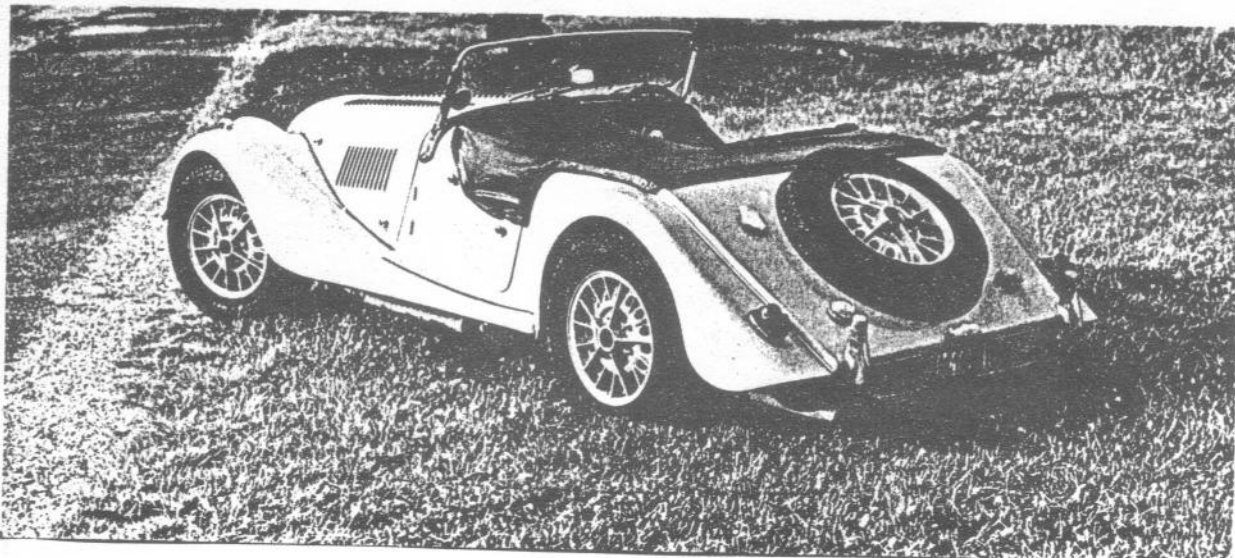
The very appealing Ford-engined 4/4 continued to provide something for the man or woman wanting a less powerful Morgan; Ford's basically dreadful if sturdy and cheaply tuneable side-valve 1,172 c.c. gave way to the Anglia 996 c.c. ohv unit with - great advance - the accompanying four- instead of three-speed gearbox in 1960. The 1,340 c.c. Consul Classic version was adopted in the following year and in 1963 the 1,498 c.c. Cortina GT. There is still a 4/4 using the 1,599 c.c. Ford unit and available with the graceful two-seater, or gauche and voluminously hooded four-seater bodies.

1968 must be put down as Morgan's inspired year of latter days. Admittedly the inspiration may have been forced on the company by Triumph dropping the four-cylinder TR4A engine in favour of the longer (and heavier) six-cylinder 2 1/2-litre fuel-injected six of the TR5. The shelved Ford vee-8 project of 1938 may have had something to do with it too. Having done preliminary work on an Oldsmobile-engined prototype (still to be seen running in MCC classic trials in the hands of Morgan development engineer Maurice Owen), they announced the

Plus 8, which had a 2in. longer wheelbase, very much wider wheels and tyres, a limited-slip differential, adjustable seats - a Morgan novelty - and the same Moss four-speed gearbox to transmit the 160 bhp and 210 lb/ft torque of the Rover 3,529 c.c. vee-8. Thanks to the aluminium alloy construction of the engine, and the changes made elsewhere, it blessedly added a negligible 3 per cent to the overall weight, but over 50 per cent more power and nearly 60 per cent more torque. Therefore, as well as vastly increasing the performance, it did not unbalance the car with too much extra front-end-weight - and the smoothness of eight silky cylinders gave a style of velvet strength to the acceleration and extraordinary flexibility of the car that was startling in a Morgan. Autocar's Road Test of the Plus 8 revealed performance quicker to 80 mph than the contemporary E-type Jaguar, even if the top speed was limited to 124 mph by the tempests of built-in headwinds of the body. There were some shortcomings of course - brakes which probably because of the flexibility of the front suspension frame chattered during hard stops, and cornering abilities which were superb only on the smoothest of roads - but overall we loved the car. I remember it providing the most exciting maximum speed runs of my testing career; each time we hit the concrete bridges of the Jabbeke *autoroute* from their apparently sunken approach ramps, the car briefly took off with a bang.

In 1972 they put the Rover 3500S manual gearbox in it, which has better synchro mesh than the faithful and more precise Moss box. In the following year, it was endowed with a wider track, and the higher 3.31-to-1 final drive ratio was adopted as standard; 1975 saw a light-weight Plus 8 with 14 in. wheels instead of the usual 15 in.

The range continues today, with the market for Morgans in Peter Morgan's words "very limited but very good". For some years now the Company have not been selling in America, principally because neither of the engines they use are available in the de-toxed versions which the USA's Environmental Protection Agency requires. Are there any future plans? "I've got a couple of cars I'd like to make," says Peter Morgan. One is what he calls a "convertible" by which he means a Morgan with rather better weather protection - a better top, and winding side windows instead of side-screens. He refrains from describing the other. But when demand for what you already make is such that, hard as your staff work, delivery is between three and four years, is there any great point in making anything else?



# Calendar of Events

- April 13; PUB LUNCH, at the DUKE OF MARLBOROUGH  
1 PM. 680 Silvercreek Blvd. Mississauga.  
just off Cawthra Rd north of # 5 (Dundas St)  
Ph; 275-9301. Look for the Cherry Hill Restuarant  
& the Duke is downstairs.
- May 24/25 SPRING RUN; Get your bookings in check inside  
for details.
- July 12; PIPERS HILL; Check info inside.
- August 9; BBQ & CORNROAST. change of venue from Bolton  
to Stouffville Ont. Peter McCowan has invited  
the members to his abode.
- Sept. 5/6/7 NIAGARA; Details to follow.

MEMO:

PLEASE MARK THESE DATES ON YOUR CALENDER. Our  
Editor has requested some time out for the summer  
so we shall only be mailing out a reminder plus  
Niagara R<sub>e</sub>gistration and Membership dues during  
the summer.

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