

MOG LOG



OCTOBER 2020

The only car club in the area devoted to a car currently built by Britons, for a manufacturer owned and managed partially by Britons.....THE British car club!

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To steal ideas from
one person is
plagiarism, to steal
from many is
research.

TOP10 THINGS YOU'LL NEVER A MORGAN OWNER SAY:

- #10 Well, the 4/4 failed emmissions again.
- #9 Roll up the window dear, I am getting a draft.
- #8 Don't worry - it won't leak on your new driveway.
- #7 My first gear syncro is weak.
- #6 Do you think the backfire could be caused by a bad gulp valve?
- #5 The defroster should melt that ice in a minute or two.
- #4 First one to the next stop light gets the pink slip.
- #3 So what if its raining? We'll stay dry.
- #2 No problem, just throw it in the trunk.

**And the #1 thing you will never hear a
Morgan owner say...**

**"Let's take the freeway.
I just hate those twisty back roads!"**

!!!!DUES NEWS!!!!

We finally got all the board members, officers, and appointed executives together to review our dues structure and the reduced activity during the past year.

After reflection, dues are temporarily reduced for 2021 to \$20.00.

Also, printed MOG LOGs are presently not an option.

Suspending printing saves money during the virus and also the health of the Editor (and the Historian) from having to go to the printing center. The printed issues may be restored soon and activities planned again.

This is perhaps the lowest dues of any Morgan Club that publishes a newsletter, much less monthly by MMCC.

We have a slight advantage over the others in that our car is still produced after 112 years.

But then we have no National Club to send dues to – or support.

Stay with us for 2021.



Membership Application Form



SEND THIS FORM AND DUES, IF PAYABLE TO:

MORGAN MOTOR CAR CLUB
P.O. BOX 50392
DALLAS, TX. 75250-0392

NOTE: Changes and additions in bold have been
made to this application/registration form.
PLEASE complete this additional information.

ANNUAL DUES \$20.00

DATE: _____

PLEASE COMPLETE ALL THE PERSONAL DATA SECTION AND ANY OTHER PORTIONS, WHICH HAVE NOT
PREVIOUSLY BEEN FURNISHED OR WHICH MAY HAVE CHANGED.

PERSONAL DATA

NAME: _____ SPOUSE: _____

ADDRESS: _____

CITY: _____ STATE: _____ ZIP: _____

OCCUPATION: _____ PHONE: H _____ W _____

CELL: _____ EMAIL: _____

CAR DATA

MODEL: (+8, +4, 4/4, +4+, 3 wheeler, etc.) _____ LHD _____

BODY STYLE: (DHC, RDSTR, 4 STR, SS, etc.) _____ RHD _____

YEAR: _____ COLOR: _____ CHASSIS NO. _____

ENGINE TYPE: (TR4, FORD, FIAT, ROVER, JAP, etc.) _____ ENGINE NO. _____

GENERAL DATA

HOW LONG HAVE YOU OWNED YOUR MORGAN? _____

OTHER MMCC MEMBERS THAT YOU KNOW, IF ANY? _____

HOW DID YOU LEARN OF MMCC? _____

LIST ANY OTHER MORGAN CAR CLUB MEMBERSHIPS _____

LIST ANY OTHER NON-MORGAN CAR CLUB MEMBERSHIPS _____

FROM WHOM DID YOU ACQUIRE YOUR MORGAN? _____

(PLEASE ADVISE IF YOU WANT ANY OF THIS INFORMATION DELETED FROM ANY DIRECTORY)

**The present MMCC club newsletter, the MOG LOG, is distributed
electronically in color. Printed option in black and white sent by U.S.
Mail may become available sometime later.**

RUNNING On.....

AND STILL RUNNING FASTER THAN COVID-19....HOPE YOU ARE TOO....

Had a nice day yesterday, three Morgans started up and running like they should be. Got the horns and the loose, rattling exhaust pipe fixed on Sophie. The Max got his new battery installed, but the Swan needs to have some brake bleeding done, maybe on another nice Sunday. Would really have preferred a lovely drive in the country, but Autumn is here and that could be done on any day.

THE PREZ, etc.



the Prez



MORGANS...ROAD CANDY

REMEMBER THIS NOVEMBER DRIVE?



MMCC BUSINESS MEETING / NOGGIN

Unless otherwise noted, on the First Thursday of every month at 7:00 PM we meet at



Back Country Bar B Q
6940 Greenville Avenue
Dallas, TX 75231
214-696-6940

~~Jan-2~~

~~Feb-6~~

~~Mar-5~~

~~Apr-2~~

~~May-7~~

~~Jun-4~~

~~Jul-9~~

~~Aug-6~~

~~Sep-3~~

~~Oct-1~~

~~Nov-5~~

~~Dec-3~~

2021 Jan 7

Back Country is located on the east side of Greenville Avenue at Park Lane, one block east of Northpark Shopping Center and Central Expressway

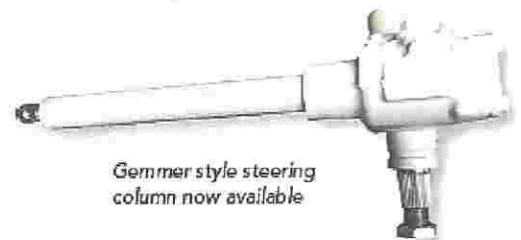
** This denotes meeting on 2nd Thursday – an exception

Morgan Motors OF NEW ENGLAND

LARGEST MORGAN PARTS SUPPLIER IN THE U.S.

For Everything Morgan

- Factory Authorized Dealer
- Largest inventory of Morgan parts and accessories outside the UK
- Service, repairs and upgrades
- Award-winning restorations
- Complete mechanical rebuilding
- Specialists in cars 1950 to current
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- The best technical service anywhere
- Visit our comprehensive website
- Family-owned and operated
- Worldwide shipping
- Exclusive on-line parts catalog

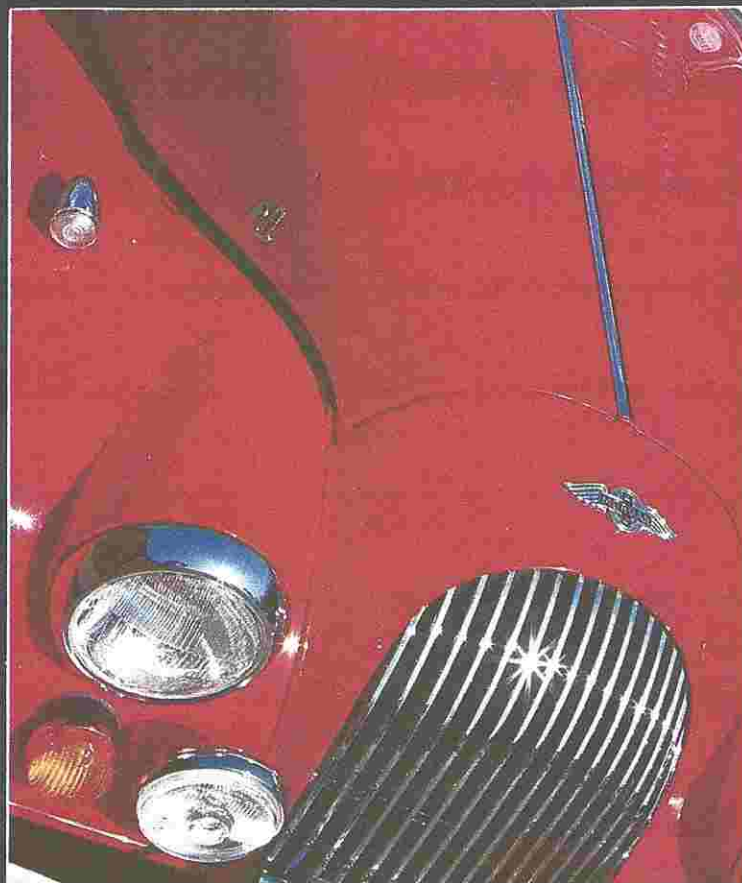


Gemmer style steering column now available

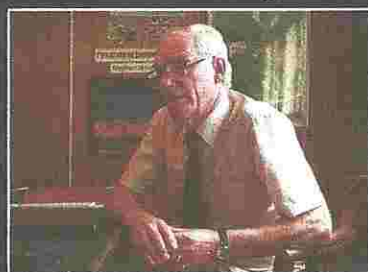
Our illustrated parts catalog available free online



THE MALVERN MARVELS



Now 75 years young, the Morgan Motor Company continues to flourish despite seeming totally out of step with the highly competitive world of modern mass motoring.



To celebrate this remarkable anniversary we talk to Peter Morgan about the past and future, drive the fastest Morgan ever built, sample a rapid 1925 three-wheeler and detail the history behind this private enterprise success story

Morgan of Morgans



Peter Morgan talks to Philip Turner about past, present and future developments of the famous Malvern sports car company

AT AN age when most 14-year-olds are building model aircraft or extending their electric motor racing circuits, Peter Morgan was hurling the first Morgan four-wheeler prototype round the narrow paths in the grounds of his father's country house in Berkshire, excessive exuberance at one tight corner putting both front wheels in the lake on the outside of the bend . . .

This was not actually the first car he drove. At the age of five there was a pedal car with tandem seating — "I generally managed to get behind the steering wheel ahead of my four sisters." An unusual experience for a five-year-old was to be taken for a ride by Archie Frazer Nash, in his GN. Archie was visiting his father, and the "ride" consisting of several laps of the front lawn with the car balanced on two wheels the whole time.

But then, the Morgan family were all larger-than-life characters — including Peter's grandfather, the Rev. Prebendary H.G. Morgan, who provided the capital that enabled production of Morgan three-wheelers to begin in 1910. There is a famous Morgan photograph of H.F.S. Morgan setting off on an attack on the

Hour record at Brooklands watched by the Reverend in a top hat — not the usual wear at Brooklands, even in 1912. This unusual country parson, who taught Peter to play chess, was very keen on all innovations, equipping his parsonage with a hot water system when such systems were rare, though according to Peter it was a fair going disaster for you never knew whether scalding steam or ice cold water would issue from the hot tap. An early motorist himself, one of the first in Herefordshire, the Prebendary encouraged his son in the building and production of his three-wheelers, just as H.F.S. Morgan gave Peter every encouragement later.

Peter was born in Malvern in 1919 and educated at Oundle and the Chelsea College of Automobile Engineering, where a fellow pupil was Duncan Hamilton. He began passengering for his father in MCC trials before he was old enough to hold a driving licence, but as soon as Peter was sixteen Father gave him a Ford-engined F2 three-wheeler which, with its 10 hp engine, was good for about 72 mph. Father would not allow him to own one of the rorty V-twin sports models and Peter found out

why when he roared up a steepish local hill in his three-wheeler. In a tight left-hand bend with adverse camber, the inside front wheel lifted well clear of the road. Only by easing the car to the outside of the bend — luckily there was nothing else coming — was the errant wheel persuaded to return to earth.

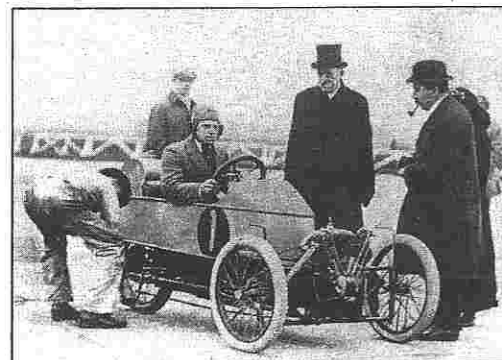
However, Peter's desire to own a twin faded considerably after Father had lent him a Matchless-powered Super Sports to drive to Maidenhead and back and the "bang, bang, bang" exhaust note of the big twin continued ringing in his head after he had switched off and for the rest of the evening.

After an apprenticeship year with the three-wheeler, Peter moved on to the company's first four-wheeler car — apart from a 1922 prototype, which was soon abandoned. The 4/4, introduced in 1936, was a development of the prototype Peter had played with down in Berkshire, but Father's experience driving the Hillman Aero Minx belonging to his eldest sister had led to the substitution of normal semi-elliptic springs at the rear in place of the quarter ellipses of the prototype, and the prototype's Ford engine was replaced by a 1,122 cc Coventry Climax engine. Overhead inlet and side exhaust valve arrangement allowed reasonably-sized valves to be used, so that its breathing was good, but it had been designed in 1925 so was nearing the end of its production life.

With the 4/4, Peter began his competition career by competing in the 1937 MCC Edinburgh Trial in which the decision to start in second gear on Summer Lodge led to the car coming to a stop before first could be found, and so to a silver medal second-class award instead of a first. The following year, however, both Peter and his father won the highly prized MCC Triple Award for winning first class awards in all three of the major trials — Edinburgh, Exeter and Land's End. These events were quite unlike most present-day trials, for they involved covering considerable distances on the road in addition to climbing steep and often rocky hills up narrow country lanes. Moreover, they were supported by "works" teams from Austin, MG, Singer and other manufacturers and attracted huge crowds of spectators.

Father had insisted that Peter should spend an apprenticeship in trials learning how to handle a car before he was allowed to go racing, but by 1938 "He evidently felt I'd done all right so far" and Peter was allowed to compete in an MCC race meeting on the old circuit at Donington. He managed to average just under 81 mph with a perfectly standard four-seater in a One Hour High Speed Trial at Brooklands — a performance that pleased his father, though Peter was somewhat alarmed to discover later, when the engine was stripped, that all the piston rings had broken. His father was not at all upset by this news, merely remarking that they always ran the

H.F.S. Morgan sets off at Brooklands, watched by a top-hatted Prebendary H.G. Morgan



S P E C I A L S U P P L E M E N T

V-twin-engined three-wheeler at Brooklands without piston rings in search of reduced friction losses, and that if the rings had not broken Peter wouldn't have gone so fast.

The war brought an end, for the time being, to Peter's competition career. One of its first casualties was a race on the Campbell Circuit at Brooklands, in which he was much looking forward to competing. After being rejected by the Navy — "We don't have any boats at the moment" — he joined the Royal Army Service Corps, in which he served throughout the war.

After his demobilisation, Peter rejoined the company "as a general dogsbody," though his official title was Development Engineer. His first major task was to find a replacement engine for the overhead-valve Standard engine of 1,267 cc which had been fitted to the 4/4 after production of the Coventry Climax engine ceased in 1939. Although it was a smoother engine than the Climax, the Standard engine's power potential was always throttled by its little valves. Sir John Black had been making the engine specially for Morgan — he had a close association with the company having, as a young man, prepared the drawings which H.F.S. Morgan submitted when patenting the Morgan's unique independent front suspension in 1910. But Sir John had now decided to concentrate all future Standard production on the two-litre Vanguard.

His father did not want to fit an engine bigger than 1,500 cc, and Peter's first visit in search of an engine had been to Len Lord, of Austin — who, though sympathetic and helpful, said they could not spare any A40 engines as they needed them all for their own cars. Nor could Vauxhall help, but Sir John Black offered him the new Vanguard engine which, at that stage in its development, was only 1,760 cc. By just slightly extending the front side members to give added room in the engine compartment, the bigger engine went into the 4/4 without undue difficulty, although Father was not very interested until he went for a test drive round the hills at the back of the "works" and found that thanks to the increased torque of the new engine he could climb some of them in top.

Thus the Plus 4 was born in 1950, though the announcement that the capacity of the Vanguard engine was to be increased to 2,088 cc by the time it went into production seemed to put an end to the Plus 4's competition hopes by taking it out of the

two-litre class. However, the introduction of the 1,991 cc engine for the TR2 in 1954 solved this problem and the Plus 4 had a long and honourable competition career.

Undoubtedly the highlight was winning the two-litre class at Le Mans in 1962, thanks to the part played by Chris Lawrence in the car's development. This success was particularly gratifying, for when the car was presented for scrutineering there were those who suggested that perhaps the drivers had made a mistake and come to the scrutineering instead of the Le Mans Motor Museum! The car averaged 93.97 mph for the 24 hours, and Peter would dearly have liked to return to Le Mans in an attempt to be the first reasonably-priced car to average 100 mph — which, in those days, would have given them sixth or seventh place in the race as a whole. However, had they increased the power of the engine sufficiently it would not have lasted 24 hours and the only alternative — improved aerodynamics by a drastic restyling of the body — was not a route they wanted to go.

Peter is a strong believer in the value of competition work in developing the car, holding that "What happens on the track this year will occur on the road to cars in owners' hands in two years' time," which meant they had to take rapid action over any racing failures. It was racing, in fact, which forced them to change from malleable castings to forgings for all running gear at front and rear.

Peter himself continued to compete in post-war rallies and in hill climbs and circuit racing, scoring many successes in the RAC Rallies of the 1950s, until the big manufacturers began taking rallying very seriously. He never competed in any Continental rallies, though an attempt at entering a car for an Alpine Rally was quashed by his father's remark that "I don't care how fast you go up hill but you're not racing down hill." Peter thoroughly enjoyed his racing, as does his son Charles these days.

When Triumph decided that the next TR would have a six-cylinder engine, Peter began another search for a suitable replacement, for there was no way a six in-line engine could be accommodated in the Morgan's engine compartment.

He was offered a Ford V4 engine, but was not impressed by it, and was about to consider the Ford V-6 when he received a visit from Peter Wilks, of Rover. The death of H.F.S. Morgan — who had driven to the "works" in his Morgan, as usual, on a Friday but had died suddenly the following Monday — meant the whole future of

the company was in doubt, and Peter Wilks had come to Malvern to see if Morgan would be interested in joining up with Rover. Sir John Black had made a previous offer, in the early 1950s, which H.F.S. Morgan had turned down in the firm conviction that Standard-Triumph knew nothing about sports cars — a conviction shattered somewhat by the TR2 and subsequent TRs.

Peter Wilks not only offered Peter a liaison with Rover, but also the use of the new Rover V8 engine which was then under development. Peter decided to soldier on alone but gladly accepted the offer of the V8. But then the trouble began, for Rover could not spare any V8 prototype engines, needing them all for themselves for development work. Maurice Owen, who had joined Morgan after being responsible for the Laystall Formula 2 car, managed to obtain a Buick V8 — from which the Rover engine was being developed — but then Standard-Triumph took over Rover, and were unhappy at the thought of the Morgan being powered by a V8 when the Triumph TR had only a "six". This was eventually sorted, but then Rover dropped another bombshell by telling Peter he could not use the engine without first getting permission to do so from General Motors. Fortunately, Peter had become friendly with a Canadian who raced a Plus 4 and recalled that he was high up in the engineering hierarchy at GM. An appeal to him for aid resulted in GM giving Morgan the necessary permission. Even then, the supply of engines from Rover was assured only after Harry Webster and George Turnbull had visited Malvern to drive the Plus 8. George Turnbull approved of the car, but insisted that the Morgan should never be made in sufficient numbers to pose a threat to the MG or the Triumph TR.

A constant worry for the smaller car makers is that their suppliers will stop making the components on which they depend. Morgan were the last users of the Moss gearbox, for instance, but fortunately Rover produced their own manual gearbox, first in a four-speed version then with five speeds, just in time, for Peter had been considering having to go over to an expensive ZF box. Similarly, Cam Gears stopped making the steering box Morgan used, so they had to tool up for a special rack and pinion unit developed for them by Charles Knight, though after this decision had been taken the Gemmer company came along with a suitable box which is now increasingly being fitted to 4/4s and Plus 4s.

Another great engine hunt began when the Ford Kent engine fitted to the 4/4 no longer complied with West German emission regulations — and West Germany is their main export market. But, after Peter had reached an agreement with Fiat to fit their twin overhead camshaft engine instead, Ford agreed to a nine-month crash development programme to convert the CVH engine from its normal transverse installation to fore and aft. This programme was sparked off when a high Ford executive learned that the 4/4 he had on order would be Fiat-engined, but also owed much to the fact that Ford themselves wanted to use it fore and aft in the Sierra.

Will the company continue as it is, building the sort of cars it is at present making?

"I hope so. So long as people want them, Morgans will go on being built. Of course, it would change if nobody bought them, but you don't change the car stupidly or for no good reason. There are styling features you have to be careful about for you can ruin the appearance so easily. I'm not afraid of change if change is necessary. I'm not too keen to make changes at the moment, but no doubt they'll come in time."

Peter was a strong believer in competition work in developing his cars



S P E C I A L S U P P L E M E N T

AT THE bottom of the sloping yard not far from the trim shop is a handful of rolling chassis, their unpainted aluminium bodies shining in the July sun. Opposite a row of men in blue overalls put their backs against the factory wall and settle down for a tea break. Up the hill is the wonderfully ancient petrol pump with its circular face marked in gallons almost totally obscured by years of grime on the glass and a few paces away Peter Morgan talks enthusiastically about his latest car.

It is not only the "Ultimate Driving Machine" — to borrow a BMW slogan — to come from the red-bricked Malvern Link factory but also as big a step in engineering terms for Morgan as perhaps any since the fourth wheel was added.

The car bears the famous MMC 11 number plate — always referred to as MMC two, not eleven — but only a small air scoop in the right side of the louvred bonnet gives any clue that this particular Morgan is a prototype for a new line of Moggies.

A kerb weight of just over 17 cwt and 155 bhp from the Rover V8 engine means the current Plus 8 is no sluggard but the new machine is in a higher class altogether as the fuel-injected V8 from the Rover Vitesse provides a mind-boggling 190 bhp. If you thought the Porsche 944 was a fast car forget it! MMC 11 has a power-to-weight ratio almost 50 per cent better than the four pot Porsche.

But if the Morgan faithful are amazed that the hammer and screw driver engineering that has been the marque's hallmark for 75 years should now have to share space with electronics — for the fuel injection — then a glance at the front suspension will fill them with disbelief.

The sliding pillar set-up, designed in 1913, has been stripped of its crude cam and peg steering box to be replaced by a steering rack. Hard to believe really but yes, a Morgan with rack and pinion steering. They will be putting stays on the doors next or even fitting heaters that really work; just

don't expect a radio in this £13,000 Mog.

It seems inconceivable that 190 bhp can be happily transmitted through a live axle held in place by nothing more than a pair of cart springs, yet it is. But there is one surprise as the old lever arm dampers have been replaced by some gas-filled telescopic ones though they are still "under development".

As we moved off in MMC 11 I realised that Peter Morgan had been right. Asked how much better the turning circle is with the steering rack he had replied, "Well this one turns round in the yard." In Malvern quoting turning circle in feet and inches is of secondary importance.

After we had turned round by the paint shop in one sweep it was clear that gone are the days when a parking manoeuvre would be accompanied by grunting noises from under the wings as the tyres rubbed against the chassis on full lock.

And the driver struggled patiently with the large steering wheel and something as rapid

MACHO MOGGIE

Morgan slips a 190 bhp Rover Vitesse engine into its Plus-8 two seater, gaining a dragster-style power-to-weight ratio and a new model to top its range at October's NEC Motor Show. Daniel Ward has been driving the prototype

Photography by Maurice Rowe

as a three-point turn was experienced only rarely.

The precision of the fuel injection is responsible for a more even but still very satisfying burble from the exhaust pipes.

Jump from a Peugeot 205 GTI into the Morgan and it would be difficult to claim the Plus 8 has the worst ride. The soft-walled Pirelli P6s do a good job of softening the blow to the front end while the new dampers relieved our backs of the expected jarring and only once did a transverse slot in the road catch the car out, causing the axle to crash loudly less than a foot from our spines. Compared with my old Plus 8, the ride was indeed supple but still distinctively Moggie-like.

With the beautiful Malvern hills moving away to our right as we began to get up some speed it was not the fierce power under the bonnet that demanded first attention but the steering. Unlike the engine it is totally different.

Drive a Plus 8 fast through the country-



side and it is the fight with the steering wheel that opens the pores of your armpits. The marked bump steer is there to catch the inexperienced, manifesting itself at the first bump and causing the pilot to wrestle with the wheel until the last one has been safely passed. The other former joy was derived from the steering box.

In the cam and peg box, the shaft upon which the cam was mounted simply butted up against a flat plate and adjusting out the free play just increased the resistance. This made the steering even heavier but worse, the box wore out more quickly. So at high speed the Morgan driver would have to accept up to two inches of free play at the steering wheel rim.

Fast cornering on a bumpy road would therefore become a moment of frenzied elbow waving as the driver tried to prevent being outwitted by the bump steer and slack in the steering.

The rack and pinion on MMC 11 couldn't be more different. As the long steering arms come from the centre of the rack — previously there was a single track rod — bump steer has all but been eliminated. Difficult to say that it is gone completely because on a really bumpy lane taken at speed the still very firm suspension is bouncing the driver around a great deal but at least there is a feeling of predictability about the bucking motion.

With the free play gone the steering now

Far left: In its natural habitat, a Morgan in Elgar country with the Malvern hills behind

Top: There is no way of identifying this as the fastest production Morgan

Above: Super grip, on smooth roads at least and no body roll — the ultimate roller skate

Below: The view no Morgan enthusiast would swap as there is no substitute



has a satisfying fluidity to it that makes wringing the fantastic performance out of the Plus 8 a more pleasurable experience. Naturally that will not stop purists, and Morgan has its fair share of those, from arguing that the steering has lost its character and there is a loss of feel at high speed. Also the increase in turns lock to lock from $2\frac{1}{4}$ to $3\frac{1}{4}$ is a retrograde step despite the advantage in reducing the 38 ft turning circle.

But this car is really about sheer gutsy performance and in the world of open top cars it has few if any rivals. At 4,500 rpm the ordinary Plus 8 is still pulling hard but it has already delivered its superb mid-range punch and particularly in the higher gears the Morgan's house brick style aerodynamics are beginning to take the edge off its acceleration. Fuel injection changes all that.

There is now incredibly smooth power from 800 rpm to 5,280 rpm, where the engine is producing at least 190 bhp, and beyond. Having the soft top down only adds the excitement of the memorable acceleration as you floor the antiquated roller throttle pedal and hang on to the large steering wheel. Stay in third gear as the rev counter needle flicks round the gauge and the mechanical frenzy under the long bonnet steps up a notch and you will have moved into the pain barrier as the wind and engine roar assault your ears.

This would get to 100 mph in a time only supercars could hope to match.

The massive quota of horsepower means MMC 11 will spin its wheels to order off the line. For cornering this has its advantages as the pleasant initial understeer is never allowed to build up as the throttle always commands the power needed to determine the car's attitude perfectly as it exits from the bend.

In this burst of exciting driving the car's shortcomings do not come readily to mind even when your pulse has returned to a semblance of normal. Yet the immense power does make the gearing in second and third in particular feel too low despite appearing fine on paper. They are simply used up too quickly. And the brakes are heavy even before any retardation is achieved. They don't haul the car to a stop rather just slow it adequately.

That said, the Morgan story has been running for 75 years and it has an admirable new hero.

It's noisy, bumpy and smelly, but driving a vintage Morgan three-wheeler is an unforgettable experience. Lawrence Pearce reports from the cockpit. Photographs by Maurice Rowe

MORGANS COULD hardly be described as sophisticated cars even today, so just imagine what a 60-year-old one is like. If you can remember your first pedal car as a child, this will give some idea of the seating arrangement. Six inches off the ground and with no padding there are certainly more comfortable ways to travel and cars which are easier to get in and out of.

The driver has to clamber into the passenger's side and wriggle

beneath the steering wheel; the passenger does likewise, thus trapping the driver in place.

It has no ignition key, starter motor or even a starting handle; it has to be push started. But before this, a few "pre-flight" checks are needed, like operating the grease plungers which lubricate the valve-gear, pressurising the fuel system which feeds the twin Amal carburettors and adjusting the flow rate of the drip-fed, total loss oil supply which lubricates the engine. And some of the Morgan's controls look distinctly unfamiliar: where is the handbrake and gear lever; what is that control on the steer-

ing wheel boss? No, this three-wheeler is not what you would call "user friendly".

In 1925, motoring was a different experience, Morgan three-wheeler "triking" even more so. This Super Aero Brooklands owned by Lawrence Weeks is an ex-works racer, devoid of such luxuries as lights, mudguards, windscreen and number plates.

Surprisingly, it has a conventional foot-operated throttle, having been converted from the more usual-at-the-time hand control, and a footbrake working on the single rear wheel. An external handbrake provides retardation for the two front wheels — earlier versions did not bother with this "luxury". The gear lever is also outside the body: it engages either of two chain-wheel sprockets by means of dog clutches, giving a choice of two forward ratios. Vainly, I search for a pair of L plates.

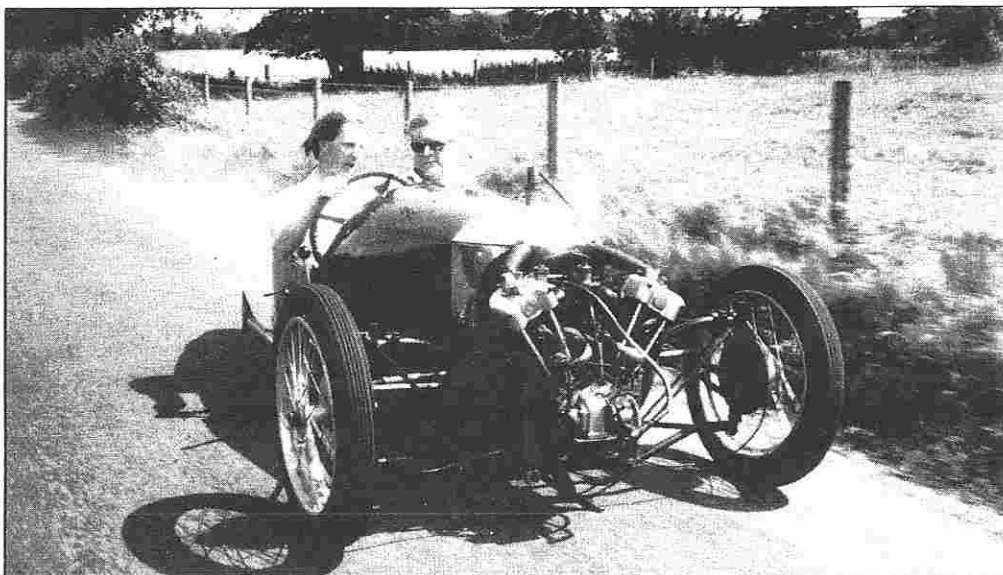
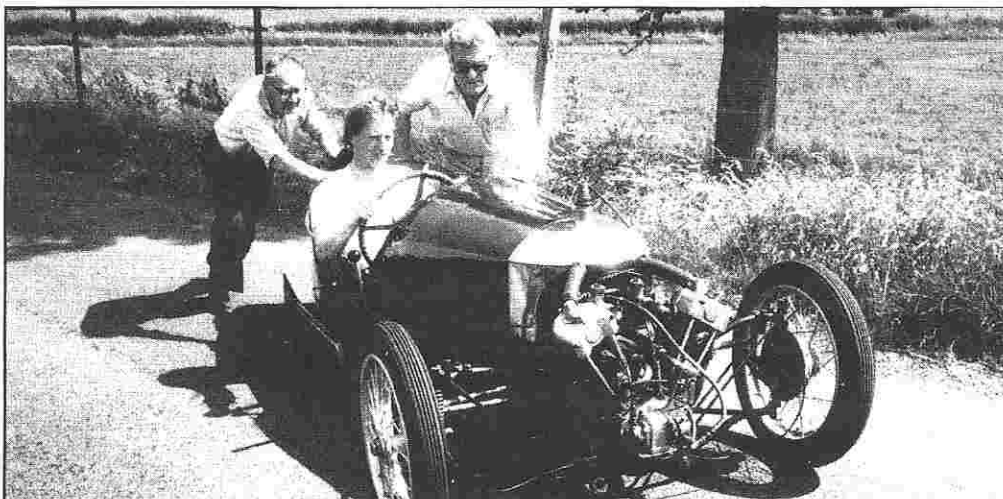
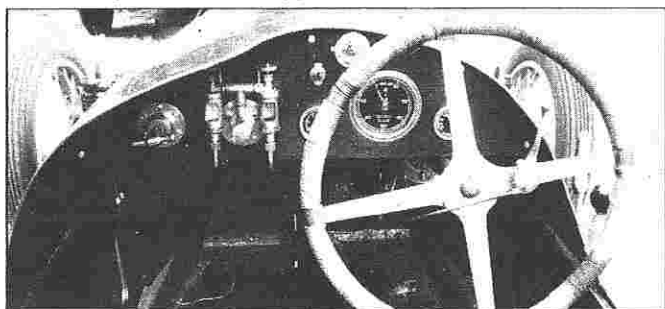
The start-up procedure is eventful. Having primed the fuel system and retarded the magneto timing, my passenger — and doubtless a very apprehensive owner — starts pushing.

Weighing only about six hundredweights, it rolls easily — at least it seems to from inside!

Disengaging the clutch, with the gear lever back in low ratio, the Morgan slows almost to a halt, then suddenly the rare 1098cc Blackburn water-cooled Vee twin erupts into life.

Immediately, you can feel the vibration, smell the Castrol 'R' vegetable oil and hear the unmistakable off-beat sound that only an unsilenced Vee twin can produce. And so can the entire neighbourhood — the twin fish-tail exhaust pipes doing more to amplify than attenuate the glorious sound. I blip the throttle to keep the engine alive and the magneto timing is now advanced to its normal running setting — it really barks, raring to go, but not before my instructor has climbed aboard. Lawrence's job is to regulate the engine's oil feed and maintain pressure inside the fuel tank, using a dashboard mounted pump which resembles that of a primus stove.

Cautiously I edge home the clutch, half expecting it to stall.



Dashboard shot (upper left), shows large steering wheel dominating cockpit. Note manual fuel pump and drip-feed lubrication system on left of dash, advance and retard lever on steering wheel. It helps to have friends (left), showing start up while below, owner seems apprehensive. Inset (far right), handbrake works surprisingly well on front wheels

S P E C I A L S U P P L E M E N T

or go kangarooing down the road. There's no drama though: the clutch plate bites as smoothly and progressively as many a modern car — and we're away amid clouds of blue smoke... from the engine. I hasten to add!

Gathering speed, which it does with frightening rapidity, it does not take long to find out that maintaining any semblance of directional control is an acquired art. The Super Aero is fitted with a steering box reduction drive, very similar to that used on the Model T Ford. It lowers the gearing to something approaching half a turn lock to lock, and is supposed to reduce steering effort. However, in spite of this, and the advantage of a large steering wheel, it still feels immovably heavy, with the slightest twitch sending the car scurrying across the road.

This is unnerving. Obviously it would not do to have a mishap in such a prized possession (especially with the owner on board) — though it would not be the Morgan's first accident in its near 60-year history: it was completely rebuilt in 1928 with the first of what was to become the distinctive "beetle-back" bodies.

Curiosity dictates a brisker pace and a change into second

gear. I'm half expecting the transmission to make expensive grunting noises, or worse, to seize solid — but, depressing the clutch, edging the lever into neutral and pausing, it slips into second smoothly and silently. With only two ratios, they are inevitably wide apart, so there is a considerable drop in revs accompanying the change up. To its credit, the Blackburn engine (of the type that was used in a successful 104 miles in an hour record attempt) is astonishingly flexible, pulling strongly despite revving so slowly that the individual firing pulsations can be felt.

Now, wind in the hair motoring can really be appreciated, but this Morgan does have minor failings. Along with the wind, one's body gets assaulted with oil, water, petrol and grease from every source imaginable, not to mention heat soak from the radiator. And worse, without mudguards, you have to be particularly careful what you run over with the front tyres, lest it ends up in your face!

There's no speedometer fitted, so it is impossible to tell how fast it is going, and the tachometer (reading to 6,000 rpm, though usual maximum is 4,000 rpm) does not work on this occasion.

In any case, the Morgan's performance would depend greatly on what gearing was used — this being easily varied by fitting alternative chainwheel sprockets, just like a bicycle.

Some indication of its performance potential can be gleaned from the Blackburn engine's 45-50 bhp allied to a total weight of around six hundredweight, giving a power-to-weight ratio in the region of 160 bhp/ton. That is better than the Porsche 944...

Unlike most three-wheelers, the Morgan feels immensely stable, with no sign of body roll around corners. This is because all the weight is low down, and contained within a triangle formed by the three wheels. (In concept, the gearbox mounted between the driver and rear wheel and drive to it via a torque tube enclosed propshaft, is similar to that of a Porsche 944.) It is also because the three wheel independent suspension is unyieldingly firm, and the Morgan has a particularly wide front track. Interestingly, the sliding pillar front suspension, which gives zero camber change, continues to be used on modern Morgans.

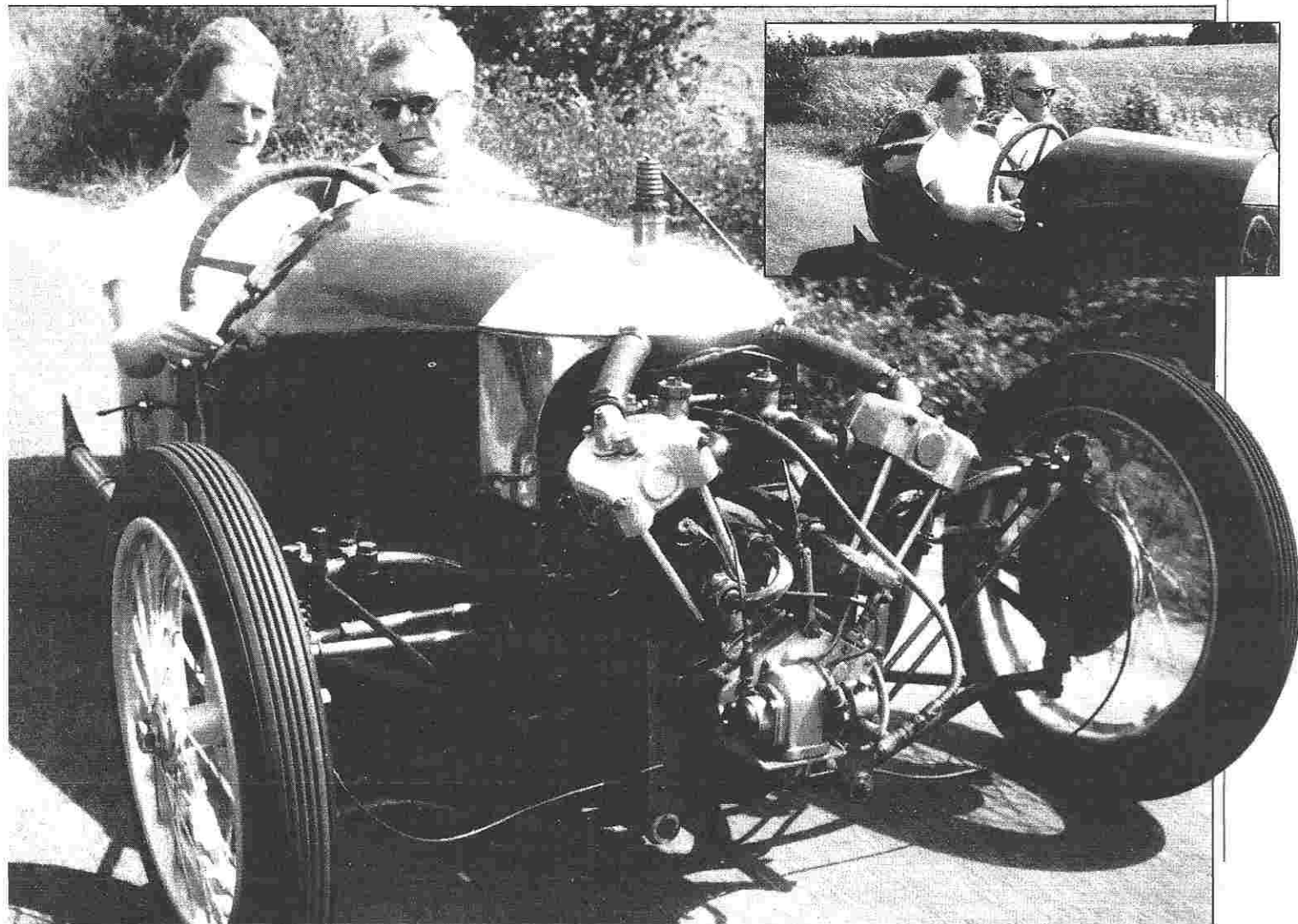
Every movement of the front suspension (not that there is much) and front wheels can be

seen from the cockpit, every ripple in the road, felt. But despite this jarring ride, and nearly 60 years use on the road and track (it was first road-registered in 1928), the lightweight structure still feels incredibly solid and free of the scuttle-shake which plagues too many modern open cars.

Regrettably there was no opportunity to experience the Morgan's capabilities at high speed, but I'm told that over anything less than a perfect surface, most of the time is spent airborne — with the occupants rattling around like peas in a pod. Normal racing practice is to huddle down inside the cockpit, out of the airstream, so improving maximum speed. I preferred a more conventional seating position, allowing me to see ahead.

The dual braking systems work surprisingly effectively — though obviously it is not possible to use the handbrake and change down simultaneously. With only two gears, it is not a problem which occurs often.

My thanks to Lawrence Weeks for trusting me with his Super Aero (which incidentally cost him just £125, "a few years ago"). It was a challenge to drive and as thrilling as any modern Italian exotic.



The elegant

WHEN, IN 1909, H.F.S. Morgan built the first Morgan Runabout three-wheeler in his Malvern Link garage and service station he did so to find a use for a 7 hp Peugeot V-twin engine he had acquired.

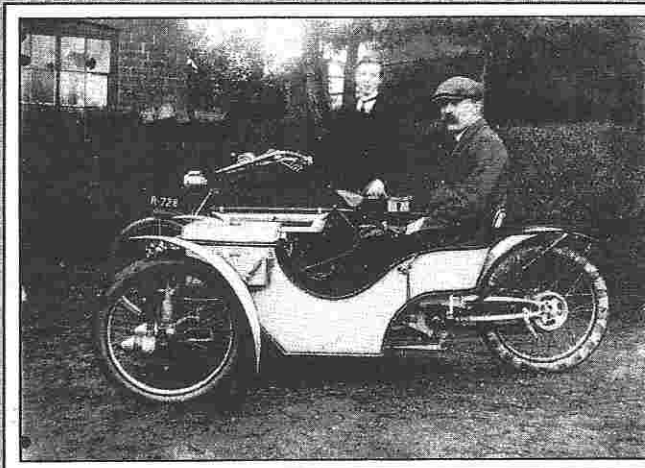
People are too apt to regard the early Morgan three-wheelers as somewhat crude devices, whereas in fact they were the most elegant creations of a man who, when at school, was undecided whether to become an artist or an engineer. His first 1909 chassis consisted of a central tube, with the engine mounted at the front and a propeller shaft running through it to a bevel box. That had sprockets of different sizes on each side, engaged by dog clutches. From these sprockets the drive was taken to a second pair, mounted on each side of the single rear wheel, so that a very simple two-speed transmission was obtained. Two further tubes ran parallel to the main central tube and, on early Morgans, doubled as exhaust pipes, which is why so few early Morgans have survived — internal corrosion from the exhaust gases ate away the tubes!

At the front of the 1909 chassis was the coil spring and vertical pillar independent front suspension which has been a feature of all Morgans, right up to the latest V-8 engined Vitesse — again, a light and elegant solution to the problem posed by hanging a big V-twin engine on the very nose of the car.

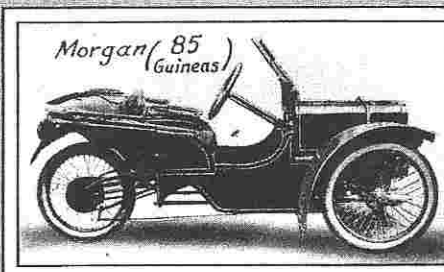
Throughout all subsequent Morgans, the preference of HFS for a light, simple solution to any problem — and, preferably, for a component which could fulfil a double purpose — was to be evident.

From that first single-seater prototype sprang a line of the most famous three-wheelers that continued until the early 1950s. Very soon, the line had divided into the fierce sporting models — with their V-twins out in the open and their short, compact streamlined two-seater bodies recalling the stubby radial-engined RAF fighters such as the Gamecock and the Siskin of the 1920s and '30s — and, on the other hand, the family models with their V-twins under a bonnet and square-cut bodies seating up to four. The two children in the back, though, learned early in life what hard times really meant, for their rear accommodation was spartan!

H.F.S. Morgan's designs may have looked simple, but they were anything but crude, and his 1909 independent suspension has lasted through 75 years in production. Philip Turner traces the history of the Malvern marque in words and pictures



1909: the first Morgan, powered by the 7 hp Peugeot V-twin. Seated in the car is Stephenson Peach, the engineering master at Malvern College. In whose workshops much of the machining work for the first car was carried out

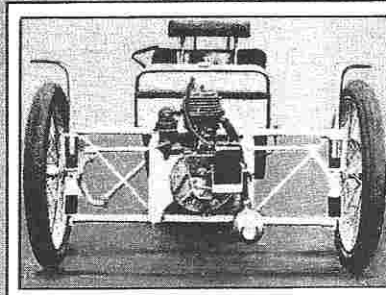
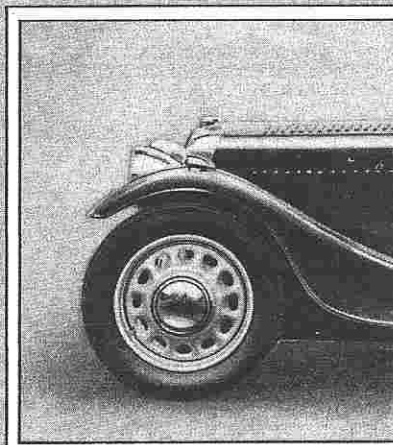


1913: Family model — an early example

In 1933, the Family line of three-wheelers gave place to the F-series, powered by four-cylinder water-cooled Ford engines of 8 hp and 10 hp. In addition to the central tube between the engine and the three-speed gearbox, there were now Z-section side members, with the top flange turned outwards and the bottom flange turned inwards to support the wood floor.

From the F-series three-wheelers came the first of the four-wheel car-type Morgans in 1936, the 4/4 — four cylinders and four wheels — powered by a Coventry-

Climax engine with overhead inlet and side exhaust valves. The 4/4 line continues to the present day, with the Climax unit replaced by a 1,267 cc overhead valve Standard engine in 1939, but there was a gap from 1950 (when the Plus 4 was introduced) until 1955 when the 4/4 Series 2 was launched with Ford 1,172 cc side-valve engines and with the gearbox in unit with the engine for the first time in a Morgan. Various Ford overhead valve engines replaced the side-valve unit in succeeding years, and today the 4/4 is powered either by the Ford CVH engine or the



1910: the first production Morgan was available with either a JAP V-twin or a single cylinder 4 hp JAP. The simple chassis with its central tube housing the propeller shaft had two side tubes which also acted as exhaust pipes, and the early form of the independent front suspension still used today

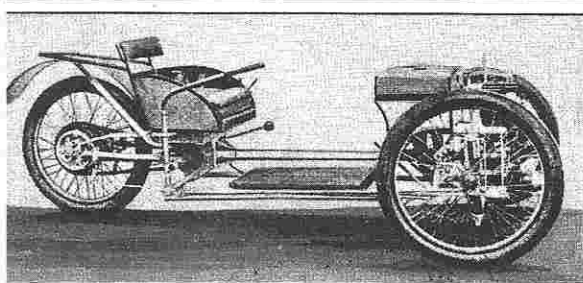
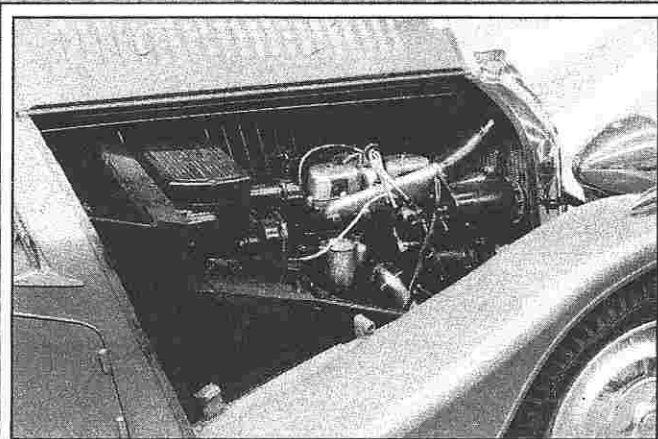
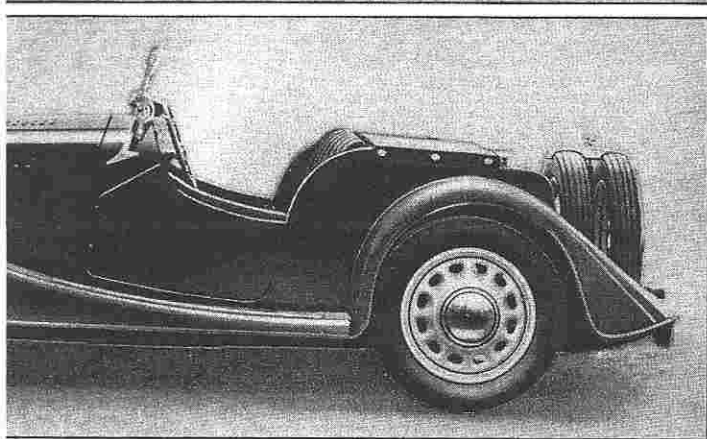
Fiat twin overhead camshaft engine, both of 1,600 cc.

The 4/4 was dropped in 1950 because Standard-Triumph ceased making its engine in order to concentrate all production on the Standard Vanguard, whose 2,138 cc engine powered the Plus 4 introduced that year. The Plus 4 underwent considerable development, receiving ever hotter engines which Standard-Triumph developed for their TR sports cars. The traditional Morgan appearance changed, too, in late 1953 when, as Lucas where no longer making the separate head lamps, the front was faired in and the headlamps built in to the front wings.

In 1968, when Standard-Triumph went over to a six-cylinder engine which was too long to fit into the Morgan's engine bay, the Plus 8 was introduced, powered by the Rover V8 engine, to which has now been added the Vitesse version with the fuel-injected Rover V8.

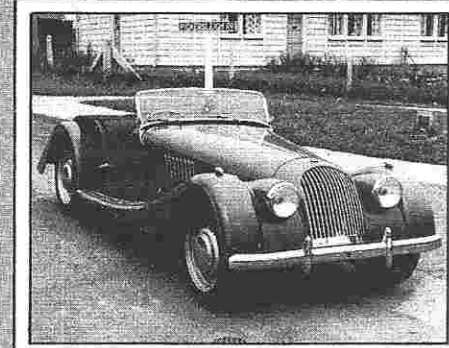
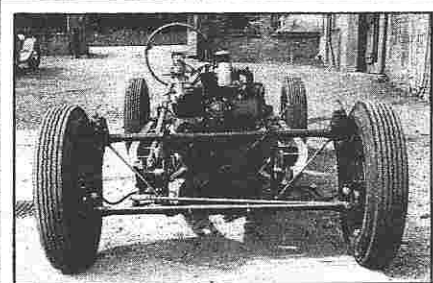
S P E C I A L S U P P L E M E N T

solution

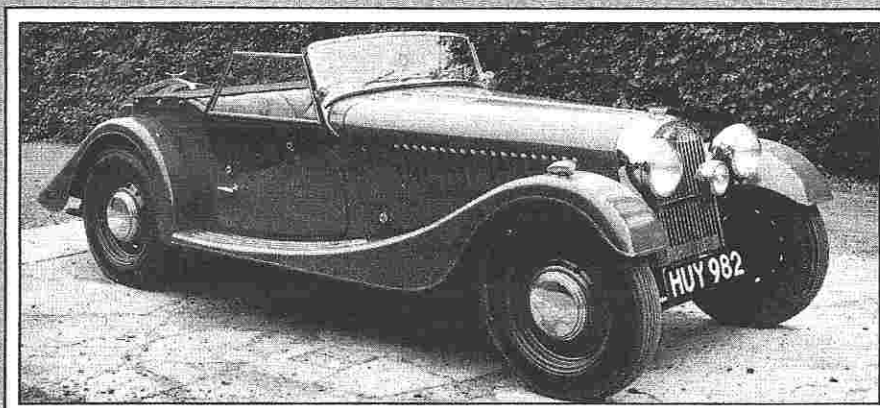


1936: first of the four-wheeled Morgans, the 4/4 powered by a 1,267 overhead inlet, side exhaust valve Coventry Climax engine

1950: the first Plus 4 was both longer and wider than the 4/4, but the increased torque and power output of its 2,138 cc Standard Vanguard engine more than took care of the increased dimensions. The independent front suspension of the Plus 4 followed the same general layout as in previous Morgans, but the length of the springs had been increased by the swan neck shaped ends of the top tube



1967: by the end of its production, the front of the Plus 4 had undergone considerable re-styling



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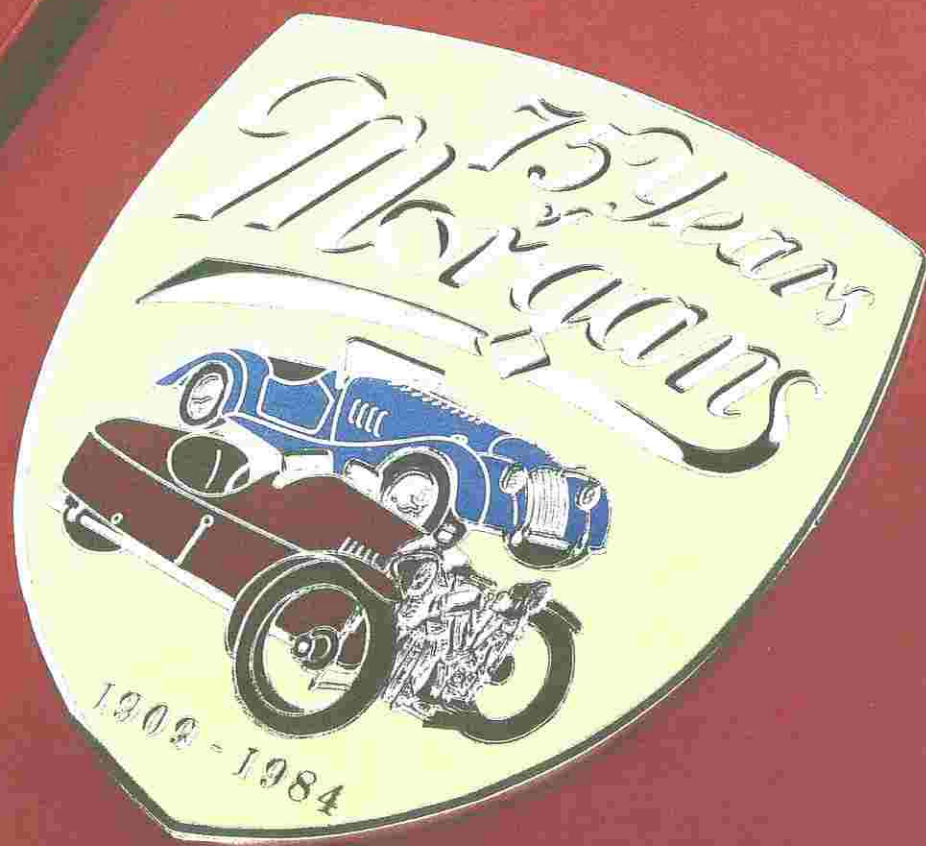
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