

SEPT/OCT 2021

Vol 44 Issue 5

The Morganeer



THE JOURNAL OF THE
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OR A CLASSIC?

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COVER PHOTO

David Crandall's 1971 Plus 8 in front of Maryhill Stonehenge, Maryhill, WA a full-size, astronomically-aligned concrete replica built in 1918.

Second of three cover contest winners!

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FROM THE PRESIDENT

Maura Hall

Gentle reader, welcome to a gentle, rainy, foggy morning here in the Spa City, AKA Saratoga, NY. There is a mist over the racetrack and some passing fog in the state park. Believe it or not, no matter what Frank says, I am *not* cleaning the car today (that was two days ago) and neither am I considering how to incapacitate anyone with my pinky this afternoon. I'm not teaching today, and we did just have a taekwondo competition, so the general population is safe for now.

No, gentle reader, I am merely sitting on the porch, looking at the weather, and thinking how pretty tot town looks today. And I'm excited that we are going to see so many of you here so soon. A few brave souls are walking past me on their way to bet on the horses, and I'm curious how they feel about Saratoga. So gentle reader, let's ask them what fun facts they know! Besides the obvious ones. Most people here know a bit about the American Revolution and the local fun facts. But what else do they know?

"There are over 20 mineral springs in this town, they are throughout the city and the park, and each one has a different make up and flavor—they are supposed to be very good for you!" *Author's note: this commenter has actually gone and tasted them all!*

"The hotel you will be staying at, the Gideon Putnam, is named after—you guessed it, and he was the first to build hotels here for travelers, and the first



in town to donate land to save public spaces. So, it is fitting that the park hotel is named for him." *Note: this visitor has stayed there over 13 times.*

"The racecourse here opened in 1863, and the town has always been known for gambling. You can still tour the Casino in the park, but it's a museum now. But they did open a casino by the harness track." *Note: this visitor is apparently NOT a successful gambler, to judge by their losses at the track today.*

"Not only was the potato chip invented here, but possibly the club sandwich too, since we mentioned the casino. The owner, Richard Canfield, wanted to make sure his cliental—gamblers—didn't wander away from the tables just because they were hungry. So, the staff made "club sandwiches" and made them available in the clubhouse, so the gambling would continue". *Note: I knew the potato chip story, but I didn't know about the club sandwich!*

Can't wait to see you all here at Autumn MOG!

Maura



A golf course on Roosevelt Drive in the city of Saratoga Springs (Tyler A. McNeil)

FROM THE EDITOR

Jonathan Kinghorn



How much do you love your Morgan? Enough to want to be buried in it? That's what millionaire Australian businessman and car collector Philip Allen has decided he wants to do, according to a story run by the British newspaper *The Daily Mail*. And we're not talking about just any old Morgan here—it is one of the 100 AeroMax cars built. This particular example was originally built for *Top Gear*'s Richard Hammond, who was reportedly already regretting having sold it before this plan came to light. Allen, who made his many millions importing Kickers and JBL speakers for cars into Australia, acquired the vehicle in 2014 and is its third owner; his stable of other interesting cars includes a 1935 MG PA Airline coupe and several Ferraris, but the AeroMax holds a special place in his heart; he apparently considers it to be “rolling art” and the love of his life.

The plan is for Allen to be mummified; dressed in his best leather jacket, leather pants, and crocodile boots; and placed in the car with one hand on the steering wheel and the other holding a cigar. The car will then be placed in a special container (already ordered) and set up on axle stands so the tires don't flatten. This container will then be buried with a concrete slab on top of it to prevent unauthorized access! The whole burial will cost tens of thousands of dollars.

I love my Morgan too, but I'd like it to be enjoyed by others long after I am no longer able to get in and out of it.

Another snippet of news is that the Morgan Motor Company built the last of its new three wheelers at the end of August—one of the 33 P101 special edition series machines. The company has produced a short celebratory YouTube video (<https://youtu.be/FAFEJmF1-zk>) capturing “a moment in time as the last few are built in the workshops at Pickersleigh Road”. The final vehicles evidently included a limited run of bespoke models. All is not lost, however, as the company promises that the three wheeler will return at some point, but when and in what form have yet to be revealed. Watch this space for what comes next, they say, “The Morgan 3 Wheeler will return”... In this issue we share some other PR from the Morgan Motor Company about their new (very) limited edition off-road Morgan model—electric Morgan's and off-road Morgans—what's next? Morgan SUVs? Flying Morgans?

Steve Schefbauer has an account of a 3/4 Group/ Litchfield Lotus Group outing to Lime Rock Park, new member **Bob Britton** tells how he returned to Morganmania, and **Colin Bray** of the Morgan Sports Car Club of Canada provides a great article about the rare and mysterious Morgan Plus 4 Competition model. Sadly, we also have not one, but two, articles from **Paul Fredericks** and **Larry Sheehan** celebrating a couple of great Morganeers we have lost recently, Henry Angel and Jim Prior. And I contributed a short article about John Sprinzel, the “S” in the Morgan SLR, who passed as our previous issue was put to bed. **Spider Bulyk** has come up trumps again with an entertaining and informative Tech Talk discussing axle and gear ratios, and there is other stuff in this issue for you to enjoy also.

Where did summer go? I hope you're managing far more Morganeering than I am. So far, my season has been too wet or too hot, or I have been too busy—and now the car is in the shop! But there are still events taking place—I just seized the moment and registered for British by the Sea at the last moment—and of course Mog is only a few weeks away now! I have the New England British Reliability Run to look forward to in mid-September, and to write about afterwards for *The Morganeer*. Which brings me, rather neatly—if I say so myself—to a reminder that if you are attending a Morgan-relat-

ed event or of on a Morganeering adventure please write about it for your club magazine—and while you are at it, take lots of photos! We'd all love to see them.

May your road be smooth,
Jonathan

TO THE EDITORS

Guys,

A real blockbuster issue boys. Chock full of interesting content, the mark of *The Morganeer* for many years. Nicely done.

And Spider—okay I admit. You out-tongue and cheeked me. But the final words have NOT been spoken. For one thing, the DHC is back to its old trick of leaking all possible fluids. And of course, not always from the same places. Maddening! Not sure who has a more twisted sense of humor—you or my Morgan Gremlins! A tossup perhaps.

The Mad Hatter

Dearest Wujek Vadim,

On bended knee, I offer my most effusive and gracious “Thank You” for your clearly heartfelt and enthusiastic compliment on the latest issue, although I feel I contributed only a wee part to what was indeed a very artfully turned set of pages by the Editors. Likewise for your compliment about “out-tongue-in-cheeking” you—not an easy feat I might observe—given your well known penchant for humor in the ultra-dry mode. In the oft heard words of my long deceased father, “The pleasure was almost all mine.” So now that “I seem to now owe you one” has been given its rightful entry by way of the above paragraph, allow me to offer: how may I be of assistance to you in solving the annoying ailments of your DHC? Go ahead ask away ...



Remaining as always,
your ardent fan,
Spider

Continued on p. 4

TO THE EDITORS CONTINUED

Hi Jonathan,

I must admit, along with mentioning that the July/August *Morganeer* is a lovely edition, that I am surprised no one chimed in with a letter to the editor after Frank's—assessment—of my character ... My sons were waiting to see what comments floated my way!

Nicely done, Mom hasn't stopped reading it yet!

Maura

Hi, We want everyone to be at Autumn MOG this year, don't you? The number of MOG members planning to come Autumn MOG in Saratoga Springs, NY (1-2-3 October) continues to grow. We expect a rush of additional reservations in the next few weeks. (If we need extra rooms, we have no assurances that the Hotel will honor the same low price for them.)

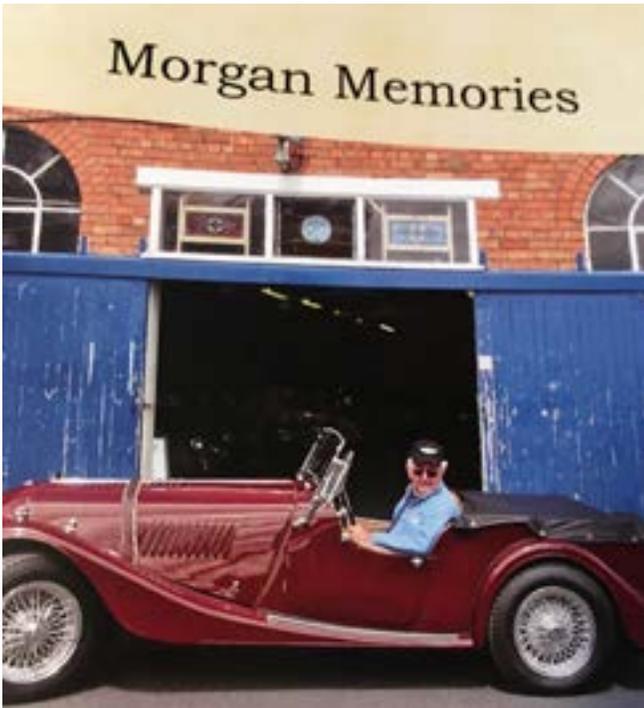
Don't miss out. Join us. Let's make up for a missed year and a half. For the most current information on the Autumn MOG event, hotel, registration, and other details go to <https://www.morgan34.org>.

Thanks, Tom Austin

IN MEMORIAM

Jim Prior

Larry Sheehan



It was 1997 and there we were attending our first or second Autumn MOG which was held at the Appletree Inn, just across the lane from Tanglewood. The Berkshires in Fall are always a beautiful sight. We were absolute newbies to the 3/4 Morgan Group and our 1961 Plus 4 was the "beater" of the squadron and a very sad sight indeed. Somewhat in awe, we were admiring all the various years and models of Morgans in attendance for the traditional Saturday morning Concours d'Elegance.

Off in the distance we could hear the throaty approach of still another sports car. With an accelerating uphill squeal of rubber, in drove a tricked out, fire breathing MGB as confident as could be. I remember wondering, "What the hell? Could this fellow be lost?" Not at all. The driver of that interloping

cousin Marque was none other than Jim Prior who had driven up from Warwick, Rhode Island ... for the day.

With that now familiar and a teeny bit disarming Jack Nicholson sort of smile, Jim explained that he was in the market for a Morgan and had figured that there was no better place to look than at an annual gathering of Morgans. Well true enough! As we all know, Jim found that Morgan but more importantly he also found a home and was welcomed with open arms into the greater family of Morgan owners, and what became many, many long-term dear friends.

Jim was a special sort of guy who would help you in any way possible. The fact that you were a direct competitor in exactly the same class at any and all Concours d'Elegance was never an impediment to Jim reaching out and enabling you to more efficiently compete head to head with him. By way of a few examples let me explain.

I can't recall which car show it was, but Jim finished first and I finished second in class. While wrapping up the day and preparing to leave the field, I commented on the customized treatment that Jim had fabricated for his SU carburetors. Well, with that smile that I mentioned a moment ago, the inner Jack Nicholson of Jim whispered in my ear that these were in point of fact Harley Davidson parts rebranded with Morgan markings. We both had a good laugh and pushed on for our respective drives home. But that was not the end of it. Within a week I received a package in the mail from Jim with the gift of similar carburetor covers.

On another occasion Jim and Joan showed up at one of the Autumn MOG's that we held in Newport, Rhode Island. By this time I had habituated to the fact that every time we would see the Prior's Morgan, there would be unique, innovative, and always attractive changes/improvements. Jim knew how to keep all competitors guessing and on their toes. Well Jim had added a handy dandy four-hole fixture to the front of his tool compartment from which hung four spanking new, pre gaped, ready to install, spark plugs. To my way of thinking this was innovative and practical and I told Jim as much. He confessed that he had designed the fixture and had made it in his shop. I was impressed. I like fabrication.

That event having been Autumn Mog, it was in October and the next time I saw Jim and Joan was at the annual holiday party. Toward the end of the party as everyone was going their separate ways, Jim came up to me with a big smile, and a small

package and said that it was something he had for me. And of course when I opened it, there was the wonderful innovation of a spark plug holder for the front of my tool compartment. That was the kind of guy that Jim was.

To this day, that holder continues (and will continue) to grace the ever practical innovations that I rely on when traveling in my Morgan. And the carb covers although not on the engine currently, stand ready for installation for any and all Concours d'Elegance. Thank you Jim.

As you may know Jim was a craftsman; He had a keen eye for excellence and loved to work with his hands. And as we also know he loved everything British.

David Crandall told the story of how Jim and Joan were part of the group of owners that David organized in 2009 to ship their Morgans to the UK for the big Centenary festivities. Although Jim never belabored the point, the Prior's Plus 4 took 3rd in the Centenary Concours at Cheltenham; which is an extraordinary achievement. And perhaps for a bit of humor, upon return to the docks in Newark, the sniffer dogs alerted at his car as Jim had decided to bring back a bit of beer from the UK and had it hidden under the parcel shelf! Unfortunately, the customs agent damaged the car by jimmying the door open to investigate.

Why bring back smuggled beer from the UK? Well, what you may not know is that Jim built an authentic replica of a British pub spanning the entire basement of his home! Now what this meant was that if you were lucky enough to have an overnight stay with the Prior's, Joan's dinner was delicious and drinks were readily available and consumed in the downstairs pub. And only having access to that pub would give you an understanding of just how many First in Class and Best in Show awards Jim and Joan had achieved.

Jim and Joan made a commitment once they got their Morgan in excellent shape, to campaign the car near and far. I have no idea what the furthest actual car show was for them (probably the UK) but I do know that a good friend of mine from Atlanta texted me from the Amelia Island show and to my surprise and delight there was a smiling (remember that smile I mentioned) Jim Prior sending me proper greetings from the Amelia Island Concours d'Elegance competition field. Jim never bragged about these "Invitation Only" events nor Cheltenham; and he never begrudged a worthy competitor a well-earned win. He was always graceful and was just thrilled and delighted to be competing at the highest level.

I'm going to miss the slap on the back, and the humorous turn of phrase that kept us laughing and in *good spirits*. And I'm going to miss that endearing smile of a true competitor with a heart of gold. Thank you Jim, for showing us the way.

May the road rise to meet you;
May the wind be always at your back;
May the sun shine warm upon your face;
May the rains fall softly upon your fields.
Until we meet again,
May God hold you in the hollow of His hand.

IN MEMORIAM

Henry Angel

Paul Fredericks



Henry and Sue Angel

What makes a man great? Is it his accomplishments in the business world? His dedication to his faith, or his family? Earning the respect of everyone who knew him? The ability to repair and maintain anything electrical or mechanical?

Henry Angel (1931-2021) was all of these. Plus, he had a calm demeanor and a quiet patience, coupled with a quick wit. He was an inventor with multiple patents for blood analyzing equipment, one for a boating navigation aid, and was involved in the development of the breathalyzer and CO measurement devices.

In our Morgan world he owned his '73 4/4 for 43 years. For 20 years he also had a '34 SS trike. He was a past winner of the Harry Carter award and, for most of the 80s and 90s, he was a regular at 3/4 club events. Many times with his daughter and me driving the 4/4, Henry and Sue with the trike in tow. I have great memories of working with Henry on both cars. We are now the custodians of the 4/4. I wish the trike was still in the family.

Henry and Sue were married for 67 years. Theirs has been a great example to their three children and six grandchildren of how a marriage should be: a long and loving partnership. He was thrilled to meet his first great granddaughter and missed the arrival of the second by a few weeks. We miss him every day, but the memories always bring smiles and laughter.

Ed: For more on Henry & Sue Angel see their Member Profile in the September/October 2012 issue.



NEW 2021 Morgan THREE WHEELER Maserati Pontevichio Bordeaux Matte Satin Finish - Special One of One // **HAIL BRITANNIA EDITION!!**

2017 Morgan THREE WHEELER Willow Green, Honey Tan Leather // **6,700 MILES**

1934 Morgan MX4 SUPER Matchless water-cooled engine, modified with foot pedal gas feed, dash mounted choke and spark advance // **BEST OF CLASS IN HUNTINGTON BEACH CONCOURS 2019**

1933 Morgan MX4 SUPER SPORT Silver, Matchless water-cooled engine // **GROUND UP RESTORATION**

1930 Morgan AERO VAN MX4 Vee twin engine, Pozzi Blue, Scarlet red leather // **FULLY RESTORED**

ROADSTERS

NEW 2022 Morgan Plus Six the new era of performance and refinement // **ORDER YOUR EXAMPLE**

NEW 2019 Morgan Plus 4 BMW Silver Glacier body, Morgan Sport Black wings, Scarlet with Royal Blue XT Leather trim, range of '110 edition' options

700 miles 2019 Morgan 3.7 V6 ROADSTER Champagne Metallic, Sky Blue Yarwood leather // **MINT!**

2003 Morgan Plus 8 Royal Ivory, Mulberry Leather // **ANNIVERSARY EDITION - 18K MILES!**

2003 Morgan Plus 8 Ivory exterior, Black Yarwood Leather // **ANNIVERSARY EDITION - 10.8K MILES!**

2003 Morgan Plus 8 Morgan Navy Blue, Black leather // **ANNIVERSARY EDITION!**

2002 Morgan Plus 8 British Racing Green, Tan leather // **BEAUTIFUL EXAMPLE!**

1995 Morgan Plus 8 Plus LS1 Corvette V8 powered, 6 speed // **ULTRA RARE BILL FINK/ ISIS IMPORTS CONCEPTS AND BUILDS**

WWW.MORGANWEST.NET



1984 Morgan Plus 8 Isis TURBO CONVERSION Special Corsa Red/Cinnamon leather // **PROPANE-POWERED**

1963 Morgan Plus 4 SUPERSPORT. Dark Blue, Black leather, Black 72 spoke wire wheels // **BEST ORIGINAL RACING RECORD IN EUROPEAN HISTORY OTHER THAN TOK258; SIMILARLY UNBEATABLE IN BOTH EAST AND WEST COAST VINTAGE RACE VENUES!**

1963 Morgan Plus 4 SUPERSPORT, British Racing Green, Black leather // **HUGE PRICE REDUCTION- OPPORTUNITY OF A LIFETIME!!**

1962 Morgan Plus 4 Four passenger, Red body/Black Wings // **RESTORATION BY PHIL EISENBERG & RICHARD TUTTLE**

1949 Morgan Four/ FOUR SERIES 1 Tan body with chocolate wings, Chocolate leather // **HUGE PRICE REDUCTION- WHAT AN OPPORTUNITY!**

OTHER MARQUES

NEW 2021 Allard J2X MkIII Coming soon!

2009 Aston Martin VIRAGE DROPHEAD Stunning!

1965 Sunbeam TIGER Mk1A Race Rally Prepped!

1962 FIAT O.S.C.A.

1500S CABRIOLET by PININFARINA. Perfection!

1959 Austin-Healey BUGEYE SPRITE Larger 1,100cc engine!



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JOHN SPRINZEL

Another Legend Lost

Jonathan Kinghorn

John Sprinzel, the “S” in the Morgan SLR, died on the Hawaiian island of Molokai at the end of May 2021 aged 90. He was born Hans Sprinzel in Berlin in 1930, but his family fled Germany three years later to escape Nazi persecution. They settled in north London and John, as he became known, secured British citizenship in 1940. A passionate and competitive sailor, he began racing motorcycles in about 1948. His debut in saloon car competition followed in 1955 when he impetuously entered the Royal Automobile Club (RAC) Rally so promptly that he was allocated the number 1—only he didn’t have a car. He solved the problem by borrowing his mother’s new Austin A30, telling her that he wanted it for a quiet sightseeing trip to Wales and the Lake District. His mother thought this an odd thing to do in March but learned the truth when she spotted her car and son in TV coverage of the event!

Sprinzel became a formidable saloon car racer focused on endurance racing and rallying. In International events during 1960, for example, he won his class at the 12 Hours of Sebring race and scored 2nd place overall in both the Liège-Rome-Liège and RAC rallies.

In 1957, while still working in his father’s printing business, he co-founded a part time operation called Speedwell Performance Conversions to modify Austin A35s, Morris Minors, and Austin Healey Sprites for competition. He soon sold his share to future grand prix champion Graham Hill, whom he had hired as a mechanic, to join the Donald Healey Motor Company as Manager of “Special Equipment”. He formed Healey’s London-based Speed Equipment Division

to modify Sprites for race, rally, and fast road use and was instrumental in developing the production Sebring Sprite coupe there.

In 1961 he bought out the Healey operation in London and established John Sprinzel Racing in trendy Lancaster Mews, where the fully alloy-bodied Sebring Sprite was developed. As well as being a mecca for the motor sports fraternity, John Sprinzel Racing was a dealership selling cars including Marcos, MG, Porsche, Alfa Romeo, Jensen, Ford, and Opel models. With the ‘60s swinging the business also created upmarket customized interiors for the Mini; celebrity clients included actress Ursula Andress, Brian Jones of the Rolling Stones, and Ringo Starr.

In addition to being a successful racing car modifier Sprinzel became a motorsports entrepreneur, freelance journalist, author, and rally organizer. He published three books, wrote for several prestigious motoring magazines, and in 1970 famously organized the 16,000-mile London to Mexico World Cup Rally. This “madcap” event took 96 cars through 20 countries to finish at the Estadio Azteca in Mexico City four days before the World Cup soccer tournament kicked off there. It is still regarded as one of the greatest endurance rallies ever held.

Sprinzel retired to a smallholding in 1973 to run an animal food business. A keen sportsman, he played basketball, water polo, and squash when he was younger, and always remained passionate about sailing. He eventually sold his animal food business and went to live on his yacht in the Aegean. He learned the fledgling sport of windsurfing in 1979, set up a school in Corfu to teach it, and established a branch in Turkey; he was a member of the Greek team at the 1982 and 1983 world championships.

Details of the SLR story vary in some accounts. As far as I can ascertain, the impetus for the project came from Chris Lawrence, fresh from his momentous class win at Le Mans in 1962, and painfully aware of the traditional Morgan’s aerodynamic limitations. Having taken tuning the motor and chassis as far as he could go he wanted something more streamlined to race. Late in 1963 he had LawrenceTune’s Chris Spender design



An Austin-Healey Sebring Sprite coupe. (Brian Snelson)



Chris Lawrence’s Morgan SLR (Craig Howell)

a new body to fit the Morgan chassis. (This may have been a development of an abandoned four-seater coupe project.) The bodies were to be fabricated in aluminum by Charlie Williams and Len Pritchard, the coachbuilders Williams & Pritchard, (who made the alloy coupé tops and fiberglass bonnets for the Sebring Sprite) before the cars were returned to LawrenceTune for completion.

Spender's drawings for the bodywork were seen, so the story goes, by club racer Neil Dangerfield, then racing a 1961 Triumph TR4 being prepared for him by Sprinzel and tuned by Lawrence. As Dangerfield mulled enhancements for the upcoming season Sprinzel evidently told him about the proposed new bodywork. Dangerfield was impressed by the design and wanted it fitted to his TR4—and, as a partner in a firm of stockbrokers, had the cash to pay for it. His money, and additional funds from his sponsor, enabled Lawrence's proposal to become a reality. Most published accounts state that Dangerfield's TR4 was the first car to receive the gorgeous and

svelte bodywork but a postscript on the GoMog website arising from an interview with Spender (<https://www.gomog.com/SLR/allSLR.html>) claims otherwise.

Four cars were rebodied—the TR4-based SLR1 for Neil Dangerfield and the Plus 4-based SLR2 for Gordon Spice, SLR3 for Lawrence himself, and SLR4 for Pip Arnold (driven for several seasons by him and Chris Lawrence). Although superficially appearing identical, the four SLRs were each individual projects, and they differed in detail. The TR4 chassis of SLR1, most notably, was similar in dimension to the Plus 4 chassis, but not identical and its Plus-4-based SLR siblings were five inches longer. Both base models, of course, used the same engine, which received similar upgrades to boost output.

A "joint venture" was formed to race the cars. According to Jake Alderson and Chris Chapman, Lawrence's secretary was tasked with deciding whether Lawrence's or Sprinzer's name would come first and tactfully tossed a coin—

"Sprinzer Lawrence Racing" was the outcome. The vehicle was officially launched at the Racing Car Show in London in 1964 as "the Morgan and Triumph SLR".

The goal was to perform well in major European GT races, but the plan was also to put the SLR into limited production. Although the four cars were each successful on the racetrack orders for additional vehicles sadly did not follow. At £600 for the body without either windows or interior trim—approaching the cost of a new Plus 4—it was an expensive enhancement. Unfortunately, it soon became evident that the SLR had already been outclassed on the track by the new Porsche 904. In addition, LawrenceTune's cash flow problems and Lawrence's serious injuries from a car accident (he was a passenger in the vehicle) further sapped the project's momentum, and it was abandoned. The SLRs nevertheless represents the Plus 4 in its best performing iteration and to many eyes its best looking too. All four cars still survive, still compete, and still impress.



Barrie and Mari Abrams' 2003 Plus 8 reflected in a 1912 Rolls Royce during a parade in St. Michaels, Maryland. (Barrie Abrams)

The Plus 4 'Competition' Model

Colin Bray



A member recently sent a link to a YouTube video to some of us in the club concerning a Morgan known as the Plus 4 Competition and asked if any of us knew anything about the model. Hence this article summarizing what I can find out about it.

In 1955 Morgan reintroduced the 4/4, the original model, later referred to as the Series One, had been dropped in 1950 when the Plus 4 was introduced with the 2088 cc Standard Vanguard engine—now referred to as the Plus 4 Flat Rad, it having the same type of radiator as the Series One 4/4s. In 1954 Morgan were forced to redesign the front of their cars because the separate free standing headlights were being discontinued. This resulted in the curved cowl which is still being used on Morgans to this day. But, when the 4/4 was reintroduced in 1955 it utilized a slightly 'less high' body—the so called 'low line' body. I'm not entirely sure why Peter Morgan did this but I assume it was something to do with saving money, perhaps in the manufacture of the body. It may have given the car a slightly higher top speed than if they used the normal higher body of the Plus 4 too.

Chris Lawrence prepared a Plus 4 to race at the 1961 Le Mans 24 Hour race but was refused entry allegedly on the basis that the organizers thought the car looked far outdated to be competitive. Undeterred, he managed to get approval for the 1962 race and promptly won the 2 liter class outright. Unbeknown to the organizers he had in fact obtained a 'low-line' body as used on the 4/4—the 'low-line' body was not used on the Plus 4 until several years later, so in fact Lawrence had hoodwinked the organizers in to believing the car was the same as a production model. All cars racing at Le Mans had to pass homologation requirements of at least 100 cars being produced within the last year and this clearly was not the case although to the untrained eye this would have been difficult to recognize. Apparently, Chris Lawrence and Peter Morgan, in later years, only recognized the 'low-line' cars built with the LawrenceTune engine as being true Plus 4 Super Sports. (1)

Peter Morgan had realized the potential of the car in late 1960/early 1961 and had Lawrence prepare cars for racing enthusiasts and called them the Plus 4 Super Sports, the first being introduced in February 1961. The main modifications

were a gas flowed and polished head, skimmed for higher compression ratio, special pistons, fully balanced engine, special camshaft, two twin choke Weber carburetors, oil cooler, four-branch extractor exhaust manifold and a separate distinctive large water coolant reservoir at the rear of the engine. The body and wings were made in aluminum. Separate bucket seats were available but not fitted on all cars. The cost of a normal Plus 4 two-seater was £655—after purchase tax the total was £965 3s. 7d—yes that's about 46% tax, so think yourselves lucky we are 'only' paying 13% in Ontario! The Plus 4 Super Sports cost £900—after purchase tax this came up to £1,131 14s. 9d. Not a cheap sports car anymore but something that was very competitive against anything in the 2 liter class on the racetrack.

It should be pointed out from that very first year of the 'new' 4/4 in 1955, Morgan also produced a 'Competition' model with various engine/carburetor improvements. This continued right up to the Series 5 model which was discontinued in 1968. Club members may remember Desi Benet had a 4/4 Competition car. The next 4/4 was called the 4/4 1600 and that had a competition version referred to as the 1600 GT.

So, it is no surprise that in 1966 Morgan decided to introduce a slightly faster version of the Plus 4, called the Plus 4 Competition. It appears in only one example of a sales leaflet from the 1965/66 year (photo 1). Generally, new models were introduced in August in the UK hence reference to the 1965/66 leaflet although it actually refers to the 1966 year. The leaflet describes it being introduced for the sporting enthusiast, presumably a driver who would use it as their normal transport during the week but dash off to the track to compete in the many race meetings at that time. It describes it as having the same specification as the Plus 4 two-seater but with the addition of a four-branch exhaust manifold, 72 spoke wheels rather than the standard 60 spoke although even those were an option on the standard cars. Wider tires were fitted along with adjustable rear shock absorbers and the 'low-line' body from the 4/4. The adjustable rear shock absorbers were made by Armstrong, the same company that made the lever action shock absorbers and were referred to as 'Selectaride' shock absorbers. The idea being that the rear suspension could be altered by turning a knob on the dashboard and made much stiffer (as if a Morgan doesn't have a stiff enough suspension!) for driving on smoother racetracks. The Armstrong system seems to have been electrically activated and from what I have read, quite unreliable. They also used the system for the early Jensen CV-8 although they used tubular shocks on the rear. This sort of adjustable shock absorber system, where you could adjust the stiffness from a control on the dashboard, was available on many luxury British cars in the 1930s although this was a mechanical system where turning a knob changed the pressure in the shock absorbers. Andre Hartford Friction disc shock absorbers were used at that time which consisted of a series of wooden discs that were clamped together between brass discs. A hydraulic control, made under the Telecontrol brand name, had an inflatable rubber bag in the disc pack which could be used to increase the clamping force and thus their damping stiffness. Several sporty cars used them, I have seen them on several Singer 9 Sports and Le Mans models for example.

Apparently the four-branch exhaust system was supplied by Derrington

(photo 2), who were well known manufacturers of aftermarket 'go faster' equipment for Triumph TR series and other cars and is shown in photo 3. It has been suggested that the Plus 4 Competition also included a special wood rimmed alloy steering wheel from Derrington, very similar to the well-known Moto-Lita wheel that was a popular aftermarket option on 1950s/60s British cars—I have a period one on my car. But a different type of steering wheel is not mentioned in the sales literature. Incidentally the Derrington four-branch exhaust was initially used on the Plus 4 Super Sports but found to have a flat spot in a certain rpm range and so a tuned version of a unit from Westerham was used instead.

In 1966 the price of a two-seater Morgan Plus 4 was £695 (after tax £841 7s. 1d.). The Plus 4 Competition was £775 (after tax £938 os. 5d.), about £80 more (photo 4). The Super Sports was £950 before tax—a whopping £175 pounds more (before tax...). Note how much cheaper all the models were by 1966 in comparison to 1961, the vast majority being due to reduction in purchase tax.

From the price list of options (photo 5) you can see the special four-branch exhaust was £30, the Armstrong 'Selectaride' shock absorbers £25. So, this accounts for £55 of the extra £80. Wire wheels cost an extra £32 10s.—don't for-



get, these were an option even on the standard Plus 4, so we are already just over the extra £80 for the Competition.

All the Plus 4 Competition cars are listed in Ken Hill's book *Completely Morgan Four-wheelers 1936-68* (2).

There were supposedly 42 cars shown in the factory records:

UK—17, USA—10, Canada—4, France—3, Sweden—2, Germany—2, Belgium—1, Panama—1, Switzerland—1, Australia—1

However, recently at least one more

Photo 2, Top: Derrington four-branch exhaust system for TR engines. Note the two tubes would have extender tubes going through the hole in the chassis and into an assembly joining these to a single pipe. Courtesy of Eric Elman (CT, USA) from his posting on the 'Morgan Experience' online forum.

Photo 3, botom: Derrington advert Motor Sport, March 1961. Mentions the extractor exhaust manifold for the Morgan.

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fortunately, the steel wheels used on the Morgans were not strong enough for racing and again this was very well known and owners would have switched to wire wheels and probably opted for the 72 spoke variety. The Plus 4 Competition doesn't look any different from many other Plus 4s except they use a 'low-line' body several months earlier. But how many people can recognize a 'low-line' from a 'high-line' body? There is no badge on the car stating it is a 'Competition' model.

Some owners of these cars may think they have something a little different, and this is true, but I'm not sure it adds much, if any, extra value to the car. It would be interesting to see and drive one of the cars with the 'Selectaride' shock absorber system—if it still works!

Note: The article I've based on information I have found from several sources. There is every possibility I am incorrect on some matters and would appreciate any corrections and extra information.

References:

Machiel Kalf, Team Leader of the Morgan Historic Register (part of the MSCC) referred me to this statement from the book *Morgan Sports Cars—The LawrenceTune Years 1961-64* by J.D. Alderson and Chris Chapman, publ. 2014, page 154.

Completely Morgan Four-wheelers 1936-68, by Ken Hill, publ. 1994, page 198.

<https://morganville.org/>. Click on 'Open Morgan Registry Fullpage'

Ed: This article was first published in the Spring 2021 issue of The Blurb, the club magazine of The Morgan Sports Car Club of Canada.



Dashboard from chassis number 6428 showing the knob to alter the Armstrong 'Selectaride' rear shock absorbers. Courtesy of Bill Hayter, Vancouver, BC.



Engine bay of chassis number 6428 showing the Derrington four-branch extractor exhaust system. Courtesy of Bill Hayter, Vancouver, BC.



RAVE 1966 Morgan 44 Competition, 1 of 44 Made - Derek Witham explains...

Selectaride Shock Absorber

Mad Dogs and Englishmen

(plus English Car drivers) go out in the midday sun. *3/4 Morgan Group and Litchfield Lotus Group members play nice at the Sunday, August 8, Meet and Drive and have a ball.* Steve Schefbauer Photos by Jay Frankel and Steve Schefbauer

There are some 3/4 Morgan Group members who think I don't really own a Morgan. Now, there are members of the Litchfield Lotus Group who don't think I own a Morgan as well. Life and living it has taken a temporary toll on the lumbar area of my back and I have been suffering the slings and arrows of physical therapy—all for the good, but enough to give me second thoughts on taking my girl EMMA 2 on a 1.5 hour drive up to Lime Rock Park, a 45 minute drive around the country roads in northwest Connecticut and a 1.5 hour drive back home. Sooo, discretion being the better part of valor, out came the old reliable Audi, still a sport suspension but a whole lot more gentile on the back and air-conditioned as well.

An invite from Walter Irvine, V.P. Lime Rock Park and founder of the Litchfield Lotus Group to the 3/4 Morgan Group for the second of four “Meet and Drives”.



was met with an enthusiastic “yes sir may I have more please” from our club. Four Morgans, one Audi, and one Mercedes Benz convertible made their presence

known Sunday morning at 10:00 a.m. on the lawn of Lime Rock Park: Steve and Jane Shapiro in their yellow Plus 8; David and Jane Darby in their red Plus 4; Paul and Angel Fredricks in their yellow 4/4; Gary Eberhard in his blue Plus 8; Terry and Annette Murphy in their red Mercedes because, as Terry put it, their Morgan wasn't feeling well this morning (Possibly too much partying last night?); and Ann Marie and I in the black Audi.

We all mingled and chatted with our Loti (plural of Lotus) brethren and guess what—we all talked cars and exchanged stories about our particular marques—gee what a surprise. About 20 minutes later Walter announced we all follow his lead, up to the newly expanded Autocross course for a group photo shoot by the unofficial, official photographer for the Lotus group, Jay Frankel. You may remember Jay's great photos from Jim Nichol's article “Magnificent Men in Their Flying (and Driving) Machines.” (July/Aug *The Morganeer*).



Ann Marie and the outcast Audi

After the shoot, it was time for the drive and all 20+ cars slowly filled their way out of Lime Rock's boundaries and onto the road where the "slowly" part disappeared in the roar of engines and the shifting of gears. It's hard to tell which marque handles better in the

tight, twisty turns of back country roads but both Lotus and Morgan drivers were trying to make a case for who bore the best resemblance to Fangio and Moss while keeping the group together as best they could. The Audi and Mercedes were bringing up the rear, but I felt confident

that at some stop sign or traffic light we would catch up. That and a printed copy of the driving directions, nicely created by Walter Irvine, and armed with Waze led me to believe, in this "half-fast" semi-rally that if all else failed we would all meet up at the Canaan Country Club, our final destination.

The course Walter set up was just beautiful with tight, lightly traveled, roads that contained large and small farms, woodland, lakes and if you had the time to glance, a gilded age mansion behind a large stone wall and tall iron gate. Wouldn't you like to know the history about that one—I would, and plan to go back and follow it up. All the while viewing the beautiful Berkshires in the background everywhere you looked. Along the route, people who were out gardening, walking the dog, jogging, and just hanging out outdoors would stop and raise the iPhone for photos and videos of this procession of beautiful British Iron. What a great ride!

Close to the end of the journey we all took a right into the parking area for the Wheels of Time vintage auto storage and got out. Mingling and chatting, we hardly noticed a swarm of biting flies (think of tsetse flies overwhelming Bogart and Hepburn in "The African Queen") descending on the group. Ok, Ok, it wasn't that bad but that's what Steve Shapiro and I thought of first. They were quite nasty, and Jane Shapiro suddenly became very popular because she had the foresight to bring insect repellent which she was kind enough to share.

Needless to say, we quickly left to enter the building, a large facility loaded



Outside the Wheels of Time



Inside the Wheels of Time



More Wheels of Time



Everyone liked the Bentley Speed Six

with goodies like XK 120 and XKE Jags, an assortment of Ferraris, Citroen, Nash, a very old Peugeot and, among others, a gorgeous Bentley Speed Six—which seemed to be everyone’s favorite. Here, again, this seemed to bring out even more vintage car stories as both Morgan and Lotus folks reminisced, together.

Time at Wheels of Time came to a close and we all filed out to our respective rides and in about two miles we turned right into the Canaan Country Club and were directed to park on the Terrace, on the side of the club that the patio overlooked. All, that is, except for Ann Marie’s and my Audi and the Murphy’s Mercedes, which didn’t fit into the category of Morgan or Lotus—totally understood but that’s the price of creature comfort that I was kind of happy about because, by now the temperature was 84 degrees with a very high humidity and we were riding in air-conditioning. Our host, at the club was Joe Quattrocchi, who owns the Canaan Country Club and, by the way, also owns the Wheels of Time, double thanks.

Open bar satisfied the thirst after a long hot ride and with a prix fix for unlimited burgers, hot dogs and a bottomless bowl of potato chips, all for \$15 per person, we were all happy. Beer and drinks were extra but a pint of craft IPA



Lunch served on the terrace

for \$7 and a large, fresh, iced tea for \$2 convinced Ann Marie that we should move up here—half the price of Fairfield County, Connecticut establishments. I’m not telling, but I witnessed—first hand—some Morgan club members as well as their counterparts from the Lotus club actually going back to the grill two and three times. Well, you can build up an appetite on a meet and drive and these are growing boys and girls.

So was the day a success, absolutely, 100% and there were several requests to be included in the next Meet and Drive with the Litchfield Lotus Group, September 25, with many thanks passed along in the process. I, personally and on behalf of the 3/4 Morgan Group, want to thank Joe Quattrocchi, owner of the Canaan Country Club and Wheels of Time auto storage for his hospitality also for turning over a part of his country club to the suspicious rabble of the 3/4 Morgan Group—thanks Joe

Thanks to the Litchfield Lotus Group for sharing their day and including us all at the 3/4 Morgan Group. We had a ball.

A huge thanks to Walter Irvine for arranging the day and including the 3/4 Morgan Group, against the advice of cooler heads—thanks Walter. Hope to see you all again on September 25.

The group photo



David Darby's Plus 4

more photos from
**Mad Dogs
& Englishmen**

Photos by Jay Frankel and Steve Schefbauer



Morgans on the Autocross track



Paul Frederick's 4/4

Lunch on the Canaan Country Club's terrace





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My Return to Morganmania

Bob Britton

I was probably 13 or 14 when I first laid my eyes on a Morgan. My older brother who had recently graduated from college bought a stunning Morgan DHC in Ferrari Yellow. It was such a different looking vehicle compared to the popular Mustangs and other American and British cars starting to hit the market during the early to mid-60's. I was completely smitten by the car and fantasied about owning one when I was older.

Fast forward to my Freshman year at college when I returned home for spring break and saw an ad in the *New York Times* for a 1965 Morgan Plus 4 for sale in a town close by. Well, with some money saved up from both summer and college jobs I had just enough cash to buy the car for the asking price of \$1,500, an almost fortune for a 19-year-old college kid at that time. I called a high school buddy to drive me to go see the car, with cash burning a hole in my pocket. Just as we pulled up outside the seller's house and rang the doorbell another potential buyer showed up in a cab, which he had taken from the local train station after traveling from NYC. Of course, we both wanted this beautiful black with red interior Morgan. Luckily, the owner gave me right of first refusal as I had beaten the other guy by mere minutes to the house. Glad we did not stop for that cup of coffee on the way over or otherwise I would probably never have owned a Morgan!

So, with \$1,500 less in my pocket I drove the car home, with "borrowed"

plates from my mom's car, no insurance, and I did not know how to drive a stick shift either. That was an interesting ride back home, especially learning to drive a standard with the archaic Moss gearbox.

So back to college in the Boston area I went for the spring semester with my Morgan. I sure had some envious classmates back at school when I showed up with this car. Most had no idea what it was as the campus was primarily full of VW's, small to mid-size American cars, a few muscle cars, or other British sports cars. Some kidded me about it being a "wooden crate" when they learned it had a wood-framed body. That sure did not bother me because I had the one of coolest cars on campus.

For the next two years I drove the Morgan everywhere, many times back and forth from MA to my home in NY, commuting to summer jobs, a trip once to Watkins Glen to attend the Formula 1 GP race and any chance I got to drive it. Of course, I also learned a few things about

car repair and maintenance as well. Once it left me stranded at Jones Beach, NY late one night while on a date when the steel pin that operates the aluminum throw out carbon sleeve broke. A call to one of my buddies with instructions to get a piece of rope to come get us so he could tow the car home led to a rather long night.

In the spring of my Junior year a college buddy offered me \$2,500 cash for it. He was dropping out of school and heading west and needed a "cool" car to get him there. I thought to myself ... "I paid \$1,500, drove it for 2 years and could now make a \$1,000 profit". Being a business major, it was a no brainer ... SOLD. And off he and the car went to California, both never to be heard from again.

But I had Morgan withdrawal soon after selling the car. A few weeks later I saw an ad in the *Boston Globe* for a 1967 Morgan 4/4 in Kingfisher Blue, for much less money than I sold my Plus 4 for. Yep, I was a Morgan owner again in short order.



Bob's first Morgan
1965 Plus 4 circa 1969



Bob's 4/4 on Skyline Drive, VA 1980



Bob and future wife at car show, MOG 10

That car got me through to the end of my Senior year at which time I sold it and bought a Porsche 911 to begin my work career.

About a year after graduating from college while working in the NYC area I saw an ad for a Morgan for sale in the same town I was living in. Having already owned two Morgans, I could not resist going to see the car. As you can expect I bought it even though it was not running and needed quite a bit of work. Later I discovered this was a rare Morgan 4/4 Series V Competition model. Soon after acquiring this Morgan I accepted a job in Boston.

Off to Boston I went, got myself settled into an apartment on chic Newbury St., and then started to look for a place where I could store and work on the Morgan. I found a single car garage in a nearby town for \$15/month rent including electricity. So, again I reached out to a HS buddy who just happened to have a car with a trailer hitch, we borrowed a trailer and proceeded to tow it to Boston.

Over the next several years I would spend weekends and some nights sorting through the Morgan, replacing rotten pieces of wood, having a new interior made and then eventually getting it freshly painted. As luck would have it, my brother offered to rebuild the engine for me since it was basically the same Ford engine as in his Lotus S 7 race car. So off to CT I went one weekend with that little 1500cc engine in the trunk of my car so my brother could rebuild the engine. He just so happened to have a shelf full of extra performance engine parts which he no longer needed that found their way into my engine, including a mild race cam, forged domed pistons, a dual set of Webber DCOE 40 carbs and a set of tuned headers. Those Webber's required a unique bump in the bonnet which you can see in the photos of the car. My brother estimated that the engine he built was putting out somewhere between 110-115HP, a bit more than the stock 84HP of the Series V Competition motor.

Also, at my brother's recommendation I sourced a Cortina gearbox from a junkyard which had closer ratio gears and a remote shifter which got rid of the push/pull shifter in the 4/4's. This was one amazingly fast Morgan with that engine. And, as it was not my daily driver, I had the luxury of keeping it in my rental ga-

rage to use primarily on weekends, trips to the Cape, going to car shows, or even venturing to a few Morgan meets.

In 1978 I drove the 4/4 to MOG 8 in Lu-ray, VA with a girlfriend. At some point during the meet, I heard an unwelcome noise coming from the engine, which turned out to be a broken valve spring. Fortunately, a Morgan enthusiast attending MOG 8 was a mechanic at the local Ford garage and he thought a Ford Pinto valve spring would work—so off to his dealership we drove so he could replace the broken spring. I drove that car for an additional seven years with the Pinto valve spring in it. And, to my delight my car won 1st place in the early 4/4 class. Two years later I returned to MOG 10 with a new girlfriend, who eventually became my wife, and that year my car took 2nd place in the 4/4 class.

In 1980 my future wife and I took a trip

to the UK to visit some of her English relatives. We took an few extra days to tour Wales and when I noticed that we were going to be traveling near Malvern Link I said to her, "we have to stop at the Morgan factory". So, a quick detour took us to the hills of Malvern to tour MMC. As others have noted, visiting MMC is like no other factory tour one can imagine. After being cheerfully greeted by the receptionist we were just instructed to go on the tour ourselves and to ask any questions we might have of any of the men or women working in the shop. We freely walked around everywhere. We even got to see Mrs. Peter Morgan's personal Plus 8 Automatic, supposedly the only one ever made by MMC. After our tour I ask if we could say hi to Peter Morgan and without hesitation, we were escorted into his office for a brief chat. He was a very charming fellow and was keenly interested to learn that my girlfriend's mother



Frame Shop at MMC where it all begins



Panel Beating at MMC

was English and had moved to the US just after WWII to marry her father, after they meet while he was stationed in the UK during the war.

I owned the 4/4 for about 10 years before I decided, as a new Dad, that I should sell it since there was no room for 3 in the car. So, I placed an ad in the Boston Globe and a young doctor from Puerto Rico doing his residency in one of the Boston area hospitals bought the car and had it shipped back to Puerto Rico. I often wonder if the Morgan is still running around the island and being enjoyed by him.

Of course, after owning three Morgans over a period of 16 or so years I was having British Car withdrawal so I convinced my wife that if I could find a sports car that had four seats, as we now had a second daughter, we should buy it. My initial quest was to find a Morgan 4-seater. Unfortunately, four seat Morgans were not that plentiful, especially in NH, where we were now living. However, I knew that Austin Healeys had little jump seats in the back, so I ended up buying an Austin Healey 3000 in 1991 and immediately installed two sets of seat belts in the jump seats for my daughters, who were four and seven at the time. The Healey became our new “family” sports car for many years. I have attended every British Invasion in Stowe, VT since 1992 and my older daughter, now 37, who now lives in VT, often comes to spend the day with me at the show.

Even after all the years owning the Healey—a truly magnificent British roadster—I still had the desire to own a Morgan again. I thought initially I wanted a DHC, just like the first one I saw so many years ago, so I began to look for one of these rare Morgans. I started to watch BaT auctions, checked out ads in Hemmings, spoke to Morgan owners at British Invasion and other car shows to find a DHC for sale.

I eventually test drove a beautifully restored 1967 Plus 4 DHC but the price was more than my budget. While visiting my brother who is now retired in Florida, we test drove the rarest of all DHC’s, a 4-seater “Snobmog”. But being an early 50’s model it just didn’t have the performance I was hoping for.

My brother, who now owns a Morgan 4/4 himself, mentioned that he knew of a Morgan club member in GA who had

several Morgans including a DHC, so I reached out to him to see if he might be interested in selling it. As it turned out he was, and he also mentioned he had an early Plus 8 that he wanted to sell as well as a rare Super Sport. Of course, the SS was way out of my price range but the early Moss gearbox Plus 8, the holy grail of Plus 8’s, perked my interest. That was it. I was going to buy that car instead of his DHC. So, after a many months of back-and-forth phone calls and viewing numerous photos as I could not fly down to see the car in person due to the pandemic, I purchased the car sight unseen and had it shipped to me in the late fall of 2020.

This Plus 8 is a low mileage 1971 model, supposedly one of 49 legally imported that year before Morgan Motor Company withdraw from the U.S. market due to being unable to meet DOT regulations. And as you already know Morgans had a hiatus from the U.S. market for a few years until Bill Fink figured out how to

get them legally back into the country again using propane instead of gasoline to meet emission regulations.

What appealed to me most about this Morgan is it is one of the 484 Plus 8s produced that was based on the low and narrow body Plus 4 Morgan’s with the Moss gearbox.

But the story does not end here. While an excellent original example of this rare Morgan model I decided to give it a “refreshening” over the winter including a new leather interior and two-tone paint job of royal ivory with Connaught green fenders.

I’m looking forward to Morgan ownership again so I can enjoy all the wonderful experiences I had more than 40 years ago with my previous Morgan cars. I recently joined the Morgan 3/4 Club and look forward to meeting other Morgan club members and attending events to share our mutual passion for this unique marque.



The 1971 Plus 8 upon arrival in NH



Bob's newly refreshed Plus 8

R.O.M.E.O.

Lenny Mandel



‘O Romeo, Romeo! wherefore art thou Romeo?’ From Romeo and Juliet, Act II, Scene II, this is one of Shakespeare’s best known lines.

Although the meaning of Juliet’s speech seems obvious, she’s not asking where he is, but why does he have to be a Montague, the sworn enemies of her family, thereby making their love, their union, their marriage impossible. She asks him to become a Capulet, or she’ll become a Montague.

Okay, you’re asking, what does this have to do with Morgans? Here goes!

R.O.M.E.O. has become an acronym for Retired Old Men Eating Out: a bunch of old timers getting together for lunch. In this case it would have been Retired OLD Morganeers Eating Out.

Fred Cohen sent out an email to a bunch of us trying to arrange an outdoor, socially distanced lunch at Eagle Rock Reservation in Essex County, New Jersey (a 400-acre recreational park, with a spectacular, unobstructed view of Manhattan and a section overlooking the NYC skyline is a memorial dedicated to the victims of the terror attack on 9/11). Everybody was excited and the date was picked—Thursday, April 29. “Bring your own sandwiches and beverages,” it read.

It looks like we’d be six or seven cars parked together, and all of us just sitting around schmoozing.

The morning of April 29 dawned, wait, I misspoke, clouds roared overhead with raindrops falling and Fred’s new e-mail cancelled the event.

“WAIT,” I wrote. “The rain stopped and it’s not supposed to rain again until four or five this afternoon. I’ll be there with my sandwich, so grab a sandwich and come on down.”

Granted it was pretty overcast, but I drove my Morgan to the Eagle Rock Reservation anyway (y’all know that my top is rarely on anyway), and I parked in one of the empty spots across from the 9/11 memorial. All the parking spaces around me were empty as well, so there was plenty of room for whoever else came.

There was an old-timer playing the saxophone with a ‘tip jar’ at his feet, a few couples sitting around talking, the New York City skyline was visible, he put down his Sax and sang “What a Wonderful World.”

I’ve sung that song hundreds of times and as I stood at the wall, looking out at the skyline, I heard him end—

“...and I think to myself, what a wonderful world, Yes, I think to myself, What a wonderful world (and then the ending made famous by, and with the signature rasp of Louis Armstrong) Oh yeah!!”

Just being alive, healthy, and able to enjoy these moments make it a wonderful world. To get into a ‘rock-star’ of a car and smile doing something as mundane as sitting behind the steering wheel and driving around, OH YEAH

I headed back to my car smiling thinking of the literal meaning of wherefore art thou, Romeo, but it was fine. There will be another day when we can gather together, break bread and smile.

I pray that y’all remain safe, healthy and enjoy every minute that we are granted here, and I’m especially looking forward to hanging out with that R.O.M.E.O crew soon.

Photos:

Top: The Manhattan skyline seen from the Eagle Rock Reservation

Middle: The 9/11 memorial at Eagle Rock

Bottom: The Morgan alone by the memorial





SPIDER'S TECH TALK

An Axle to Grind

When I first bought my Morgan in the 70s, the speed on interstates here in the East was anywhere from 45 mph to 60 mph. Real speed demons might drive at 65 mph. Today's traffic runs much faster and the Morgan was never intended to run for sustained hours at these speeds. This has contributed to Morgan owners not taking their cars for extended highway drives and limited attendance at far away Morgan meets. It is also contributed to people like Steve Weston in the UK wanting to make some kind of change to reduce RPM at speed. His story, with some mystery interwoven follows....

Spider,

Maybe you can shed some light on an ongoing issue with axle identification I have. I moved back to the UK about 5 years ago and brought the car with me; in the States I didn't run the car for many long journeys and honestly didn't know what to expect on how the car performed or ran. Larry Eckler always said Plus 4's with a 3.7 axle should have increments of 20 mph per 1000 rpm in top, but my car is wailing at 65 mph-ish at about 4000 rpm. It has an HR Moss box. On the axle it has a tab with 41/11 stamped on. I always thought I'd got a 4.1 axle in it due to the quick acceleration but when I read Colin Musgrove's book Moggie again tonight I noticed he called out the 41/11 internals as a 3.7 axle, so I'm really confused!

Pre-COVID I took the car for a road trip to the South of France and it sort of behaved itself but I was crying out for another gear or overdrive or maybe another axle ratio? I had probably been spoiled by owning a 1965 TR4A with O/D for over 20 odd years 1976 onwards, held together by candle wax and string and soaking up my monthly salary just to keep it on the road, but I did love that overdrive, it dropped the revs by about 500.

I stumbled across a company that supply new OD units to fit any car with a prop shaft long enough, well that's what the sales pitch is, but it sounded intriguing all the same. Maybe some floor mods and a swap to SS bucket seats and it might fit? There is also a company named 'Vitesse' based in Hinckley UK that pop Mazda Miata/MX5 5 speed boxes into newer Morgans pulling out the Ford unit. I'm not sure if they have worked on an early car yet. There is certainly a reluctance to replace a Moss box here as they are much more desirable as stock because of eligibility for many historic race and rally events plus the cachet of 'originality'.

Overall a bit of a conundrum really. My car's is a 1961 Plus 4 with a 63 TR4 2138 engine, lightened flywheel, Ali rad, Derrington headers, SS exhaust, new H6's, gear reduction starter, thin pulley/alternator conversion, Gemmer box, 72 wires, Koni rear conversion, etc, etc, The Moss box is #2479 HR and I run Michelin XZX's 165 R15. What do you think?

Steve Weston



Steve Weston and his Plus 4

Steve,

Thanks for checking in with me. I'm happy to help. However, I'm going to start out telling you things that may or may not initially solve the issue. It's always important to start with known facts.

Dana Differential/Axle: If yours is a Dana 3HA and the tab on the differential reads 41/11 AND IF the tag is the correct original, it indicates that the pinion gear on the driveshaft entering the axle from the gearbox has 11 teeth on it, and the ring gear that meshes with the pinion has 41 teeth. The ratio is then determined by dividing 41 by 11 to get 3.7272...72. Let's call your final drive ratio to be 3.72. Think about what this means: the pinion (drive shaft) must go around 3.72 times to turn the axle one rotation. 3.72 is a pretty standard axle ratio found in many cars from Morgans to Mustangs to Astons to Jags to Mercedes to Corvettes etc. If the ratio were 4.11, that would require the drive shaft to turn 4.11 times for every rotation of the axle, causing the engine to turn higher rpm for any given mph, AND giving the car more low speed torque at the expense of top speed. Conversely if the ratio were (say) 3.09, the reverse would be true: slower off the line but much higher top speed. If you come to really doubting the Dana's gearing, you can drain and open the differential whilst still in-situ. Shine a light on the interior and count the teeth on the ring gear and the pinion gear. Reseal and refill. Those two numbers would remove all doubt about what the gear ratio might be.

Comparative Morgan Plus 4 Performance: Both Colin Musgrove and Larry Ekler are quite correct. Larry's estimation of 20 mph per 1000 rpm in 4th gear of an HR Moss box is quite close. One usually doesn't drive low speeds in 4th so starting with 2000 rpm = 40 mph, 2500 rpm = 50 mph, 3000 rpm = 60 mph, and 3500 rpm = 70 mph. For comparison, my 1957 Plus 4 with 41/11 gears and an HR Moss does almost exactly that. So, 65 mph in top cog would require roughly 3250 rpm. Are you sure it's an HR box? Does the 4 digit serial number on the box itself say HR? Should

be stamped/engraved right on the top cover: see lower left hand corner of the attached Moss photo. Are you sure that the 41/11 tag is the original? As a simple test, you can jack the rear of the car, mark the rear-right wheel with chalk and rotate it 360 degrees while someone marks the drive shaft entering the axle ... which should turn 3.72 turns. It doesn't have to be that accurate, even close to 3 3/4 turns would tell you that you have 3.72 gears.

Design Issues: The Morgan is a light car and uses Triumph engines, Moss gearboxes, and Dana axles because these are convenient and reliable (and cheap). They are not chosen to optimize the car, just to make it good enough. One design flaw is that the TR2/3/4 engine makes enough power at (say) 3000 rpm to push a Morgan through the air at much more than 60 mph ... maybe 3000 rpm makes enough power to push it to 70 or even 80. Unfortunately, it cannot do so, as it is limited by the final drive ratio. Most Plus 4 owners who tour with their Morgans (vs. those who really only want to race, hill-climb, trial, or autocross/solo where rpm counts) feel that the car could use another ratio: 5th gear, overdrive, etc.

Gauge Accuracy: The tachometer is not technically a tachometer, but rather a mechanical rev counter, connected to the distributor by cable. If the cable is faulty or if the innards of the tach/rev counter have aged, they might be lying about the engine's real rpm. The speedometer is also mechanical, driven by cable. The cable is driven by a right-angle drive exiting the Moss box on the passenger/right side of the Moss box. The bronze/brass right angle drive comes in different ratios and may or may not have been changed in your car. The speedometer itself might have aged. If you want to know the truth, measure your speed using the satellites on your cell phone: on my iPhone I use an app called MPH which bypasses all the earthly stuff and clocks my speed off the satellite (easy/cheap). If you want to know the truth, put an electronic gauge (VOM/RPM meter) on the 12v line to the distributor/coil to give you the true rpm of the engine electronically rather than mechanically. You may think this is a pain, but there is nothing as valuable as knowing the truth.

Options & Remedies: Most Morgan Plus 4 drivers would love to cruise a lower rpm, (say) 2500 rpm = 60 mph or 2750 rpm = 70 mph. Changing the axle ratio would be a mistake since you cannot "shift" the rear axle: a taller ratio would be heaven at 70 mph but you'd hate yourself going down back roads or competing in autocross. Older solutions were to install a Laycock de Normanville overdrive equipped Moss from a 50s/60s Jag but this creates other problems. The simplest solution is to replace the Moss box with a 5 speed box (I believe Toyota makes the easiest fit) which would also give you a hydraulic clutch to replace the mechanical one. This gives you all the torque ratios you have with the Moss plus an extra, tall 5th gear to cruise on highways. Many Morgan shops sell a conversion, among them the Ecklers. The taller ratio gives you highway speed, reduces vibration and noise, and the Toyo box also has a synchro-1st gear which the Moss does not.

Truth in Advertising: Having completely rebuilt my Plus 4 multiple times, I have never made the ratio switch. I prefer to drive my

(very vintage) Morgan the way it was designed ... which is to say, I think convenience is highly overrated. Yes, when Stephanie and I make the 10 hour highway trip from Connecticut to Virginia or Canada at 70 mph highway speeds, the engine is turning 3500 rpm and both the driver and the passenger are quite aware of it. As long as oil pressure is holding at ~70lbs and temperature is stable just above N (80F weather) the engine seems quite happy. Ear plugs and gloves help the driver relax. That having been said, this does not mean that changing over to the Toyo 5 speed box is a bad idea. I'm aware of more than a few people who have made the swap and love it. I'm just an ornery and crustaceous grundoon.

Spider's Thoughts: Either your gauges have lied to you, or your car has had its gearing changed. There are only two places to change the gearing: inside the Moss or inside the Dana: my money would be on the Dana and I would certainly want to find out what's going on before changing the gearbox.

If you were to change the box, it is the Toyota conversion you want, as the fitment detail is all worked out, stick comes out in the same place, and been done often before.

Any solution involving an overdrive unit creates three problems: not original (no Morgan ever came out with one), adds serious weight, must be electrically "cutoff" so the Moss cannot accidentally be put in reverse with the overdrive still engaged (Jags had the capability, Morgans need to be jury-rigged) which causes the overdrive unit to fail (dramatically).

I ran the math as follows last night: 165R15 radial tire rolling diameter = 25.4" which gives a rolling circumference of 79.91". At 3000 rpm, 4th gear has the input shaft and the output shaft of the Moss turning at the same rpm = 3000. The rear axle would then be turning at $3000 \div 3.72 = 806.45$ rpm. Each time the axle rotates, the wheel covers 79.91" of ground, so $806.45 \times 79.91 = 64,443$ inches/minute = 5370 feet/minute = 1.02 miles/minute = 61.2 mph. This is how you would expect the car to perform: 3000 rpm gets you down the road at 61.2 mph.

But if your car requires 4000 rpm to achieve 65 mph, the above math would produce a Dana gear ratio of 4.67 (stump pulling ratio!) only available in the 4/4 cars which show a specification of 4.56 (allowing for some difference in the tire dimension). There was a 4.1 rear for 4/4 cars and also for the Vanguard-engined Plus 4 cars. Using the above math, even the 4.1 rear ratio would give you 73.8 mph at 4000 rpm. Although possible, I would imagine it highly improbable that the Moss has any altered gearing.

In Summary: Check the validity of the gauges first: how fast are you really going and what's your real rpm. Plus 4 cars at full chat

can be deceptive, making you think they're running at unsustainable rpm. Then you can use crayon/chalk to check how many turns the driveshaft makes for one turn of the wheel, thus confirming the gear ratio of the Dana. By then you would be armed with sufficient information to decide whether you want to make the Toyota 5-speed swap.

Let me know how it all works out and (of course) ...

Run cool, Spider



The Moss box

The Morganeer's Bookshelf

Classic Engines, Modern Fuel

The Problems, the Solutions Paul Ireland

Veloce Publishing (September 15, 2020)

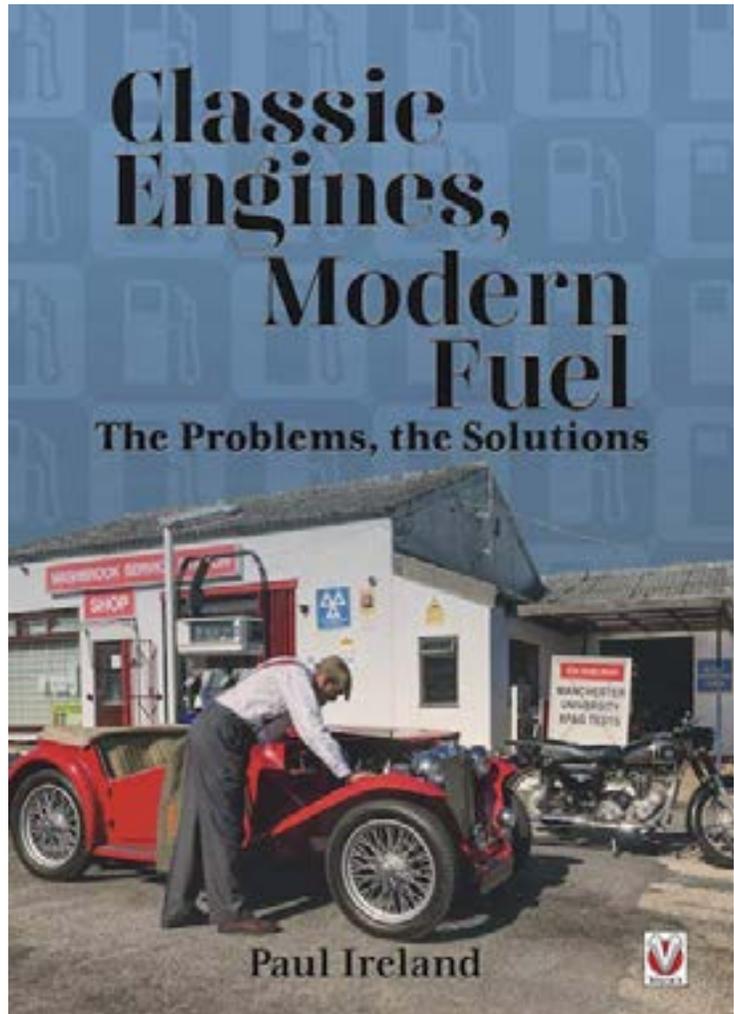
Unleaded fuel is here to stay, and so is an Ethanol content. The composition of fuel has changed markedly, even in the last 30 years, and Ethanol may not be the villain you perhaps think it is.

The British book, *Classic Engines, Modern Fuel*, is a compilation of Paul Ireland's popular science articles, the Manchester XPAG Tests, based on the most comprehensive set of tests ever run on a classic engine using facilities at Manchester University. The book features real data and practical descriptions applicable to all classic engines. It aims to separate fact from fiction and provide options and solutions.

Pure research written in the simplest way to show how a spark-ignition engine works, this collection of articles investigates how classic engines respond to modern petrol/gasoline. Addressed to the driver, rather than the concours entrant, some modifications from original are proposed.

The publisher notes that "Paul Ireland's years of experience and no-nonsense scientific approach will help you get the best from your classic car or motor bike, allowing you to experience the pleasure of driving instead of worrying about breaking down!"

Royalties from the book are used to support school children in Kideleko, a village in Tanzania. In January 2021, book bags, pencils, etc. were given to over 800 children in two schools.



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WORD FROM THE WORKS

Morgan Forges a New Path with Plus 4 CX-T

August 5, 2021

Morgan has a long history in trialing, the all-terrain endurance events which test man and machine to their very limits. As early as 1911, Morgan sports cars were competing—and winning—in these competitions around the UK.

Trails is where the ‘T’ in its latest creation, the Plus 4 CX-T, comes from. It’s this spirit of adventure in Morgan’s history, along with the voyages that have been undertaken by Morgan customers all over the world since, that have inspired the new model. The CX part of the name, you might’ve guessed, references the versatile CX-Generation bonded aluminum platform which underpins both Morgan’s Plus 4 and Plus 6 models.

“The project was unrestrained and born entirely from a desire to create an exciting British adventure vehicle,” says Jonathan Wells, Morgan’s Head of Design. “For me, it’s a complete package: historical integrity, legitimate capability, and a brand-new adventure-lead aesthetic.”

The result, created in partnership with off-road specialists Rally Raid UK, is a vehicle set to conquer almost any type of terrain and take you on adventures never previously possible in a Morgan vehicle. Every Plus 4 CX-T is built at Morgan’s factory in Malvern, Worcestershire before undergoing the final preparation and setup at Rally Raid UK’s own workshop facilities.

Its extreme capability comes from a host of modifications and upgrades: EXE-TC coilover as-



semblies, Plus 6 suspension arms, bespoke bushes, and off-road tires endow it with a drive-over obstacle clearance of 230mm, and the durability to match, while a three-mode locking differential maximizes traction on any surface type.

For travelling far from the beaten track, a rear equipment rack—which incorporates a protective exoskeleton—houses an array of stowage solutions. It can be further adapted to carry leisure equipment such as bikes and surf boards, to compliment the lifestyle activities of the owner. Less visible is a five-piece underbody protection system and full bespoke exhaust system with rear side-exit that improves the Plus 4 CX-T's all-important departure angle.

“Applying my experience of 13 Dakar Rallies, 60 Dakar vehicle builds and a lifetime of overland adventuring to an unconventional sports car such as a Morgan has been an interesting and rewarding project,” added Rally Raid UK’s Mike Jones. “Rally Raid UK and Morgan have engaged with industry-leading suppliers to source the highest quality components, as well as designing a range of bespoke parts that will remain unique to the model. The Morgan Plus 4 CX-T is a genuine overland adventure vehicle and I look forward to seeing the incredible destinations that owners will find themselves in.”

Tempted? Well, just eight will be built, all to be finished before the end of 2021 and priced at £170,000 plus local taxes. For that, you’ll be able to sit down with Morgan’s design team to tailor the specification to your exact desires.



Morgan Plus 4 Race Cars Hit the Track

July 14, 2021



The Morgan Motor Company, the University of Wolverhampton’s School of Engineering, and the University’s racing team (UWR) continue their long-standing technical partnership with the creation of a motorsport-focused variant of the Morgan Plus 4. In line with Morgan’s program of continuous product development—which recently saw the release of the Model Year ’22 package of updates for the Plus 4 and Plus 6 models—the project aims to collect data and feedback from the extreme conditions of a race environment which will directly shape the research and development of current and future models.

It marks the first competition use of a Morgan based on the bonded-aluminum CX-Generation platform and sets out to validate the Plus 4’s performance and durability credentials. This encompasses the aforementioned platform—which weighs just 97kg yet offers twice the structural rigidity of Morgan’s previous aluminum platform—as well as the model’s bespoke double-wishbone suspension and BMW-sourced powertrain.

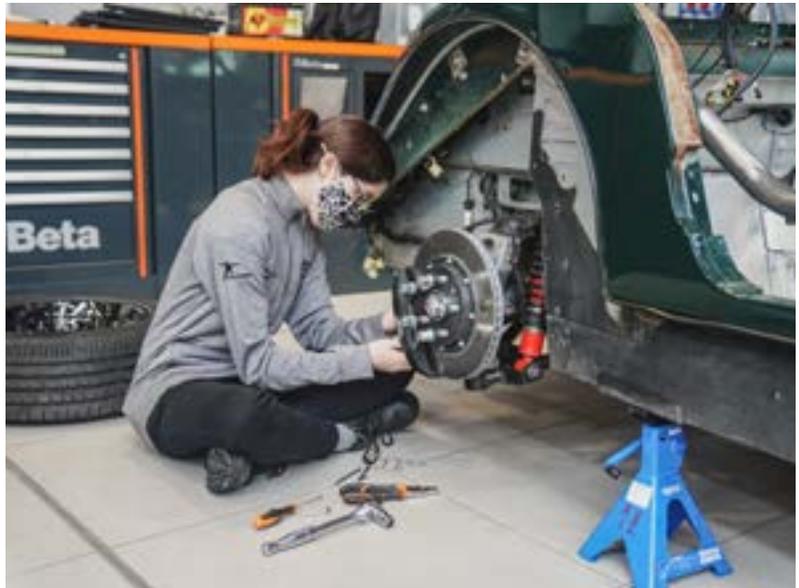
The two cars, which have been designed to compete in a host of club-level sprint and endurance championships, such as the Morgan Challenge, will race in the remainder of the 2021 season and beyond. Having completed the racing modifications to both cars, the UWR team will provide trackside and workshop engineering support to the cars and drivers, honing students' vital skills and preparing them for a career in motorsport or automotive engineering.

In 1962, Morgan won its class at the 24 hours of Le Mans and, just as impressively, the car was driven back to Morgan's home in Malvern, Worcestershire, after the race. Following in this 'clubsport' ethos, the motorsport variant of the Morgan Plus 4 remains fully road legal, able to be driven to and from the circuit if desired. Fitted with both manual and automatic transmissions, the vehicles demonstrate the versatility of the Plus 4 and its breadth of capability. They will primarily be driven by professional racing drivers, to ensure consistency as part of the development program, but drives will also be available to guests for selected events.

The project forms an important part of Morgan's CSR (corporate social responsibility) program. Morgan and the University of Wolverhampton have worked in partnership for five years, supporting education and training with direct recruitment opportunities for graduates. Previous students of the university working on the Morgan race team have gone on to secure full-time roles with the company. Further plans, in collaboration with Morgan's nominated charity partner, Mission Motorsport, will be announced in due course.

Steve Morris, Chairman and CEO of Morgan Motor Company, said: "We are delighted to announce the launch of the motorsport variant of the Morgan Plus 4, which continues our long tradition of motorsport. A century ago, Morgan's three wheelers became famous for their exploits in trials, hill climbing and endurance racing, and this competitive spirit is alive and well here at our Pickersleigh Road factory to this day. The program brings tangible benefit in terms of ongoing product development, and we are delighted to continue our partnership with the University of Wolverhampton to inspire the next generation of automotive talent."

Professor David Proverbs, the Dean of Faculty of Science and Engineering, added: "The partnership between the University of Wolverhampton's racing team and the Morgan Motor Company provides an incredible opportunity for our students to work with such an iconic car manufacturer. Converting these two stunning cars for racing, and then supporting the cars and drivers at racing circuits around the country will give the UWR students unique experience of the motorsport industry, as well as helping their drivers to win some races.



"We are delighted to announce the launch of the motorsport variant of the Morgan Plus 4, which continues our long tradition of motorsport. A century ago, Morgan's three wheelers became famous for their exploits in trials, hill climbing and endurance racing, and this competitive spirit is alive and well here at our Pickersleigh Road factory to this day. The program brings tangible benefit in terms of ongoing product development, and we are delighted to continue our partnership with the University of Wolverhampton to inspire the next generation of automotive talent"

Steve Morris, Chairman & CEO



1948 Morgan F4 Three Wheeler for Sale

Right hand drive 1948 Morgan F4 imported to USA from Nottingham, England, in 1968. Shown at the Connecticut Concours d'Elegance in 2009. Chassis #1146, Vin #MOR78595634, 1958 Ford 100E engine, 22,000 original miles. Current Location: Long Branch, New Jersey.

Email or text Marcia or Tom Blackwell for further information, tjblackwell68@gmail.com, marciaserioblackwell@gmail.com, 732-539-9181



Morganeering at its best!

Bob Cohn sent in this photo of his four seater loaded up with grandchildren and a cooler as they set off to pick up some lobster!

For Sale

1959 Morgan Plus4, 4-seater
Excellent condition. 31,620 miles



The car needs to go to someone who will use it more than I have used it.

Summary of key features: 100 Hp Triumph TR 3 engine; Thoroughly gone through, hardened valve and guides, neoprene rear oil seal, electronic ignition system, High speed starter, new exhaust system.

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Rear Axle rebuilt; Stainless Steel 82 spoke wire wheels; Spacks adjustable shocks; Ferrari Red Imron Paint.

Only needs some interior work rear seat is original leather and seams are splitting.

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Contact Larry Krueger 203-913-2081



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The Morganeer

CROSSHEAD

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