

# The Morganeer

JAN  
FEB  
2018

Vol 41  
Issue 1

## *The Eye of the Photographer*



Image by John H Sheally II



THE JOURNAL OF THE 3/4 MORGAN GROUP, LTD.

## NEW CLUB MEMBERS

Rich Fohl                      Richmond, VA  
'64 4/4, '70 Plus 8, '07 Roadster

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## FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear Santa,

I hope this letter finds you well. I bet your job is getting pretty tough this time of year. It can't be easy flying all those miles just one night—I have so many questions! But Santa, people aren't the only ones with holiday hopes and dreams.

I think I deserve a gift this year. I passed my 5,000 mile checkup with flying colors, and my "Check Engine" clunk hasn't been heard once! I spend a lot of time outdoors. I don't mean to brag, but ... I'm pretty brave. I'm looking for something to keep me warm—functional, yet fashion-forward. (Please do not send UGGs.) Maybe a set of antlers? Or a big wreath for the fender? Or even a carstache? And - maybe something to give me a little more pep in the step? I mean, I would never speed! I promise to be discrete, don't worry! A just a tad more zoom for those sunny days... ahhh yeah, you know what I mean.

I must admit, I don't know how you keep doing it every year while you keep getting a year older like the rest of us. I have a new appreciation for that long winter nap! Not to mention the tweaks and fixes that happen over my winter snooze.

By the way, thanks for that car cleaning kit. It's going to come in handy. You wouldn't believe the places that she finds to put that shamy! The new stuff is much better, no doubt.

How's Mrs. Claus? Hope she's doing fine. What about the reindeer? Do you measure their speed in reindeer power instead of horse power? How can I convert that? Do you think it would give me better mileage?

Hey, did I tell you about my neighbor? It was so cool. We had this great conversation yesterday. He was telling me that sometimes people may say I'm an old person's car, and he says he loves that because it means I have character, I'm one of a kind! Wasn't that nice?



So anyway, for the holidays he has a strapped a large menorah to his top—depending on where you live, you may have seen this. I was telling him about the antlers, and a friend of mine even has a red nose! But regardless, a large menorah wishing you a Happy Chanukah stands out. I think it's pretty cool. You can even rent one! Maybe for the sleigh? But he made a really good point, true for us all. When you think about it, it isn't the decoration that counts for all of us - it's the message we share.

This new year, I resolve to be more patient at lights. To let impatient cars pass, and enjoy the attention I get. Being a Morgan, I get lots of attention. After all, when you realize that people are watching, you definitely want to be on your best behavior. And once you are aware that even the most mundane errand contains possibilities for a message and connection, that five minute drive suddenly is no longer meaningless or boring! So it is up to us what message we bring when people look our way. Let's enjoy the miles and share the joy!

Thanks,  
Sassy Red Roadster!

And thank you all, best wishes for a wonderful 2018, may your cars never clunk, may you be well and looking forward to seeing you all again soon!

Maura

## FROM THE EDITOR

Welcome to 2018, and new opportunities to excel in our Morgan community. Keep that in mind as you read further in this piece – and get your hand ready to raise as a volunteer. Actually, the weather has been SO cold here for days on end that it's difficult to think of anything but staying warm. Yes, I suppose if I was a REAL Morganeer I would visit my Morgan and think of something to do to warm it up a bit. Like a great big hug, or a slug of hot tea into the radiator or maybe even trying to start it. Nah, forget it. It's much too cold. And besides my Drophead is a guy so it doesn't need coddling.

Which brings me to my next subject. If you read this issue of *The Morganeer* closely (which I'm SURE all of you do) you will find several articles purportedly written by a few of our Morgans themselves (starting on page 2) - if you have not noticed already. There are two more, but I'm not going to reveal where they are – just one clue. You may not have to turn many more pages to find them. It does raise the question – what is our dull boring newsletter coming to? A sci-fi periodical? Are our Morgans now colluding with our computers, taking on a life of their own and taking over ala a Stephen King novel? I would DEFINITELY keep that in mind, and also two hands on the wheel and eyes on the road the first time you drive your Morgan this Spring, or there's no telling where it might take you! All the way to Maine maybe?

Okay, I have no idea where that came from, but let's get serious and into the issue proper. As is my penchant, I think this issue should properly be labeled the 'Plus 4 Plus issue.' Not only does this iconic experiment of Peter Morgan gone wrong figure in our fascinating interview, but also graces the issue's now famous 'centerfold'.

This issue's 'featured story' is an interview with one of the iconic

Morgan personalities in the US – John H Sheally II. I don't know why the thought never occurred to me before, but John could not have been more accommodating and forthcoming for the interview, as well as providing a boatload of his wonderful photography. (can you see his 'eye' in the cover photo?) This all came about through the cover photo of the last (Autumn MOG BIS Plus 4 Plus) issue, which caught the eye of **Douglas Hallawell**, who mentioned to me that John had restored a Plus 4 Plus – and it kind of snowballed (so to speak) from there.

Also, somewhat related to the Plus 4 Plus theme is another of our Parisian Correspondent Douglas Hallawell's fine, excellently researched pieces, this time on Morgan one off's which, along with the Plus 4 Plus, never quite stood the test of time (and the tastes of us Morgan traditionalists.) The article is appropriately called *Breaking the Mould*, which is apparently exactly what happened to the Plus 4 Plus fiberglass body mould. (This just SMACKS of a conspiracy, doesn't it?)

Moving on, and also on somewhat related themes are two articles on discovering your Morgan's history. First of all is, once again, a very well written and researched piece by **Jonathan Kinghorn** on how to find your Morgan's history 'from the ground up' so to speak. It is followed by a very interesting profile on the official Morgan Motor Company Archivist provided by **Stephen Scheffbauer**. Steve had gotten to know Mr. Martyn Webb through correspondence regarding factory wheel options for his '64 Plus 4 and other bits of trivia regarding the build of his car, and was so taken by Martyn's friendly helpfulness that he decided we all needed to know more about him. Good idea Steve.

**Fred Cohen** is next with his slightly whimsical and nostalgic tale of what it was like getting parts for his Morgan direct from the factory, and his chance encounter and friendly chat with owner Peter Morgan on a visit to the works – WAY back in the last century. Ah yes, I remember it well. In more than a few ways things have gone to hell in a hand-



basket in this new millenium. Speaking of which, be sure to read and ponder the 'President's Two Pence' from outgoing MMCDC President **Bruce Trabb** concerning both our Morgans and who might be caring for them 'later on' this century. Definitely food for thought.

Which brings me back to my hint about putting your hand up to volunteer in my first paragraph. As you may have noticed elsewhere (in the Event Calendar 2018 and also an Op Ed) I have volunteered to CO-CHAIR this year's Autumn MOG, which we have already arranged will take place at the Williams Inn in Williamstown, MA. Co-chair being the important part, because I will be fully expecting someone to volunteer to join me, sort of as a proby to learn the ropes and hopefully, fully fledged, agree to take on Autumn MOG 2019. We will also need some event chairs and others to take on admin tasks. Hey somebody! Help me out here.

I have a feeling that, like me, my Drophead is in deep hibernation and dreaming about driving down Highway 1A towards Key West or along the Pacific Coast Highway south of Monterey. Some day I want to actually do that. But in the meantime, reality strikes and I must go out and bring in firewood before the all too soon darkness. I wonder if anyone ever thought of putting a Morgan on skis? The Norwegians perhaps?

Anyway, for now, I know the icy snow packed ROAD GOES somewhere, and hopefully at some point ON FOREVER,

Frank



## TO THE EDITOR

Frank,

Enjoyed your op ed "Does Every Road Go Somewhere?" Reminds me of the old Irish saying, "If you do not know where you are going, any road will take you there". Of course it is more fun in a Morgan.

John (McNulty)

*Thanks John - kind of describes my life - not here or there, but somewhere in between. ed*

Frank,

Capping-off a great weekend at British Invasion was a totally unexpected surprise. I spent a glorious sun-filled Sunday caravanning across Vermont, New Hampshire (think White Mountains), and Maine with a gorgeous award-winning Drophead Coupe Morgan. We only needed to stop to feed one car with petrol and the other with oil.

Bob Cohn

Frank,

What a great shot of an impeccable Plus 4 Plus on the cover page!

Further to David Webb's very interesting writings on the Plus 4 Plus, you may want to add what I wrote on the subject of test-driving the proto coupé - in Part 3 of my articles titled 'Breaking the Mould', published by MOG magazine in April. Part 3 is also due out in the December issue of the The Morgan Ear.

The European trip was purely for continental test-driving purposes and only lasted 2 weeks. Here is the relevant excerpt:

*As soon as the prototype Plus 4 Plus was completed and registered (869 KAB), Peter and Jane Morgan set off for the continent in May 1963 for two weeks of test-driving. Half-way through their trip, in Italy, the coupé was hit (on a front wing) at a crossroads by none other than an Italia 2000! A policeman at the scene proceeded to write his report, questioning the car's and driver's identities, to which Peter twice replied 'Morgan'. Refusing to believe a word of what Peter declared - despite his insistence - the cop passed the (anonymous looking) prototype off as a Jaguar in his report. As for Peter, he mistook the Italia for a TR4 with a special body! The coupé was summarily repaired in Switzer-*

*land as Peter had not managed to find a suitable glassfibre specialist in Italy. The coupé later underwent further testing in the UK in the form of trialling. The second production coupé was displayed at the Earls Court Motor Show in October 1963. You can briefly see it at 1.09 minutes in this video of the car show: [www.youtube.com/watch?v=8SdnardvOQ](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8SdnardvOQ) and the prototype coupé in the French Riviera at 1.29 minutes + 1.57 minutes in this video: [www.youtube.com/watch?v=nYqfvr5RnTY](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nYqfvr5RnTY)*

Douglas Hallawell

Hi Frank,

Imagine my surprise and delight when I found an article with my byline in the latest Morganeer (Confessions of a Lady Autocrosser). Then imagine my chagrin when I realized that I had spelled Barrie Abrams name wrong. In my defense, I wasn't writing to The Morganeer. I was describing to my daughter (Madame President) the top-of-the-world joy of autocross racing. My apologies, Barrie.

That said, I have to express again what a delight it is to watch Barrie race. His intensity is infectious, from the moment he pulls into the parking lot to his very last fraction of a second on the course. He's generous with his enthusiasm, too. He has encouraged me from my first tentative attempt around the cones right up until my last run this year.

So I'm sorry for my error, Barrie, but I delight in sharing the thrill of autocross with you. I can't wait for next year!

Pat Hennessy

*Not your fault Pat. Looks like another one slipped past our excellent and professional editorial staff (Spider and me). Actually, I'm sure it was Spider's fault. But now that I think of it, I may have spelled Hennessy wrong a time or two. ed*

*And here is one of my most unusual letters - not from Brad King, but from his Morgan, Molly! She, at least, is missing our company after being unceremoniously shipped back to the UK (in steerage, no doubt), apparently without being consulted about the move. Yes, we miss you too old girl.*

**Photo:** The wingmen fondling ... er, I mean gently holding Molly's front wing

Hi Frank, Hi Meredith,

Molly here. Brad's just fixing my er, bumper. Can't keep his wrenches off me. He's bought me new bumper irons. Turns out the original ones were bent. Must be that nudge in the parking lot I didn't tell him about.

Anyway. Am loving being back in the UK, though missing my friends like your DHC.....love the crazy way those doors open! WOOF! Tell him I said Hi!

I'll pass on what you wrote to Brad. I'm sure I can persuade him to pick up the pen again, especially now those long winter days are with us. He's set up the garage nicely for me for the winter and is pampering me, so I am happy. The flame "Hello Officer" red paint job is turning some heads as you rightly surmise. Haven't met many sisters yet, but tooted at some we've past on the road. Brad will expand no doubt. If he doesn't I might just write the article myself....

I know Brad and Lin are missing the Morganeers and especially the Wingmen. Me too, especially as they have been such "intimate" friends and seen parts of me others haven't. Did I say that out loud?? My, I think that made me *blush*. You know what I mean!

Have a great Christmas too. Brad has a new winter flying helmet and Sidcot Suit - so he looks more determined than ever!

Toot! Toot! and AAooooogarh!

Molly

Molly,

*I have kept company with quite a few pretty red roadsters in my time, but ever since I saw your naked chassis you have had a special place in my oil pump. I'll always fondly remember our occasional trysts, especially that wonderful 'overnight' in your garage (don't tell Brad)! Perhaps we'll see each other again. Fondly (and revving madly),*

You Know Who



# MORGAN TALES AND FABLES FROM ANOTHER CENTURY

Fred Cohen

**B**ack in the pre-digital early 1980s, and before Morgan Spares came to our rescue, my wife Lita and I made a trip to Malvern to visit the Works and order a slew of parts for our Plus 4 restoration. We also had a list of parts to collect at Melvyn Rutters establishment. This was over thirty-five years ago and Morgan was still operating much as a 1950s family business.

Having planned well in advance for the trip I carefully typed a list of the items I needed using Morgan part names and numbers and then made several Xerox copies of the list. I proudly handed the gentleman in the parts department two pristine copies of the list with my name, address, car model, year, and chassis number. He looked at the list, thanked me and said Morgan had standard procedures to be followed for ordering parts. He then took out a pad and slipped two sheets of carbon paper between the leaves, wet the tip of his pencil in his mouth and proceeded to spend the next half an hour meticulously copying the twenty five or so names and numbers for the parts I requested.

Then he informed me that they would start to work up a preliminary invoice while Lita and I walked about the shop selecting miscellaneous other parts, including bumpers, leather seats, interior trim, top, tonneau material and colors. Such was the informal nature of a visit to the Works in the early 1980s.

But the most intriguing part of the visit was what followed. None other than Peter Morgan saw us wandering around the shop and invited us into his office to chat. He was very interested in the US. We of course got around to talking about cars and he spoke of his interest in returning to the US market. That meant meeting seemingly impossible

safety and emissions requirements. He felt that since he did not make the motors for his cars he was at the mercy of other manufacturers.

As I recall the conversation Peter agreed with the regulations in regard to items such as seat belts and safety glass, but thought the bumper and headlight height requirements were frivolous. He said that reports on Morgan cars involved in accidents indicated they were safe cars.

Almost as an afterthought I asked him about the lack of enough fuses for the electrical system in his and many other contemporary British cars. With a chuckle he said that was a safety feature! I asked "how so?" He then explained that if you were driving fast at night and had an electrical short the lights would probably blink rather than blow a fuse. This would warn you there was a problem allowing you to slow down safely with the lights possibly still on. If the live wire bounced away from the metal it was touching perhaps even continue driving home. No discussion of car fires!

In parting Peter asked what business I was involved in and when I told him



Image by John H Sheally II

magazine publishing he said he would appreciate if I sent along anything I might come across about Morgans in the press which I agreed to do. One of the articles I subsequently sent him was a feature in the New York Times covering our 3/4 Group Autumn MOG. We had contacted the Times about our event held that year in Tarrytown, NY and they sent a reporter and photographer.

I still have the letter from Peter with his comments on the Times coverage and thanking me for sending the article. It was a different world then, but perhaps not a very different time for Morgans - way back in the Twentieth Century!

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Photos:

**Top:** Peter Morgan in office, where he loved to chat with visiting Morgan owners

**Bottom:** Fred and Peter Morgan at MOG 25

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# RESEARCHING YOUR MORGAN'S HISTORY

Jonathan Kinghorn

I'll bet that most of us want to know about the previous owners of our Morgans and what they did with them and to them—and if we are not, future owners probably will. Unfortunately, the book *How to Find Cars & Owners* was published back in 1991 and copies are now harder to find than a leakproof Morgan. So, how does one go about researching a vehicle's past today? Here's some of what I learned while unravelling my car's story—which, incidentally, proved to be rather more interesting than expected—but you'll have to wait for my next article to find out how.

## Before you do anything else

The first thing to do—and it is probably too late for most of us—is to talk to the vendor when you buy your car to find out what they can tell you about it. Write down everything they say while it is still fresh in your mind, because it is so easy to forget or muddle details—at least, for me it is. Whether what you are told proves to be gospel truth or total fabrication, it will be the foundation for all your later research.

As soon as you can, ascertain your car's chassis number. It may be used on official documents as the car's VIN number; if not, you will find it stamped on the top of a frame cross member under a seat. Fortunately for us, the Morgan Motor Company keeps hand-written ledgers in which the basic details of every vehicle they make are recorded on dispatch. Send them your chassis number and £75 and they will (eventually) mail you a chassis report. Expect to wait longer than the 3–4 weeks in-

dicated on their website (<https://www.morgan-motor.co.uk/chassis/>) and to receive a plastic-encapsulated certificate that gives you the chassis, engine, and gearbox numbers; colors of the original paint and upholstery; optional extras fitted; the date of dispatch from the factory; the consignee; and any other information noted back in the day. Cool huh!

## Official Records

The next step is to gather all the official records you can lay your hands on. Do so as soon as possible because in most states data relating to inactive registrations and titles is deleted after a set period, usually ten years or so. There is a National Vehicle Title Information System (NMVTIS), which claims to contain 94% of current state Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) data; 38 states participate, six provide data only, and Vermont is one of seven states “in development” (whatever that means). However, the NMVTIS website (<https://www.vehiclehistory.gov/>) will refer you to several independent “Approved NMVTIS Data Providers.” These online services charge a small fee before releasing reports that are great for checking that a recent used vehicle isn't stolen or salvaged before buying, but less so for researching older cars. You will learn if there are accidents reported and stuff like that, but won't get prior owner's names or addresses. Thanks to the Driver's Privacy Protection Act (which went into effect in 1997), contact information won't be released—and this is of course the most valuable information for us. These online searches start

### Current Title Information

State	VIN	Issue Date	Odometer
Massachusetts	4303	12/02/2016	000009865 Miles

### Historical Title Information

State	VIN	Issue Date	Odometer
New York	4303	04/06/2007	UNKNOWN
New York	4303	09/13/2011	UNKNOWN
New York	4303	05/29/2012	UNKNOWN
New York	4303	05/20/2014	UNKNOWN
New York	4303	06/03/2015	UNKNOWN
New York	4303	06/15/2016	UNKNOWN



with the VIN, and while some will accept a Morgan chassis number, others require a full 17-digit VIN.

If you know which states your car has been registered in you can contact their respective DMVs directly to obtain title and registration information; most charge about \$10 for each search. If the data has not been deleted they will have titles showing when the vehicle entered the state and maybe a copy of the title from a previous state. Most states won't share owner's names and addresses because of that pesky Driver's Privacy Protection Act, but try anyway.

Don't fill out an online form; snail mail it in and include a polite cover letter with a big color photo of your car printed on the back. When I did this for the Vermont RMV they searched and found nothing, but instead of charging me they returned my check and letter with a Post-it note saying "very beautiful"! A cover letter and a photo help to establish that you are searching legitimately, and will hopefully encourage both a favorable reception and superior service from the humans in these notoriously unloved organizations. Responding to one inquiry, the New York RMV told me they wouldn't release the information if they had it, then, responding to another request for pre-2011 data, they sent me post-2011 information (that I already knew). Go figure.

### Next Steps

Armed with information from these sources you can start digging a little deeper, and this is where the real work,

and the real fun, begin! As well as talking to the vendor of your car, nab other people too—3/4 Group members, mechanics, relatives—anyone who may have known it. Go through the paperwork that comes with the vehicle looking for clues, and check it over carefully in case there are informative inspection stickers on the windscreen or old documents lurking under a seat. Morgans are a niche marque, and prior owners may well have joined related clubs, so check out club archives and publications if you can. I know from personal experience how invaluable old 3/4 Group membership directories and back issues of *The Morganeer* can be!

The goal, of course, is to identify and contact all previous owners of your car (or at least, their living relatives) to see what they can tell you. Each owner will know at the very least, from whom they bought the car, what they did to it, who they sold it to, and roughly when. Each new name you uncover should lead to another link in the chain of ownership.

Online search sites enable you to check out living or recently deceased people and their immediate relatives. They usually require a modest monthly subscription, so sign up, go nuts, and then cancel. These sites might furnish email and postal addresses, but these probably won't be current, and often you can't be sure you're tracking the right individual. Try the likeliest of them anyway, explain why you are

of Vermont  
ARTMENT OF MOTOR VEHICLES  
ate Street  
elier, VT 05603-0001  
.dmv.vermont.gov

ate 10/19/2017

to Whom It May Concern:

our request is being returned because:

☐ We need the full name, date of birth and .  
about.

☐ We need the vehicle identification number

☒ We found no vehicle/vess  
matching the information contained in your inquiry.

Very Beautiful!!

are i  
quiri  
mobile record

### Photos, Opposite page:

**Top:** The chassis number stamped on the cross member of my Plus 4 under the passenger seat.

**Bottom:** The National Vehicle Title Information System's record of titles issued for my Plus 4.

### This page:

**Above:** The Vermont DMV couldn't find title or registration records for me, but clearly enjoyed the task!

**Below:** Dash plaques and badges can be enlightening or misleading. My car has dash plaques from the first six Fall Vintage Festivals at Lime Rock Park, 1983-8—but what do they tell me?



writing and how you got their information, and include a big color photo of the car for the reasons given above. Your emails or letters may be returned undeliverable, but keep trying until you get a response or exhaust all your leads. If snail mailing, enclose a stamped and self-addressed envelope to improve your chances of getting a reply.

A few folks will not want to play ball, but most will be eager to talk, and some may even have photos and documents to share. Ask lots of questions when you make a successful contact and record the responses. Things that you may think unimportant now may become significant later. When you have successfully contacted someone, rinse and repeat. Every new name you learn, every tidbit of information gleaned should raise new questions in your mind, open new doors, and launch you on another line of inquiry. A good research project is never finished, it just keeps going deeper and wider.

#### General Advice

**Be thorough.** Check every source,

follow every lead, ask every likely person, leave no stone unturned.

**Be patient:** It will take longer than you think to follow your leads through and for agencies to cough up data.

**Be impatient.** Don't delay. Memories fade, records get deleted, people move on. Waste no time. Act now.

**Expect setbacks.** Many of my leads turned out to be duds. Multiple letters and emails were returned undeliverable, and the one response I got was not the right guy! At least I tried. Research can be a bit like a job search—no, no, no, no, no, no, no, no, no, yes! All you need is to find one or two key people and your knowledge will be transformed. Don't give up.

**Get creative:** Think outside the box and let it be known that that you are searching your car's history; place an ad in a pertinent newspaper, magazine, or club journal for example. I wrote a letter to the editor of *Connecticut Magazine* and even contacted the state's farmer's association. These were desperate long shots, and they haven't resulted in any

responses yet, and probably never will. Nevertheless, they were worth trying, and done online they didn't even cost me the price of a stamp!

**Get lucky!** You need to make your own luck by being diligent, by asking questions, and/or being in the right place at the right time.

After a few months of sleuthing in which I had one extremely lucky break, I have an almost complete ownership history for my car. And I have far more detail to add to this basic information than hoped for in my wildest dreams—and a couple of stubborn gaps that I will probably never be able to fill. I have also had a lot of fun, and met some wonderful people. I highly recommend researching your car's history. You can do a surprising amount from home online, and it is a great thing to do in the off season when you can't drive the Morgan. And when you've gathered a pile of information, please create a history file so it doesn't get lost again; future owners will thank you! Don't procrastinate; start now. In my next article, I'll tell you how my search went.



**Photo:** Johnathan's 1960 Plus 4, Chassis No 4303





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# The Morganeer

## 2018 ADVERTISING RATES

The 3/4 Morgan Group Ltd. Welcomes advertisers for the Morganeer, Which is published 6 times a year in both electronic and printed issues.

### AD SIZE ANNUAL FEE

Full Page \$300 per year

Half Page \$200 per year

Quarter Page \$100 per year

Business Card \$40 per year

All advertising is billed on an annual basis with full pre-payment due by March 15, 2018.

New ad materials must be sent to:

**Morganeer Editor**

Email: [wnek\\_fm@comcast.net](mailto:wnek_fm@comcast.net)

Payments should be made to:

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# INTERVIEW

## *John H. Sheally II:* *A TOTAL Morgan Man*

**W**hat kind of person would conceive of an idea or even remotely consider driving a 1935 Morgan three wheeler from Virginia to Los Angeles? Only someone with an unquenchable thirst for adventure and total confidence in his ability to perform even major on the road maintenance to his antique and unusual motor car. That person, I am pleased to report, is the subject of our interview in this issue of *The Morganeer*.

*The idea came from an email I received from our Parisian correspondent, Douglas Hallawell, who commented on the Autumn MOG Best in Show Plus 4 Plus which graced the cover of our last Morganeer. In his email Douglas also mentioned that another of the iconic names in the Morgan world, John H. Sheally II, had also done a Plus 4 Plus restoration. (Actually and unbelievably, he has restored four of them!)*

*Who, you may also ask, would even conceive of drag racing a Morgan? Yes, the answer is the one and the same John H. Sheally II. But these are only several of the fascinating and interesting stories he tells in answering our interview questions. So, let's get right to it and thank you John for giving this wonderful interview.*

**Were you a car guy from as far back as you can remember? What was the first car you thought was really cool? What was the first car you owned after becoming a legal driver?**

Yes, I was a car guy as on my grandfathers farm in Henderson , North Carolina I was allowed to drive the tractors, cars and trucks all around the farm at the early age of 11 to 12 . The day I was 15 I got my drivers license in Hopewell, VA. The first car I got to 'legally' drive would be a black Dodge that belonged to my Uncle Frank Wortham who had just come back home from Belgium serving in WW II where he lost a leg after being shot on the way down in a parachute jump during combat. The Government had provided him an insured car as a injured veteran. What was unusual about that car was it had push button automatic transmission, which was new to cars and allowed him to drive with his wooden leg. To me that was a cool car.

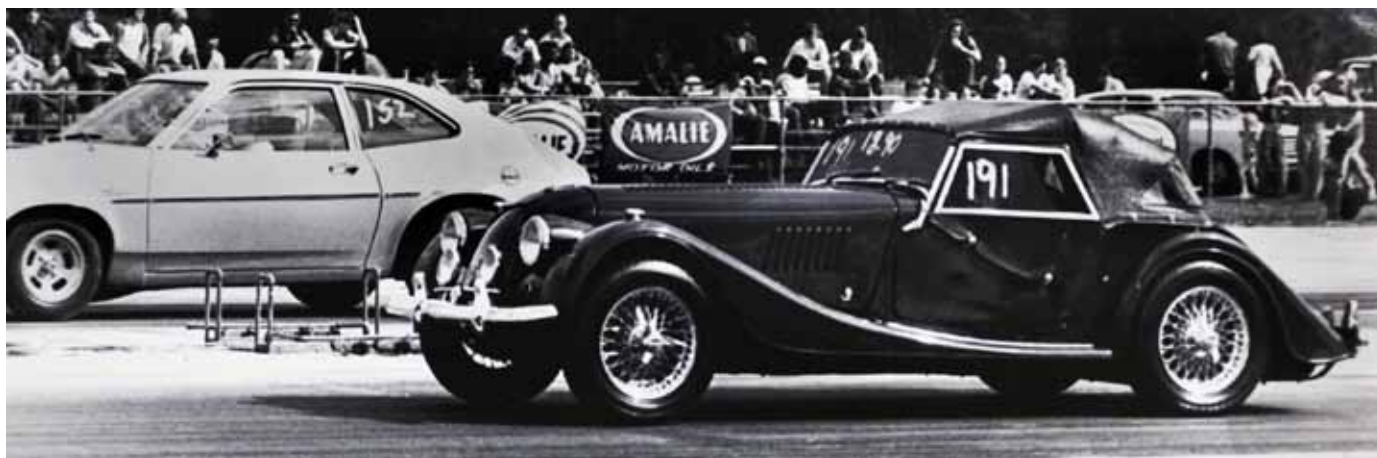
The first car I owned was a Mercury Monterey convertible. It was white with red leather interior. I was so thrilled with it that I would park it under my bedroom window and at bedtime I would climb out the window and sleep in it unbeknownst to my parents. I loved to smell the leather.

I got into racing in my teens at sanctioned drag races driving a C-gas rail, a 1955 Oldsmobile and a 1957 Chevrolet. Later I drag raced the 1967 Plus 4 Morgan (photo attached ) Later it was Enduro carts then shifter carts. Then a Group 44 TR 4 in SCCA.

**When and how did you discover sports cars in general and Morgans in particular? What was the first Morgan model you decided you must own? How long did you own it, and did you rebuild it?**

The first sports car I ever had was a 1953 MG TD. I drove past a Chevrolet dealer in Hopewell, Virginia in my Mercury and spotted that green MG TD on the used car lot, wheeled in and traded the Mercury for the MG, which I loved but didn't like it's lack of horsepower. I drove it several years and then





that little engine gave up I replaced it with a much stronger 4 cylinder engine from a brand new Volvo 544, which really looked like a MG engine to the untrained eye except for a deeper oil pan that most people didn't notice. I had the engine power that I craved.

The first Morgan that I owned was a 1967 Morgan Plus 4 series 4 (low profile body). I had just finished serving in the U.S. Navy and went to John Copeland Motors in Norfolk, VA to order one, but the owner of the dealership said he couldn't import any more Morgans because of the bumper requirements in the USA. The cutoff date was the last day of December and it was already April. I went home disappointed. However I picked up the telephone and called Morgan Motor Company LTD and asked for Peter Morgan, I could not believe it but Peter actually came on line and listened to my desire for a Morgan and he said "young man I think I can have that green 1967 Plus 4 shipped to you before the end of December. Right then and there a wonder-

ful friendship with Peter Morgan began and lasted to the day he passed away.

I drove that 1967 Plus 4 for 225,000 miles, track raced and autocrossed it. I also entered it in solo competitions and it won many concours Best of Shows and First in Class awards. Half way through my ownership of the Plus 4 a Ford Station Wagon was driving on a downhill blind right hand corner in my lane and met me in a head on collision in Richmond, VA, destroying the front end of the Morgan. I was slightly injured. The lady driving the Ford was not injured in her big 'tank' but the Morgan was a real mess. I restored it in a paint and body shop in Richmond as a friend of mine owned the shop and let me come in nights and work on the Morgan until it was restored and 'In the Wind' again.

**How many full Morgan restorations have you accomplished? Which was the most memorable? The most difficult? The most satisfying?**

I stopped counting at 10 Morgans. The most difficult was one of four Plus 4 Plus models that I did. It was really a sad case that had sat outside for over 10 years rotting away but I felt needed to be saved because they are so rare. My book on Plus 4 Plus Morgans features the restoration of that white Plus 4 Plus from start to finish.

The most satisfying restoration was that first one that I owned - the 1967 Plus 4. I said that I would never let that Morgan go, but a 1967 black Plus 4 Super Sports came my way with less than



#### Photos:

**Top:** John drag racing his '67 Plus 4 at Suffolk Raceway in 1968

**Right:** John's first restoration - his '67 Plus 4

Image by John H Sheally II



10 thousand miles on it, which of course I could not pass up, and it was easy to let the first one go at that point!

**When and how did your interest in photography come about? Do you have any favorite subjects other than Morgans?**

My interest in photography started about age 12 when I was given a Brownie Hawkeye point and shoot camera for Christmas. I have never looked back. I went on a program in high school where you were in school half a day then worked for a newspaper the other half. The paper was *The Hopewell News*. Then after high school I went to work for the *Progress Index* in Petersburg, VA and then into the U.S. Navy for it's school of photography, I was an Aerial Photographer flying just about every day from the aircraft carrier the USS CONSTELLATION CVA-64 and then The USS Independence CVA-62, shooting various countries and shorelines from helicopters and fixed wing naval aircraft. Traveling the world as a photo journalist opened many subjects and stories to me.



After the Navy I went to work for the *Virginian Pilot* in Norfolk. After retiring from that newspaper it was on to magazines where I worked for 14 national magazines producing stories and layouts with my partner who does the writing for all of the stories and books we publish.

As far as favorite subjects, as a Photo Journalist I like them all! Life is an image!

**What was the most memorable Morgan event you attended and why?**

My favorite Morgan meet? I would have to say several, starting with the first one at Pocono, PA for The Morgan Car Club of Washington D.C. I attended this event for 39 years in a row. The 70th and 75th anniversaries of The Morgan Motor Car for The Morgan Motor Company, LTD in the UK are also on the top of the list. Both were out-







standing. Forced to make a difficult choice I would say the 70th in the UK being the very best of them all.

**You had a very close and personal relationship with Peter Morgan. Is there a good PM story you haven't shared before that you could tell us about?**

That would probably be when I invited Peter and Heather to be the Guests of Honor at the MCCDC 25th anniversary in Malvern, Pennsylvania. Peter knew that I had just restored from the ground up another Morgan Plus 4 Plus and was bringing it to the meet. When I arrived that evening he met me in the lobby and asked if he could see the car. So we walked out front in the dark and I opened the enclosed trailer. He entered and started really looking the car over bottom to top quietly for about 10 minutes then turned to me and said "you know, when I took the first Plus 4 Plus to show at Earls Court a man walked up to me and said sir you really built a pretty little submarine." He then turned to me and said "This is really beautiful and you proved to me that I wasn't all wrong after all."

In my book, *The Rare Ones*, Peter Morgan and the Plus 4 Plus, Peter stated "For my part, I never regret introducing the Plus 4 Plus, although you can say that at the time it was a failure!" Years later he said to me that perhaps he wasn't wrong after all as he had sold every one of the Plus 4 Plus models. He also said that if he had it to do over he would have moved the windshield a foot forward to allow more cabin room and he would have put some air vents near the bottom of the rear windshield for venting, as the cabin was a bit hot in the summer months.

**Some mundane stuff now. A little bit of your personal history. Where did you grow up? Spouse or significant other and where/when you met?**

I grew up between Hopewell, Virginia and Henderson, North Carolina. That said my parents lived in Hopewell and I spent the summers in Henderson with my grandparents. I met my

**Photos:**

**Opposite page**

**TOP:** John in his fully restored '35 MX-4 Super Sports three wheeler

**BOTTOM:** John racing his Plus 8

**This page**

**TOP:** John in his 1935 Morgan MX-4 barrelback three wheeler

**Right:** Front and back covers of John's book – *The Rare Ones: Peter Morgan And the Plus Four Plus*

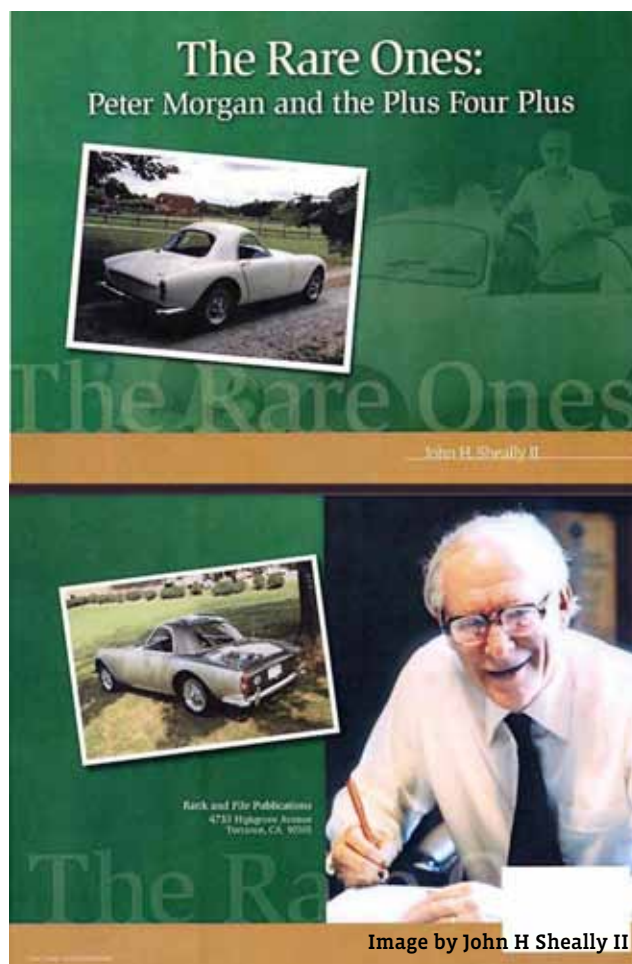


Image by John H Sheally II

beautiful wife Donna in Hopewell and have a beautiful daughter, named Kate and grandson, Henry.

**One story you have to tell our readers. You once drove a Morgan three wheeler (with no weather gear) cross country to attend I believe a MOG West event – correct? Can you tell us about that trip?**

Yes, I drove a 1935 Morgan three wheeler coast to coast, starting with the rear wheel in the Atlantic Ocean and finishing with the front wheels in the Pacific in Los Angeles California. The trip of 3,328 miles from Virginia Beach, Virginia to Los Angeles as a salute to the 70th anniversary of the Morgan motor car. I called on of my best friends, Tim Hund and said “let’s go across country in my 1935 MX-4 Super Sports barrelback three wheeler.” Tim asked “when are we leaving?” and I replied “April fools.” He laughed and said “then you are joking” and I said “heck no, we are doing it as a salute to the 70th anniversary of the Morgan motor company.” He said “Okay, let’s do it”. I said “Good. I already have us set up with the trip through the widest route, swinging down through the widest part of Texas. And I have only one rule - I do all the driving”, which he was fine with. Tim had no experience in driving a three wheeler at that time. That said the trip was on.

I had lined up several US sponsors for the trip. Ramada Inn put us up with two rooms each night for the trip, Castrol motor oil gave us \$2500 and



Image by John H Sheally II



their jackets and Mayflower Van Lines agreed to transport the Morgan three wheeler back to VA. I did it that way because a trip’s end I did not have the time to drive the three wheeler back to the East Coast and still have time to go to England to celebrate the Morgan Motor Company, Ltd 70<sup>th</sup> Anniversary.

We had been invited as guests of honor to the MOG West event in CA after completing the trip. Some of their folks were taking bets that we wouldn’t make it. As we arrived at the door of the Plus 4 Morgan Club president, Garret

Capune, the evening before the meet he exclaimed “John, we all were convinced that your three wheeler would not make or finish the coast to coast run. So we planned to have a guy burst into the banquet ragged and and worn with a busted steering wheel in his hand in your absence . . . Now we have to change our plan.”

And yes, I still have that very MX-4 Morgan and drive it all the time to this day. It is the aerial shot looking down on that 1935 Mx-4 with me in the drivers seat.

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**Photos:**

**TOP:** John’s Plus 4 Super Sports

**BOTTOM:** Hitting the road again after an all-nighter repairing the engine fire damage in Phoenix (note scorched bonnet)



*Editor's note: In a chapter of John's book MORGANS PRIDE OF THE BRITISH he gives a detailed day by day account of his cross-country trip, which included such adventures as a broken fuel line engine fire, a valve failure causing extensive piston damage, an interesting encounter with a biker gang (who they befriended, of course), and many other adventures. John said the book is now out of print but you may be able to find one used.*

**Now a few philosophical think questions. If you could just own/drive ONE Morgan, what would it be?**

That's an easy one to answer. I have liked them all but my 1967 Plus 4 Super Sports was the most fun to drive, compete with on track and solos and auto-cross. It always did things better than others and constantly amazed me with it's handling - spot on all the time. It delivered over and over again and danced with the best of them. I think that the Plus 4 Super Sports is the best looking of all the Morgan Models and defines what a Morgan is.

**Other than Peter Morgan, who is your favorite Morgan personality and why?**

That would be Charlie Curtis, the kind gentleman that probably drove more different Morgans than any man in history. Charlie tested every new Morgan built for decades and left notes under the windshield wiper on any corrections needed before delivery to the customer. What a nice job to have and a pleasure to do. Remember that the next time you get in your Morgan. Charlie Curtis probably drove your car around Malvern before you yourself had the pleasure to drive it.

**Do you foresee a time in the future when Morgans will be legislated OFF the roads in this country?**

No, I think vintage cars and vintage clubs will always have a place with those like us who will cherish and restore them and pass them on to others as time goes on . There is a old saying that we never own a Morgan

or other automobiles. We just maintain them and pass them on to others in the future .

*Thanks so much John. I must say this has been one of my favorite and informative interviews. Thank you for sharing your thoughts and stories with us. Good luck racing your Plus 8. And I really admire you for restoring not one, not two but four Plus 4 Plus Morgans! Well done, old boy.*

**Photos:**

**Right:** John with Morgan Motor Company chief tester Charles Curtis

**Below:** Peter Morgan autographs the dash of John's restored Best In Show trike







Love it, Hate it,  
or Somewhere  
in Between,  
it is Definitely  
One of the  
'Rare Ones'

## THE MORGAN PLUS 4 PLUS

Images by John H Sheally II









# WHY A MORGAN?

John H. Sheally II

**O**kay, what is my reply when I am asked, WHY A MORGAN? It is quite simple. Brock Yates once wrote "A Morgan merely is and that should be enough". You either accept a Morgan as you would the Himalayas or go on to more splendid things such as butterfly collecting. A Morgan merely is and that should be enough.

I read those fine words just after I had purchased my first Morgan Motorcar brand new from Morgan Motor Company, Ltd. It was a 1967 Plus 4 in Westminster Green complimented with Black leather interior and topped off with chrome wire wheels. I have never looked back, as the Morgan marque has always been my mainstay in motorears.

That was forty 48 years ago and in 2017 I still feel the same. If you want a hand built motorcar to love and improve and enjoy and be hands on with, turn wrenches on, make it your

personal icon and have fun with – DO HAVE A MORGAN.

I have been doing the above for over five decades. I have owned and driven all the models that MMC have produced starting with the three wheelers and up through the Plus 8s and Aero 8s and "NEW" Morgan three wheelers. The exception is the Aeromax and some of that series and I can't wait to do so with those either.

That hands-on has led to unlimited pleasure. The thrill of making a Morgan better and better is very satisfying. I have never had a perfect one, or has one ever been perfect even when receiving the checkered flag or a Best of Show or when receiving a compliment about one from a perfect stranger.

Morgans are real. The improvements that I have made on them is my therapy. The friends that I have made via association with the marque are exhilarating. The miles of seat time take the edge off the day.

The smiles associated with a Morgan are priceless. Yes I have owned and/or driven many other fine makes and models over the years including Bugatti to very fine Ferraris from Dino to the Daytona Spyder, Rolls Royce, Alard, Duesenberg, Porsche 904, 906, 356 and Carrera to modern Carrera, the wonderful 930s, all the Lotus models, Lamborghini, Alfas, Maserati, GT Fords and on and on. With the exception of Bugatti I soon become bored and always go back to the Morgan because they excite and stimulate me very much, much more than the others.

Wonder why? My answer is simply: MORGANS ARE EVERYTHING THAT OTHERS SAY THEY ARE AND EVERYTHING OTHERS SAY THEY ARE NOT. THEY ARE MERELY MORGANS NOT ANYTHING MORE.....NOT ANYTHING LESS. They just are.

Butterfly collecting never appealed to me, as I prefer the butterfly in free flight as I do the Morgan in the wind.



## PLUS 8 FOR SALE

Shelly & Lenny Mandel's Cadillac Cranberry 2000 Plus 8 is for sale.

The car has been garaged, and meticulously serviced and all major work was done at Morgan Spares.

The original owner added about \$11K in extras and Lenny also added: *an RPI V8 Morgan +8 Polished Stainless Steel Exhaust System—2 ¼ bored Manifolds, 100 Cell Sport Cat & Link Pipe (stock Morgan Cats are 400 cells), 18" Sports Silencer and Sports Tail Pipes, Carbon Fiber Injection Trumpets, ECU Performance ReChip, Aluminum Radiator, Moto-Lita Steering Wheel, Leather door pouches, and much much more.*

They are buying a 4 seater so that their grandsons can enjoy the Morgan along with them.

Contact Lenny @ 201 618 0716.

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## The 3/4 Morgan Group Ltd EVENT CALENDAR 2018

<u>DATE</u>	<u>EVENT</u>	<u>HOSTS</u>
May 19-20	<b>Farthest North Dustoff/Lobster MOG</b> <i>Location TBD</i>	Frank & Meredith Wnek <i>wnek_fm@comcast.net</i> Phone: 207-729-6300
June 23	<b>Lunch with Friends</b> Hull, MA	Ron & Kathy Garner <i>ron-garner@comcast.net</i>
Advertise Your Event Here Free!		
Sept 21-23	<b>Autumn MOG</b> Williams Inn Williamstown, MA Details to follow CO-CHAIR NEEDED!	Frank Wnek <i>wnek_fm@comcast.net</i> Phone: 207-729-6300
Oct 5-7	<b>British Legends Weekend</b> Falmouth, MA Morgan a featured marque	Cape Cod British Car Club <i>www.capecodbritishcarclub.com</i>

Nota Bene: The 3/4 Morgan Group Ltd. members regularly get together in smaller, regional events on a less formal basis: Noggins, lunches, BBQ's, tours, work sessions, and casual parties.  
Contact your local Area Captain to host one yourself or just to stay in the loop.

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# A PROFILE OF MARTYN WEBB

*Archivist, Morgan Motor Company*

Steve Schefbauer

---

“As was usually the case, if you paid Mr. Morgan enough, you could have just about anything you wanted!”

**W**hen I think about the term Archivist, I picture an old bearded man in a robe, sitting at a desk with a candle for light, and a quill pen in hand. That is NOT Martyn Webb! Born and raised, coincidentally, in Malvern Link, he attended local schools and then joined the Royal Air Force in 1974 as an aircraft engineer. And since the

sun never sets on the British Empire, he has served in the Middle East, Belize, Norway, The Falklands, Turkey and numerous “no fly” zones. In 1988 Martyn specialized as a crew chief for a Squadron in air-to-air refueling, again, around the globe.

In 2009 he was invited by Charles Morgan ‘himself’ to safeguard the historic material at the factory, creating

an archive and Museum to celebrate 100 years of car production. Martyn got this offer as a result of researching and writing the book *Morgan, Malvern & Motoring* detailing the early years of the factory, Charles liked it.

---

Photos:

**Top:** Martyn at ‘Run For The Hills’ Show

**Opposite Page:** Martyn and his 1910 Morgan recreation



## The Archives

What comprises Martyn's realm? This should make a Morgan enthusiast drool! Well, here are some of the contents but not all: chassis record books, test driver's record books, hundreds of technical & engineering drawings from 1914 to present, thousands of photographs including the Victorian albums of Rev. George Morgan.

Martyn has digitally scanned most of the important early documents and photos but as he points out, "there is still a lot of work to do to digitize the entire collection". If this was not enough to keep one busy, he is the museum curator, responsible for the factory's collection of historic cars, PR activities and has been involved in developing the factory tours that welcome 30,000

visitors a year. He also represented the factory at the opening of a new Morgan showroom in Taipei, Taiwan.

When I asked Martyn about his most memorable moments on the job he said, "from an archive point of view; I had a request from a Morgan owner in Canada for information about his 1950s 4/4 which turned out to be the very first 4/4 Series 2 from 1955---a rather significant car in Morgan history! I also organized a display of Chris Lawrence's 'Lawrencetune' race cars at the 'Run for the Hills' event this year---an opportunity to 'play' with some of the most famous Morgans, including all three SLRs". All that and taking members of the Royal family, Princess Ann in 2009 and Prince Charles several years later, for a visit around the Morgan Museum as well.

## Martyn's Collection

So, what does he do for fun you should ask? As you can see from the photos, Martyn has a fine collection of historic vehicles, among them: a recreation of the first 1910 production Morgan that he built over the past 20 years, a 1923 Morgan Aero he restored in the 1980's and later sold to help pay for his 80th Anniversary Morgan 4/4, a competition history Plus 4 Flat Rad owned since 1985, and a 1960 Austin Healey 3000, restored to "works rally" specification, that Martyn races in local hill-climb competition at Shelsley Walsh and Prescott. In addition to the photo cars, he also owns two classic Minis, a 1961 Austin Mini 850 and a 1966 Austin Mini Cooper no less.





Martyn is an international treasure who has provided me with a chassis record for my '64 Plus 4 EMMA, an electronic copy of the 1964 Morgan Catalogue, and has answered numerous questions such as how many cars were made in 1964 and what were the wheel options that year.

If you have not yet purchased your chassis record, I urge you to do so. It is the start of establishing provenance and the quest for a complete history of your Morgan. Martyn will gladly help you in the journey, of course. It's just one of the things he does so well.

Cheers!

---

Photos:

**Right** Martyn and his competition history Plus 4

**Bottom:** Martin and his "Works Rally" Austin Healey 3000 at Shelsley







### 3 WHEELERS:

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**2014 3 Wheeler 128 Special Spec**  
Jaguar Stratus Grey metallic // 1 OF 1

**2013 3 Wheeler** Porsche GT  
Silver metallic // 1744 ORIGINAL MILES

**2013 3 Wheeler** Charcoal Grey  
Metallic // 1250 ORIGINAL MILES

### ROADSTERS:

NEW **2015 Morgan Roadster '65:**  
Montblanc White/Sable Leather,  
340HP // BEST IN SHOW - MogWest 2017

**2014 Morgan Roadster '65:** RAF  
Blue/Saddle Leather, 340HP

**2006 Morgan Aero 8** Silver  
exterior/medium Blue leather  
interior with grey piping

**2005 Morgan 3.0 Roadster** Two  
Tone Metallic Blue/Blue leather

**2005 Morgan 3.0 Roadster**  
BRG Metallic/tan, 1,800 miles

**2003 Morgan Plus 8 35TH  
ANNIVERSARY** Bugatti Blue/  
Black leather with blue piping

**2002 Morgan Plus 8 LeMans '62**  
BRG body-white hard top/Black  
leather // RIGHT HAND DRIVE - #01 OF 40

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with dark red piping

**1970 Morgan Plus 8**, Yellow,  
Black Leather, newly rebuilt  
3.5 liter, V8 16 valve engine

**1967 Morgan Plus 4**, DHC, Ivory/  
Green Wings, Ivory leather

**1967 Morgan Plus 4**, four  
pass SuperSport perfect clone,  
ground up restoration

**1963 Morgan Plus 4** Four  
Passenger Roadster, Regency  
Red/Black leather

**1963 Morgan Plus 4** SuperSport,  
BRG/Black leather

**1959 Morgan Plus 4** DHC, BRG/  
Black Wings, black int. very nice

**1935 Morgan F2** VIN #F246

### OTHER MARQUES:

**Allard J2X, Mk III**

**1985 Renault R5 Turbo**  
White Metallic/Tan

**1972 Lotus Elan Sprint** Lagoon  
Blue over Cirrus White

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*The following article was first published in the February 2017 issue of MOG magazine. Reprinted here with author's permission. ed*



# BREAKING THE MOULD

## *Part I*

*Morgans are rare as standard, other limited runs are even more desirable – yet some are completely unique. There have been a surprising number of one-off Mogs across the decades, some oddities and others stunning in design. Douglas Hallawell takes a look at three 1950s & 1960s examples from Europe, including an after-market re-body and the prospect of an Italian-bodied Mog, in the first of our 3-part series.*

Douglas Hallawell

**I**n 1961 Peter Morgan was looking at the feasibility of marketing an alternatively styled Morgan with a non-traditional body mated to a Plus 4 chassis. Thinking along similar lines, Dr. Salvatore Ruffino, Standard-Triumph's distrib-

utor for Italy, realised in 1959 that there was a potential for the TR3A power lump and its chassis. As an Italian, it seemed only logical for him to knock on an Italian coachbuilder's door rather than solicit one of several British manufacturers that spe-

cialised in glassfibre bodies. The aluminium prototype was to use a complete TR3A rolling chassis as a basis for his sportscar, once he had convinced Standard-Triumph to supply 1000 units for future production, to be spread over two years



(1960-1962). Like several other dream cars – the Giugiaro-designed DeLoorean immediately comes to mind – Ruffino's project was to prove to be over-ambitious. While production was in full swing, Standard-Triumph backed out – due to the Leyland Motors takeover – leaving Ruffino on his own, and with far fewer Triumph Italias to produce.

What, one may ask, does this have to do with Morgan? Well, in some respects, the formula is not unlike that of the Morgan Plus 4 Plus coupé from the same era. Both projects involved a complete rolling chassis onto which a hand-built body would be designed and built elsewhere. Another feature both cars shared was the absence of wooden framing. Standard-Triumph's specific engine serial numbering included an 'I' suffix (for Italia), and likewise, engines supplied to Morgan for the Plus 4 series had an 'ME' suffix (for Morgan engine)

Photos:

**Opposite Page, top, and this page, top and middle:**

The Ashley Morgan Plus 4

**Below:** Peter Morgan and his Plus 4 Plus



Image by John H Sheally II



in the TR's engine numbering. Where the two cars differed was in design, with the Plus 4 Plus remaining a purely British sportscar whereas the Italia was designed by Giovanni Michelotti and built in Turin by Vignale. In 1965, TVR adopted Ruffino's method, leaving the design of the Trident in the hands of Trevor Fiore, who, along with famed Turin-based Carrozzeria Fissore, showed how sleek a British sportscar could look with Italian styling.

With a total production figure of 330 Italias, the Anglo/Italian venture proved, nevertheless, more successful than both Trident and Plus 4 Plus production put together. Apart from six

early RHD models, the Italia was only offered in LHD guise, unlike the Plus 4 Plus and the Trident. On account of having Triumph gearboxes – as opposed to Moss boxes on the Morgans – most of the Italias were equipped with overdrive. At the 2016 Birmingham NEC classic car show, the Italia Register had no less than six stunning coupés (from 3 countries) on display.

Had Peter Morgan chosen to entrust the Plus 4 Plus project to an Italian coachbuilder, e.g. Zagato, the Milan-based designer and coach-builder, then it's fairly easy to imagine what the Morgan coupé could have ended up looking like. As it was, Peter Morgan decided to

have the 2-seater coupé built in glass-fibre by EB Plastics in the UK which, admittedly, did have the advantage of costing less than in steel or aluminium. A glassfibre 2+2 coupé that caught Peter Morgan's attention, in January 1962, was the Debonair GT kit car and an alternative design by Coventry Lami-

Photos:

**Middle:** The Triumph Italia

**Bottom:** Triumph Italias on display at Birmingham NEC 2016

**Opposite page:** Coventry Laminates Morgan roadster 3/4 scale model





nates, of a roadster, was produced as a ¼ scale model specially for Morgan; the project was dismissed though. Unfortunately for Morgan, the TR4-engined Plus 4 Plus was not a success story – with only 26 cars sold – during its short lifespan (1964-1967). And, at £157 (14%) more than a Plus 4 Super Sports, it was costly too.

In 1961, prior to Peter's project, Rolf Wehrlin, who was the official Morgan-appointed Swiss importer for the marque, had his own dream of creating a Morgan coupé, using a complete (Sportiva) bodyshell supplied by Ashley Laminates in the UK. His interpretation of a glassfibre coupé was, however, less appealing than the Plus 4 Plus. Sporting a Judson supercharger, it was assembled in Switzerland in time for the Geneva Motor Show in March 1962. When Peter visited the importer's stand, he was, however, unpleasantly surprised with the coupé and very annoyed with the importer. Wehrlin had assembled

and displayed what he purported to be a 2+2 Morgan coupé (based on a 1954 Plus 4 tourer rolling chassis) without a word of permission from Peter! Its only saving grace was the (handsome) 19-month headstart on the Plus 4 Plus. Although it was never officially badged a Morgan, the coupé has, interestingly, survived the times, and now belongs to Markus Tanner.

*Many thanks to Jake Alderson who took the time to proof-read & contribute certain details, and to the Triumph Italia Registrar for the photos & input on the Italia 2000. Thanks also to John H. Sheally II for the photos of his Plus 4 Plus and Markus Tanner for the photos of his Swiss coupé.*



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# PRESIDENT'S TWO PENCE

*This is the last column from outgoing Morgan Car Club of DC president Bruce Trabb (also a 3/4 Morgan Group member), reprinted from the December 2017 Rough Rider, newsletter of the MCCDC, with permission of its editor Ed Zelinski and the author. Bruce articulately raises some issues that we ALL need to start thinking and talking about – the future of our clubs.*

## CONGRATULATIONS Richard Fohl!

We have a new MCCDC President in Dr. Richard Fohl. Rich is one of the most knowledgeable Morgan enthusiasts, well respected, well known to the Morgan factory as well as Morgan fans, both in the United States, Europe and internationally. Congratulations on your election and thank you for your willingness to serve MCCDC.

Guiding MCCDC is not an easy matter, as it is complicated by several factors. Included among these are the following:

1. An aging MCCDC membership is not being replaced by 'younger members'
2. There is a lack of new four wheel Morgans being imported to the United States in the last twelve years
3. The cost of used Morgans in the last several years has remained relatively high. Comparing a year 2000 Morgan Plus 8 to a same year Jaguar Roadster of comparable condition, the Morgan is more that double the cost.
4. The Morgan factory has changed focus to a more upscale customer base
5. The total inventory of serviceable Morgans available in the United States continues to diminish and is not being replenished by new Morgans entering the US.
6. There is a lack of willingness on the part of MCCDC members to volunteer in the administration of MCCDC. Over the last several years, only one person has run for office for each elected position. In many cases, such as myself, officers had to be solicited to run for office.

The above factors have resulted in the following:

1. Many MCCDC members, as well s members of other Morgan clubs, are not willing to travel distances due to their advancing age, as well as the advancing age of their Morgans.
2. Many young people today are not interested in Morgans due to their high cost and lack of new car availability. A new Plus 8 with options can cost over \$100 thousand in Europe. In general, many young people today are not really interested in purchasing fixer-upper cars. They have a lack of time availability and knowledge to perform this task and prefer to purchase a car without problems that they can use immediately.
3. Many 'sports car' buyers are not even aware of what a Morgan is due to lack of the car's availability, low produc-

tion numbers and lack of marketing efforts in the United states by the company.

4. In general, there is a lack of participation on the part of Morgan club members in club events. As an example, the Texas Morgan Club is considering the elimination of their annual MOG due to lack of participation. It was reported that they only had six cars attend their last event.

*Possible solutions that should be considered by MCCDC to reverse, combat and overcome the above referenced trends and observations include the following:*

1. Work with and support the Morgan company and Morgan dealers by encouraging them to bring to the US new four wheeled Morgans under the proposed federal exemption to allow 100-200 cars per year.
2. Coordinate with other Morgan clubs on shared events.
3. Coordinate with other British car clubs on shared events, such as the 2016 'Covered Bridge Tour', sponsored by the Northern Virginia Triumph Club, which the MCCDC club participated in last year.
4. Invite other Morgan and British car clubs to participate jointly in MCCDC sponsored events, since we all have similar interests and experiences with some of our cars, and even share common parts.
5. Participate in local car shows as ambassadors of the Morgan brand to generate and encourage interest, understanding and demand for Morgans.

It has been my pleasure to serve as president of MCCDC these past two years.

Regards to all,  
Bruce Trabb  
Outgoing President MCCDC



# Yes, Virginia, There Will be an Autumn MOG

Frank Wnek (*the Mad Hatter revealed*)

**I**n case you're wondering, yes there will be an Autumn MOG in 2018, and on and on for as many years as our club remains in existence, as far as I am concerned. And I know that there are many who share this sentiment. It is the BIG event of our club's driving season, and the one opportunity to see many of our friends and fellow club members (and Morgan enthusiasts) who happen to live in the far diverse corners of our club geographic area. In a BIG way, it is the very essence of our club (yes, yes, even more than *The Morganeer*). We have been doing it for 40 some years now (talk about tradition!) and many of our club members have taken their turn chairing the event. And besides that, it is just plain FUN, as those of you who have attended well know.

But we must, as a club, come to terms with a little problem that has developed over the last several years relating to Autumn MOG. And that is, sadly and inexplicably in my mind, getting someone, and particularly a NEW someone (who has not done it before) to volunteer to be the event chair. As you have read elsewhere in this issue, we have set a location and dates for next year's event – The Williams Inn in Williamstown, MA the weekend of Sept 21<sup>st</sup>.

At this point, I have agreed to co-chair Autumn MOG 2018. But I am REALLY hoping that someone will agree to co-chair with me. Yes, I have chaired the event before. And yes, we are all busy and have obligations. But you know what – we ALL also have the same amount of time. It's just a matter of what we decide to do with it.

As co-chair, I will gladly help a new person learn the ropes. It's not all that difficult. It just takes some organizational skills and the willingness to dedicate some time serving the club.

The location and dates have already been selected. The basic schedule and events of Autumn MOG are already well established. But there are many ways the chairs can add some personal touches which can make it more fun and interesting.

Another thing I would like to see happen is for Autumn MOG planning to take on a longer term perspective. We should have at least a 2 or 3 year plan for the event, if not a 5 year plan. In that regard, I proposed to the Board of Directors at our recent conference call that we form an Autumn MOG Planning Committee. I have volunteered to initially chair the committee IF at least two others also volunteer to serve on the committee. The main purpose of the committee would be to investigate and determine locations AND chairs for the event several years in advance. Jim Nichol and Tom Austin have agreed to join the committee, but there is certainly an opportunity for several more to join in.

In the past we have lost out on good opportunities at some very nice venues for Autumn MOG simply because we were too late in getting started in the planning. If you think about it, most weddings, which are one of the events we are always competing with for reservations at these venues, are normally planned well in advance of one year. And weddings normally represent a higher income potential for the venues. So it is in our best interest to get room bloc reservations well in advance, something we have NOT had the foresight and planning to do in recent years.

SO – if you're one of those who feel the same way as me and look forward to attending Autumn MOG each Fall, AND you have not volunteered to chair the event, consider this your call to arms. PLEASE, let us hear from you. As I said, I will help and coach you through the first year. It is NOT that difficult. There will also be opportunities to help out as event and activity chairs, such as admin, awards, auction, concours, autocross and rally.

I have this dream. That one day (year) in the remainder of my lifetime I will be able to attend an Autumn MOG and just be a participant, and not have to worry about who, what, when and where and helping make it all happen. There's no telling what might happen to me if that dream is shattered! Would any of you want to be responsible for me trading my Drophead in for a – MIATA?

Think about it people. It's all up to YOU. PLEASE – let me hear from you.



*Reprinted from the 1981:2 issue of The Morganeer, written by then editor Bob Mitchell.  
SOME things never change, even from one century to another. ed*

# OPINION EDITORIAL

## *Defending The Faith*

The time to draw the battles lines between great and good is now!

### Thoughts On A Little Red Car

Bob Mitchell

**H**ave you ever given serious thought as to why you put up with windburn, hot feet, wet clothing, bleeding kidneys, crushed spinal columns, fungus, and wood worms for what some people perceive as merely a method of traveling from one point to another without using your pedal extremities? Why do you have a mad, passionate desire to own a Morgan and, even more inconceivably, actually drive it?

For all intents and purposes, from April until November, my Drophead is an everyday car. I have developed a psychological dependency on that machine. I find myself staring out the window towards the garage, wondering if the weatherman was correct about his 60 percent chance of showers. If I have not been able to drive the Morgan for several weeks, I experience something akin to withdrawal symptoms, which can only be alleviated by a civilized tour down some familiar country roads, sending terror into the hearts of the local horsey set.

My Morgan is not the best handling, although I have been known to leave a 914 well behind on a winding (if smooth) road. It is not overpowering, although, again, I enjoy out-accelerating some poor EPA strangled MG or TR. The car IS

fantastically handsome, probably because it was designed empirically; they look as they do because the car itself dictates that it wants to be that way. As for the interior design and sophistication of systems, a tear rolls down my cheek when I feel my back spasm at the sight of a pothole ahead.

Even with its design anomalies and its total lack of creature comforts, my Morgan is a tremendous thrill to drive. Part of this comes from somewhere deep down inside, since I know that sixteen years ago, several citizens of the United Kingdom really cared how they put my car together. They took the time to set my top without wrinkles; they spent the needed hours to smooth the wings and clean the paint brush between coats.

You can go out and buy faster, better handling cars, arguably some as innately good-looking, definitely some more comfortable. But they all lack an addictive quality. Morgans have personality. It is installed at the works just as surely as the engine. As a group, we are 'possessed' as no other car owners with a love of an automotive experience. Nothing exemplifies this quite as well as waving back to a station wagon full of five-year-olds whose wide-eyed youth has realized in a few seconds just how I feel when I drive my little red car.



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## AUTUMN MOG 2018

### Co - Chairs

Frank Wnek  
Vounteer needed, see page 29

### Event Chairs

**Rally**  
Jim Nichol



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- Electronic photo format - .jpg.
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- Caption photos to identify cars, people, locations, dates, events, etc.

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