

SIXTY YEARS OF THE MORGAN PLUS 4 CLUB PART 3

This story of the Morgan Plus 4 Club of Southern California is written after reading Forty year old copies of Morgan Plus 4 Club Formats. It is intended for enjoyment and may not have every historical event documented correctly. However, I hope you will enjoy reading about our Club History. Carolyn Klein

The decade of the seventies and eighties - were tumultuous to say the least with Watergate, the end of Vietnam, normal relations with China, Earth Day, and then Prosperity and the Cold War ending. History recorded the Bicentennial celebration for the United States, the movie Star Wars, May '77, Pope John Paul is elected, October '78, Iran hostage Crisis, November '79, Olympic Gold with Hockey Miracle on Ice when US beats Soviet Union, 1980 California census 23.7 million (were you one of them?), Mt St Helen erupts, Sally Ride is first American woman in space, Los Angeles hosts Summer Olympics, Pete Rose breaks Ty Cobb's career hits, and the first version of Windows operating system is released. Meanwhile here is what the Morgan +4 Club was doing to make history of its own.

Morgan Plus 4 Club Presidents who lead our way included Tom Mc Clung, 1976, Brian Howlett, 1977, John Willburn, 1978, Norm Kear, 1979 & 1980, Jim Whelan, 1981, Evelyn Willburn, 1982, Ted Robinson, 1983, Gerry Willburn, 1984, Michael Hattem, 1985. All but one of these leaders, with the recent passing of Norm Kear, is still part of the energy that keeps the Morgan Club going today.

And what would the second Monday of the month be without pizza? It was back to the Straw Hat Pizza Palace on Centinela Ave. for the club meetings until June of 1980, when off to Damiano's Mr. Pizza in Los Angeles. Well, the pizza was not too tasty perhaps because two months later Club meetings moved to Hobo Joe's in Rosemead, through January 1982. The Club tried Taraxco in Lakewood with tasty Mexican food, but the appetite for pizza (or cheap food) won out and in April of 1982, meetings resided at Shakey's Pizza in Culver City for two months, and then to Shakey's Pizza in Lakewood. Here we settled in for years to come with lots of pepperoni pizza and beer to enjoy while enjoying our Morgan meetings.

The Format covers included the Morgan front end art drawing of Goodman Loy (Northern California Morganeer) from 1976 - 1980, along with memorable picture of club events or member's cars. In 1976, there was a service directory published for members to reference for car parts, wheels, rims, chrome or other services. There was a notable tech article written by George Newbauer on how to construct a tow bar for your Morgan.

March 1976, had a Queen Mary Le Cercle Concours d'Elegance with the Morgan Club recognized with 'Best Club Trophy' with the 10 Morgans invited for display included a flat-grille, three wheelers, roadsters, drop heads, and four passengers. The Club Concours in August was held at the Fashion Island in Newport Beach.

The Morgan Club Slalom history continues with Team Members - Brian Howlett, Jim Whelan, Louise Norwood, Tom Mc Clung, Bill Lovato, Bob Langdon, Fred Klein, Art Lund, and Chuck Small. This hardy crew enjoyed many competitive drives along with social camaraderie along the way. Of note, 1976 was the last Santa Maria car race weekend, so no more tri tip barbeque dinners after the races. The inaugural Historic Car Races were held in August 1976 at Laguna Seca Raceway in Monterey, CA. Who knew what a car tradition was in the making.

The 1976 Morgan events traveled from the central coast to San Diego and everywhere in between. There was a second annual gathering of the North/South Morgan Club in Cambria the weekend of Oct 2nd & 3rd with great driving Rallye and Hearst Castle tour. The Club enjoyed a September tour to San Diego and then on to Julian.

In 1977, the Morgan Club enjoyed a Briggs Cunningham Museum tour in January. February was a night navigational rally, and who can forget the amazing wine tour in March. There was a true passion for enjoying the Morgan to find the best wineries in the area and there was always a fun picnic for all Morgan members.

California sunshine and fine weather was the perfect combination for months of fun driving events and lots of racing. It was time for competition and April brought a Club Slalom at Cal State Fullerton and the May tour at Los Alamitos Race track Auto Fair. Watch out, here comes July which meant the Annual Screw Loosener Rallye and pool party hosted by Louise & Bob Langdon.

There was the annual tour to the Monterey Vintage Car Races and Pebble Beach Concours. (FYI entry fee for Races \$100 and Pebble Beach tickets \$5.00) There were 30 members and 10 Morgans that made their way to the Car Holiday in August. The Morrill's hosted a wonderful barbeque at their home in the Carmel Valley.

Michael Hattem became known as the Club Concours director and made special arrangements year in and year out for fabulous Concours. In 1977, we enjoyed the ABC Entertainment Center with more than 30 cars on display. Bill and Lilly Lavender took Best of Show with their 1956 Drophead Coupe.

In 1978, Club history must record just one name....John Willburn. He did it all; President, Format Editor, Publication Chairman, Tech Editor and Cover Art chairman! Fortunately, club members helped out with some fun events as well. There was a Palm Springs tram tour, competitive Rallye, and some traditional Morgan events for folks to enjoy.

Garrett Capune invited Morgan cars for "a casual but classy collage of cars and colleagues" for the inaugural Morgans on the Lawn. The event was held on the front lawn of his home along Skyline Drive in Fullerton. A playful Concours voted on most photogenic, most sociable,

5th runner up, and MG Mitten and Pep Boy Special Effects awards. No documented number of Morgans noted, however everyone who was there enjoyed great hospitality from Garrett.

Michael Hattem organized the Club Concours at the ABC Entertainment Center on Father's Day, 1978. Thirty polished Morgans were displayed with Jim Belardi's 1952 Flat Grill, Butterscotch, taking Best of Show.

ZOOM ZOOM, racing Morgans were everywhere this year. The Road America race in Wisconsin, had Anatoly Arutunoff doing a fine job racing with true Morgan spirit. The Competition slaloms filled the calendar and SCCSCC events too many to mention kept the racing tires well worn.

The Club really took the August calendar serious with months of planning to what was referred to as MogWest. The event was the weekend of Vintage Car races, Pebble Beach and great efforts to reserve motel rooms in blocks and banquet arrangements. Summer was not complete until the trip through the hot central valley to enjoy the car races in Monterey. Brian Howlett kept us all energized at the Laguna Seca Historic Races, as he beat out a Porsche to come in 1st to the delight of all the Morgan members who climbed 'Morgan Hill' to watch the race from the cork screw turn.

There was lively debate and discussion on Club support of SCCSCC and dues payment in 1979, and the \$25 dues stirred real excitement with pros and cons of insurance and slalom participation. The Morgan Team of Racing continued to enjoy weekend fun with racing. By the end of the year, Bill Lovato was top driver in Class Q for SCCSCC and Brian Howlett number one in his class as well.

In 1979, the pattern of Museum tour in January, and February rally repeated itself, along with Morgans on the Lawn in April, at Garrett's growing in popularity with 28 Morgans squeezed onto the lush lawn. In May, members came out for an out of area tour to Los Alamos with nine Morgans and 27 participants enjoying Rallye and antique stores, along with gala dinner at the Union Hotel.

July brought the traditional Rallye and pool party in the hills of Pasadena sponsored by Bob and Louise Langdon. Of course, Laguna Seca and car racing was the entire Morgan focus in August, with the Board meeting hosted by Don and Bobbie Morrill.

The Club was delighted to share time with Charles and Vivian Morgan who visited in September and Barbara and Gerry hosted a lovely evening with Morgan friends. The fall provided us with a weekend of fabulous racing and a Concours in Riverside, and the 4th annual Morgan Lotus Picnic and softball game. Who could ever keep track of the final softball score but a good time was had by all who attended.

Needless to say, Format printing is not cheap, and in 1979, the Proposed BY LAW change was to increase Dues to \$15 for members and \$5 for auxiliary members passed, to ensure financial balance.

IN 1980, our Club had many reasons to celebrate with the 70th Anniversary of the Morgan Motor Company. Norm Kear grew in confidence with one year of Club presidency under his belt and was ready for more Morgan events.

As in 1978 and 1979, history repeated itself, with more Morgan drives with a wine tour sponsored by the Robinsons, competitive Slalom at Cal State Fullerton, and our Club sponsored Slalom at Cypress College.

Due to the enthusiastic energy and Morgan Spirit that Garrett Capune generated, the Morgans on the Lawn was moved to the campus of California State University at Fullerton. Was anyone amazed when 99 Morgans arrived for the gathering of the faithful? There was even East Coast participants, including John Sheally in his 1935 MX-4 three wheeler, who drove from the east coast to arrive at Morgans on the Lawn. Of note, Winnie Becker was greeted by friends at the event.

The Concours master Michael Hattem arranged the Club Concours at the ABC Entertainment Center with 20 polished and pristine Morgan cars displayed. Lou Canut with his 1952 +4 roadster was awarded Best of Show.

July was time for the 8th annual Screw Loosener Rallye and Pool party, quite the social event to enjoy. Then August was time to pack the cars and enjoy another engine growling weekend of classic cars racing around the track at Laguna Seca. The cool morning fog burned off before the parade lap at lunch and the afternoon of serious racing. Brian Howlett won for the third year in a row at Monterey,

There was a party bound Morgan group who traveled across the pond to join the Morgan Anniversary (MOG80) Celebration in Malvern. The Capunes, the Freemans, the Willburns, Robin Yarrow and Lynn Bird enjoyed the Morgan party in England.

A true Morgan spirit was acknowledged in August, when a stranded Greg Sincoc with a broken fan belt on his Morgan sat helpless on the shoulder of the San Diego Freeway at 4 p.m. Sitting on the side of the road, with a call to AAA and forty minutes later, no service coming Greg was beside himself. Out of nowhere, Robin Yarrow (CHAMPION OF THE ROAD) appeared and offered to pick up a fan belt in Gardena and drop it off for him. With no road side assistance arriving, Greg had a CHP officer stop and begin to assist him with a drive to an auto store. Unfortunately, an emergency call sent the CHP car off to assist others and a long walk to auto stores and Mazda dealer to find a fan belt (that was close) and long walk back to the car at 7p.m. The car was sitting alone along the side of the road with a note on the windshield.

'THE BELT IS INSTALLED...GOOD LUCK. Robin (Champion of the Road) Indeed the proper belt was neatly installed and ready to go. Morgan friends are something special aren't they? Robin Yarrow is indeed a special Morgan friend.

The fall event to support the Morgans included a yard sale sponsored by Alice Gabrielson with 10 % of profits to go into the Club funds. We have true Morgan friends who help others. And if I did not mention, the slaloms and the Championship events were throughout the summer. By the end of the race season, Brian Howlett and Louise Langdon won first place in their class for SCCSCC awards.

Jim Whelan was elected President in 1981, he enjoyed keeping the Morgan Club running smoothly under his leadership. Policy revisions clarified monthly Morgan events with no expenses without prior Board approval and the Vice President shall organize the calendar of Club sanctioned events for member participation. The Club point's policy was extensively revised to provide equitable reward for club participation in events.

WHAT --- DID YOU HEAR THE BIG NEWS? Indeed, Special Guest Peter H.G. Morgan will be in attendance for Morgans on the Lawn IV. Yes, along with a record setting 107 Morgans enjoying the grass of Cal State Fullerton. Peter graciously signed autographs (rather than signing checks), reviewed engine mechanics and pointed out an installed drive shaft was backwards, as well as some shocks that were installed incorrectly. The man knows his Morgans! There was a Saturday evening banquet and a Sunday Rallye that finished at Briggs Cunningham Museum.

The Club continued to support SCCSCC with Team Morgan racing, Monterey Historic Car Races in August with reports of Morgan cars with some skilled drivers behind the wheel posting fast times.

The By Laws were in need of serious review and updating with a committee of Norm Kear, Alice Gabrielson, Robin Yarrow and John Willburn who work diligently to update the dues structure.

Michael Hattem the Concours master arranged the Club Concours to move to the Pico Rivera Sports Arena. John Hedden in a 1967 4/4 was awarded Best of Show. Two weeks later, 14 Morgans adventured to the 6th Annual Santa Barbara Concours D'Elegance, held at the Crane School in Montecito. The Morgan class ranged from a '23 Aero, Snobmog, +4+, + 8, propane powered 4/4 and various roadsters. The Klein's 4 Passenger Brownie took the 1st place award, with 2nd through 5th places separated by two points.

While Sally Ride became the first woman in space travel, Lynn Willburn became our First Lady of the Morgan Club in 1982. Recently, I was told on good authority that John Willburn was fortunate to be visiting San Francisco, stopping to see Bill Fink on Pier 39 when he met the

'woman of his dreams' as Lynn happened to be picking up her Morgan and as they say ...the rest is history

Morgans on the Lawn brought 80 of the finest Morgans along with picnic baskets, wine and a truly enjoyable day with fellow Morgan friends from near and far. Of course, July brought yet another Screw Loosener Rallye and pool party in Pasadena, and the competitive racing spirit with Morgans

The Format in 1982, had Old English text for the President message...not easy on the eyes, along with a full page Morgan Mart page chalk full of Morgans for sale, fabulous tech articles by Gerry Willburn and the Best Snoopy you would ever want to read with a special twist of what the club did 20 years ago, 10 years ago and at the time in 1982. We learned that April in 1962, Gerry while road racing his Ducati motorcycle at Riverside had a crash that ended his racing habit.

The historic Car Races were well attended by Morgan lovers from both the North and Southern clubs. Brian not only raced that year successfully, but was then requested to show his car at Pebble Beach on Sunday. What a double dip treat.

Ted Robinson became President in 1983, and invited many Southern Morgan friends to a fabulous gathering at Morro Bay along with many Northern Morgan friends which included in total, 96 Morgan automobiles. What a collection with some memorable pictures, we all still remember of rows of Morgans with the Rock in the background. It began with Darts, Saturday Concours judging, beach barbeque and Sunday Rallye with Banquet awards and Monday tour of Hearst Castle. A fun packed weekend for everyone for sure.

The Club enjoyed the Mission Inn Tour, a Movie tour, Progressive Dinner, Wine Tour and time trial events. Does everyone remember the Highland Games held at The Orange County Fairgrounds with 15 Morgans gathered with other British cars to celebrate what the English have provided. The bagpipers made the spirit of the Highland games complete.

Lynn Willburn procured from Ken Hill a Bobby's Helmet to be awarded at the most deserving chap who had a close encounter, in a Morgan, with the local constables. Recently, Jim Whelan boasted that he earned the award when he was questioned by an officer regarding his front license plate or the lack there of on his Morgan. Unfortunately, in October, John Goss a former member and Morgan friend was killed at Riverside in his Aston Martin, and Lynn shared all the donated Christmas presents (from Club members) with his children John and Heather.

MORGAN ANNIVERSARY 75 Years of Morgan Motor Cars in 1984 Gerry Willburn had the privilege of leading our party hardy club into a year of celebrating the Morgan car.

The Club was recognized at Laguna Seca during the Spring Historic Auto Races, May 17 - 21 with a weekend of darts, track time and Morgan only races, Rallye, Sunday races with Morgan parade laps and Awards banquet Sunday evening.

Morgans on the Lawn moved to Crystal Springs Picnic Grounds in Griffith Park and Channel 4 News team reported on our 65 Morgans in attendance. Quite a fun time for all who attended this event.



No Morgan car celebration would be complete without the mecca to Malvern. Indeed, the Southern Morgan members who traveled to England included Bill and Judy Fink, Dave and Linda Freeman, Jim and Lilia Whelan, George and Maggie Newbauer, Brian O'Gorman, Fred Hutflez, Ross Selvedge, Robin Yarrow, Barbara and Gerry Willburn, and John and Lynn Willburn. It was reported there were over 1,000 Morgans in attendance as well.

The scheduled agenda was hectic with international cocktails at the Abbey Hotel, English sporting Event at Dobb Hill, Sprints at Silverstone, Morgan works tour & Vintage and Classic Car spare Company tour, Warwick castle tour, Picnic walk though Malvern Hills, Worcester Porcelain Factory tour, Prescott Hill with 600 Morgans, Concours and Field Day at Eastsnor Castle. Quite a week of Morgan memories for all who attended.



For the local Morgan lovers who stayed in California, the Club was busy with events including a gymkhana, wine tour, Highland Games, our Club Slalom at Cypress College, our Club Concours at the Century City Plaza and a tour of the Lindley Bothwell collection. There are so many fun events and great memories with our Morgans for sure.



In 1985, celebrating 30 Years of the Morgan Plus Four Club and leading the Club was Michael Hattem a 12 year member of our Club, who was ready to make it a banner year for the Snobmog, his favorite Morgan perhaps?

The club enjoyed the January historical tour of Pio Pico and Richard Nixon birthplace, February Lovers Leap Hill Climb, Wine tour for March with Triumph Club. Morgans on the Lawn VIII continued with the Club

moving the event close to the scenic shore at Burton Chace Park at Marina Del Rey.

Showing off Morgans was so much fun, so May was time to show off your Morgan with a picnic at the Highland games at the Orange County Fair. John Willburn hosted a Rallye and pool party to kick off summer in June.

July meant MOG West and back to Morro Bay, to join many of the Northern and Southern Morgan cars, all who enjoyed a weekend of coastal breezes, sunshine along with Club Concours, darts, slalom, Rallye and Awards banquet. Everyone looked forward to what was planned for the next gathering of Morgans at MogWest.



Racing at Laguna Seca is the August Morgan outing that many club members enjoy. But wait, there must be a scheduled Club Concours, so members dusted off those race tires and polished their fenders for the Club Concours planned for October at Century City. There were 14 Morgans on display, all shining examples of Morgan splendor and John Leavens took Best of Show with his three wheel Morgan.

The Club social highlights include the wedding of Lynn and John Willburn on August 4th, with Snoopy reporting 20 years ago Mollie Miller bought her Morgan, and 10 years ago the Club Concours was the debut for a 1964 Morgan 4 Passenger I affectionately refer to as my 'Brownie'. Hats off the Jim Whelan, in 1985 for his monthly contribution to

entertainment at Club meetings with great written quizzes and fun Morgan racing videos.