

Edwardian Tricycles TO

A HALF-CENTURY OF MORGANS 1910—1960



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

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

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

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

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

H. F. S. Morgan, founder-designer, at the wheel of a Stark single-seater in 1913



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

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

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

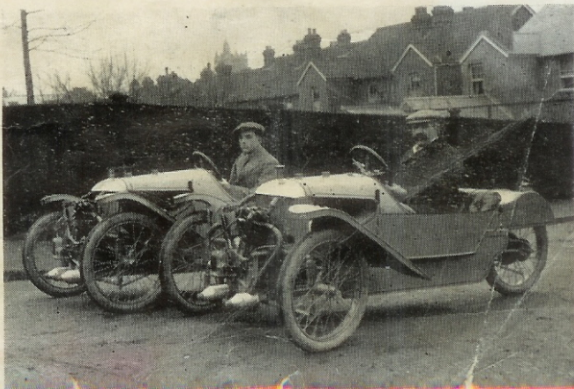
About a dozen were made (none of which is known to have survived), and with one of these H. F. S. gained a Gold Medal in the 1911 London-Exeter-Land's

End Trial of the M.C.C. During this year a prototype tiller-steered two-seater was shown at Olympia, and in 1912 Morgan made his first J.A.P.-powered long-wheel-base four-seater.

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

Just before World War I a prototype four-wheeler with Dorman four-cylinder engine was made, but never put into production. Manufacture of munitions occupied the wartime years, but thereafter the demand for Morgan's three-wheelers called for factory extensions and a step-up in weekly production to 50 cars. In fundamentals the vehicle remained unchanged, but progressive development brought electric lighting and starting as

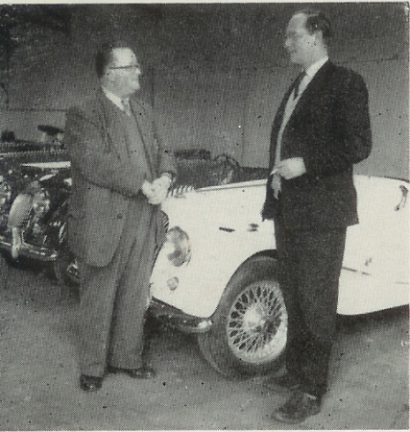
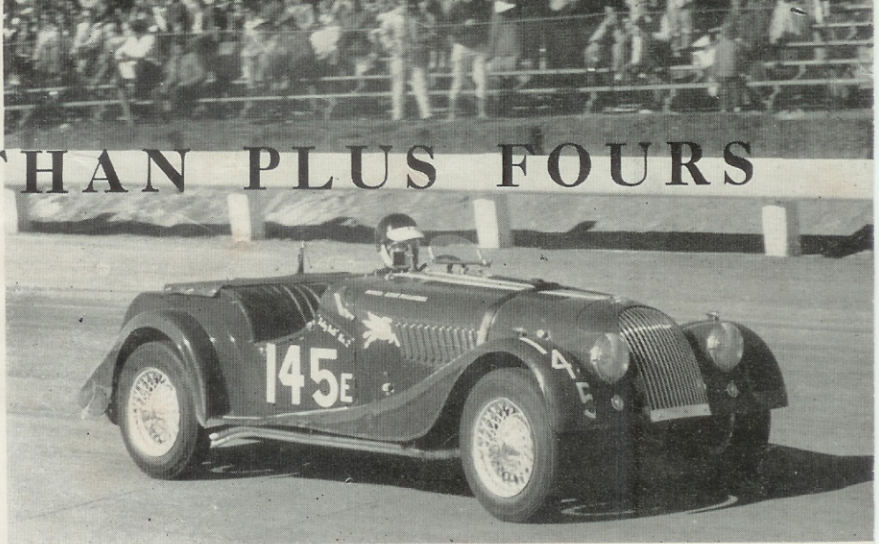
Left: In July 1914 E. B. Ware took Class J records (for cyclecars not exceeding 750 c.c.) at Brooklands. He covered the flying mile at 63.09 m.p.h., the kilometre at 65.10 m.p.h. Keen father-and-son owners of Grand Prix Morgans (right) in 1913 were the Frys, chocolate manufacturers of Bristol



ELIZABETHAN PLUS FOURS

Morgans are extremely popular in the U.S.A. Here Lew Spencer races Rene Pellardini's Plus Four during a 1958 meeting at Laguna Seca

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



maintained in production until 1951, when the last of the three-wheeled line—twelve Super Sports models with Matchless twin engines—were shipped to Australia.

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

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

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

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

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

U.S.A., where the Morgan enjoys great popularity and competition success.

During the last decade the car has changed very little in essentials, since this is the way the customers like it, and demand still exceeds the weekly output of nine or ten cars (they take a lot more space, time and money to make than the old three-wheelers). Nevertheless, Peter Morgan is quite aware that no market is fully predictable, and he is prepared to meet a change in demand at any time.

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

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

For fifty years the Morgan family company has kept independent of the mass-producers, and contributed handsomely to the lighter side of motoring. Nothing dull or stodgy has ever left that small factory; they have all been youthful, lively, fresh-air machines, designed and built by people who share the interests and enthusiasms of their customers. With that happy philosophy, the next half-century is entered with full order books. R. B.

well as front-wheel brakes—introduced as an extra (for £6) in 1923. By 1931 there was a three-speed-and-reverse gear box.

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

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

To conclude the three-wheeler story, the range was supplemented, in 1933, by a family touring four-seater (the F.4), powered by Ford 8 or 10 h.p. engines. This had a pressed steel chassis and re-

First of all the four-wheelers was this Coventry-Climax engined 4/4 of 1936 (left). It was an immediate success, and the present-day cars are directly derived from it. A vintage year for Morgan three-wheelers was 1925, when about 1,500 were produced, of which some are shown below

