



Mallory mayhem

Despite ominous weather reports, the sky was bright as the M.M.C. drivers and supporters arrived at Mallory Park, although Sarge only just made it following a trailer tyre blow-out on the motorway and thus providing him once again with conclusive proof that he and mornings did not get on terribly well together. Everyone rolled effortlessly through scrutineering, with no evidence of the noise or drug busts previously encountered at Mallory. Paul Chauveau also arrived with moments to spare fresh from trekking in Nepal. As sherpas appeared hard to hire around Mallory at this time of the year, some of the other drivers stood in and helped to haul his car off the trailer to get him signed on and scrutineered in time for the rather early practice session.

Practice was indeed short and hectic and the entire track seemed to be full of Morgans leading to some mournful moans of too much traffic and too little use of mirrors. Jack was told by an observant official to remove or at least



It's WAR ... The chip showing the old block how to do it (forwards on this occasion).

tape up his Buttocks and your scribe was, in the pursuit of journalistic excellence, paying particular attention to this aspect when a twitch (if not indeed a clenching) was observed as he approached the Hairpin. The reason became clear as a rather too side-on 'Billy' Bellinger had just discovered that his old man's blue banger handled like a kart not only as it approached the limit but also as it went away again (rather quickly) at the bend. Most drivers passed carefully on the inside, but Jack, who was

obviously paying, tentatively took the scenic route around the outside of the stranded car to check his bank balance, which fortunately remained intact. Billy patiently and correctly waited until there was space for him to move off again.

The number of people who had their (alleged) fastest lap time ruined by sightseeing at incidents was truly amazing. Rick too was probably regretting his bank balance as, following a mid-week modification to his suspension, he reported that his car handled frightfully. Chris Springall was definitely doing calculations in his head as following practice he despondently re-loaded his car and headed off to find a mechanic to sort out a probable back axle problem. In fact, all he found was an unmoving queue for the exit.

Kelvin Laidlaw entered into the spirit of things by doing

continued on page 2



There's always time to have the gearbox out before the race ..

2000 Championship after Round 3

Class A

Matthew Wurr	30
Keith Ahlers	23
Rick Lloyd	14
Peter Garland	10
Simon McDermott	8
Chris Springall	4

Class B

Chris Acklam	32
Grahame Walker	17
Peter Horsman	16
Philip McKelvey	14
Rob Wells	8
James Bellinger	2

Class C

James Paterson	32
Simon Orebi Gann	20
Paul Burry	17
Daniel Ward	14
Andy Green	4

Class D

Jack Bellinger	33
Kelvin Laidlaw	22
Mary Lindsay	18
Paul Chauveau	8
Jeremy Holden	6
Leigh Sebba	4
Ian Hepburn	1

Class E

Alan Wickenden	33
John Clarke	22
Chris Dady	14
David James	11
Stephen Wheatley	8
Peter Sargeant	4

some swift calculations of his own, involving the length of his car, the width of the track and whether or not he had room to spin it through 360 degrees at the hairpin without hitting anything solid and thus not damaging anything other than his ego. Fortunately he could, but it didn't help his qualifying time and rather unnerved those following him who rapidly subtracted the width of their cars from that of the remaining track while working out the changing angle of approach as they sought to avoid him. Buttocks were noticed nervously to twitch again as the wisdom of the official's demand became all too apparent to our heroes.

Twenty five Morgans eventually lined up for the green flag lap behind Matthew Wurr on pole with Simon 'Orange / Blue' McDermott alongside and Keith Ahlers breathing down his neck. James Paterson was thoroughly enjoying his place next to Ahlers while Rick Lloyd nursed his car onto the third row back alongside the proud number 1 of Peter Horsman. Paul Burry and Chris Acklam were certainly pushing these two from the fourth row. In the fifth row

was Walker hoping his mechanical problems from practice were sorted. Then there was Wickenden, class E, in front of everyone else in a variety of B, C, D and E class cars.

Matthew used the green flag lap to test his brakes and then they lined up to start for real and were off with a thunderous roar: Wurr in the lead towards the first corner with McDermott, Ahlers and Lloyd behind. Horsman seemed to stutter but was away and chasing after Paterson and Acklam. Imagine his pleasure as, with held breath, he rounded Chris on the outside of the Esses to retake him only to be confronted by a sea of red flags.

For suddenly it was all happening as the 9th row of the grid came towards the first corner. Jeremy Holden was really enjoying the sensation of speed as he whizzed past absolutely bucketloads of his fellow competitors on the outside of Gerards perhaps wondering to himself why they were all going rather slower than he was. The answer to this apposite question was that they were going to stay on the track and



"No really. After the first 2 engines and a ground-up rebuild the costs level out."

that he wasn't, and Jeremy was drawn to the inescapable inevitability of this as his car was drawn with equal inescapable inevitability into the gravel. He undertook some necessary foreplay with some grass before sticking sideways in the gravel and then turned right over, much to the alarm of the Sarge who was passing at the time, and of Chris Dady who had to go onto the gravel to avoid him and broke his manifold in the process. Dady jumped out of his car and pulled poor Jeremy from his, and it was then that the red flags started waving and ambulances and tow trucks sped out onto the track. Eventually Chris rejoined the grid, the ambulance returned to its post and Jeremy was seen driving into the pits with a new lowline bonnet profile, mercifully unhurt other than a Harry Potter mark on his forehead. Morgans are obviously resilient, as are their drivers.

Another green flag lap followed by a thunderous roar and again it was Wurr in the lead closely followed by McD, Ahlers and Lloyd. James P. was fifth with Chris A close on his tail, benefiting from Peter H's poor start, his newly overhauled gearbox having lost first gear in between practice and the first start. Walker, Horsman and Burry steamed behind jostling for position at every corner

straight and turn refusing to stay in formation, each waiting to exploit the slightest gap.

Alan W. led the rest of the pack behind them with Simon O.G. and Jack in hot pursuit. Simon slipped past on lap three and thereafter spent a rather lonely race holding on to his place. Jack and Alan continued to battle for the rest of the race, but Jack managed to nip past at the hairpin on lap five, then Daniel Ward, who had been tagging along, took advantage of his extra power to separate them for two laps before taking Jack on lap 9 to follow in Simon's wake for the next 9 laps leaving the sparring to numbers 17 and 51. Andy Green, who had clung to Jack's Buttocks until lap 3, started to drop back until finally he retired on lap 6 with a blown head gasket.

Philip McKelvey woke up at the start to find that 'Mary had slipped her leash', so in a rather unchivalrous manner he overtook again. Mary stayed a couple of paces behind and even came to heel but lacked the power to make a bid for freedom so, instead, the two duelled around the track. Billy/James Bellinger found both starts hairy, dropping back five places but managed to regain four of them by the 4th lap when he found a niche politely following Mary around until the finish. Like father, like son...



"Look Rick, just saying it goes hoppity-hop round the corners isn't a lot of help."

John C and Kelvin L battled it out from the start, delighting the crowd by coming out of the hairpin neck and neck. Chris D celebrated his birthday by overtaking them both on lap two. He did complain to your faithful hack that number 1 squeezed him out on the hairpin, but she didn't really believe this quite unprovoked and outrageous slur on Our Champion.

David J followed Sarge around for a few laps, until his old misfire problem played up again enabling Paul C to overtake on the track on lap 3. Your reporter recalls that Mrs James had mentioned this problem to her at the Drivers' dinner and so things were clearly not improving on this front. Stephen Wheatley then pushed David around until lap 13 when David lost the battle to leave Stephen magnificently victorious in his 4/4.

What of the leaders? Well, the track seemed awfully crowded and small, especially when Matthew began overtaking the back markers on lap 5. He managed to find just enough space to keep ahead of Simon McD who pushed him for 12 laps until he got stuck behind some back markers and saw Keith in his mirrors and then Keith's bumper passing followed by the rest of him. Keith then hassled Matthew who was finding cornering difficult, giving spectators a thrill with his backend at the hairpin, but to no avail as Matthew swept past the chequered flag to another victory. And the *Driver of the Meeting* award from Autosport.

Keith and Simon took second and third and then came a disgruntled Rick who nursed his car into fourth place. Chris Acklam took another class win to finish only hundredths of a second behind Rick and three seconds in front of James P. These latter two had battled throughout the race with James leading until lap 10 when Chris overtook. Paul B, Grahame W and Peter H streamed in after James, having had a wonderful race changing positions constantly until lap 14 when their finishing order was set and they made a final charge for the flag.

Spectators and drivers alike thoroughly enjoyed the many battles which took place at Mallory and it is off to the next meeting with all still to play for. The standard of racing has, this season, been incredibly high and safe too. It all bodes well for Castle Combe with the appetite-whetting mobile podium for the victors.

Ruth Horsman



Morgan drivers are a friendly bunch - always keen to ensure that their competitors are running on all 7 cylinders for the race ...

Circuit		Mallory Park																	
Date		04-Jun-00																	
LAP CHART																			
		Laps -->																	
Pos		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18
1		99	99	99	99	99	99	99	99	99	99	99	99	99	99	99	99	99	99
2		20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	29	29	29	29	29	29
3		37	29	29	29	29	29	29	29	29	29	29	29	20	20	20	20	20	20
4		29	37	37	37	37	37	37	37	37	37	37	37	37	37	37	37	37	37
5		21	21	21	21	21	21	21	21	21	21	13	13	13	13	13	13	13	13
6		13	13	13	13	13	13	13	13	13	13	21	21	21	21	21	21	21	21
7		14	14	14	14	14	50	50	50	1	1	50	50	50	50	50	50	50	50
8		1	50	50	50	50	1	1	1	50	14	14	1	1	14	14	14	14	14
9		50	1	1	1	1	14	14	14	14	50	1	14	14	1	1	1	1	1
10		51	51	51	39	39	39	39	39	39	39	39	39	39	39	39	39	39	39
11		39	39	39	51	51	17	17	17	17	25	25	25	25	25	25	25	25	25
12		17	17	17	17	17	51	51	25	25	17	17	17	17	17	17	17	17	17
13		45	45	45	25	25	25	25	51	51	51	51	51	51	51	51	51	51	51
14		25	25	25	45	45	55	55	55	55	55	55	55	55	55	55	55	55	55
15		55	55	55	55	55	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7
16		7	7	7	7	7	45	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15
17		71	71	19	15	15	15	19	19	19	19	19	19	19	19	19	19	19	19
18		18	19	15	19	19	19	71	71	18	18	71	71	71	71	71	71	71	71
19		19	18	71	71	71	71	18	18	71	71	18	18	18	18	18	18	18	18
20		15	15	18	18	18	34	34	34	34	34	34	34	34	34	34	34	34	34
21		34	34	34	34	34	18	49	49	49	49	49	49	49	49	49	49	49	49
22		11	11	49	49	49	49	11	11	11	11	44	11	44	44	44	44	44	44
23		44	49	11	11	11	11	44	44	44	44	11	44	11	11	11	11	11	11
24		49	44	44	44	44	44												



The Birkett 12 hour Relay 2000: A view from the Pits - Martin Kurrein

Morgans have competed in the six-hour Birkett handicap relay race for many years, and have had some success in the past. Nowadays the race is run at Snetterton in October – and boy can it rain there! Most recently a team of mostly +4s (formerly known as “*The Wrong Trousers*”) won the handicap event in 1999.

It was in 1998 (the last year I raced in the event) that Robin Knight, Competition Secretary of the 750MC, first mentioned the possibility that he would run the Birkett as a 12-hour handicap relay race for teams of road-going sports cars in 2000. This was to be the 50th Anniversary of the race – and he wanted to do something special. The length of the race dictated a June date.

For competitors it was bound to be special. Club racers rarely get the chance to spend more than about 25 minutes on the track in a single race and, with teams limited to six cars, here was a chance for at least a couple of hours driving. Like many at the time, I thought it was a date for the diary that was not to be missed.

In 1998 the “*Morgan Challenge*” team of +8s, which I also managed, came in at 6th overall on scratch, and nowhere at all on handicap. In 1999 we were 10th on scratch, but we did better on handicap coming in 3rd – but behind the +4s. It had become accepted lore that the +8s were always handicapped out of it, despite running well and setting good times

It was on that basis that I resolved to try and put together a team of fast +8s for the 12 hour race in a bid to win the event on scratch. I had names in my head – the problem was who would be available in mid-season?

My driving days were stalled at the time, so the original team was Keith Ahlers, Chris Acklam, Grahame Bryant, Rick Lloyd, James Paterson and Rob Wells – all with

experience in the race and with fast reliable cars. There were no less than 3 further Morgan teams – managed by Chris Springall, Andy Downes and Doug Taylerson.

Sadly, Chris’ team imploded with mechanical problems a week before the race. Two days before it, Peter Garland phoned – was there any chance of a place? A quick phone around and all was organised – 7 drivers and 6 cars for the Morgan Challenge team.

In the meantime I was busy plotting. Gunpowder was not in the recipe – it mainly consisted of the names of all the drivers taking part, the lap times they’d claimed, the figures for lap times over the past few years and a large spreadsheet! Mix well and you may just persuade the handicapper – a hard man to please on the best of days – to give you an extra lap or two.

The race was starting at 9.00am so testing, practice and scrutineering took place the evening before the race. Our team were all there in plenty of time – even Peter! Really! As a consequence we had the time to enjoy the arrival of Peter Sargeant with his car, untested, unscrutineered and on its trailer less than ½ hour before official qualifying ended. Hordes of team-mates surrounded the ensemble and he made it by the skin of his teeth.

Meanwhile I paid a visit to the handicapper

The situation was rather different from what I’d expected. Several of the 18 teams were not using road going cars. There were evil little Caterhams fitted with superlight Honda Blackbird engines, Mallock race cars and a team of Porsche – all running on slicks – and some capable of lapping at less than 01:13 sec! The lap record for a Morgan was 01:17.69 – and that had stood since 1997. The best race time in the April 2000 race had been

01:18.9. As 2 of our cars were in classes where the lap records were over 01:20 and 01:22 our chances of a scratch win looked distant.

Our chances on handicap weren’t much better. The Porsche team was “scratch” with nil laps. We were in 5th or 6th place (equal with a team of full-race spec. BMW M3s) with 27 handicap laps to be credited. My calculations indicated we should get 52 laps on the Porsches – what were our chances?

None. Zero. Zilch. Rien. I talked, I explained, I cajoled but, contrary to rumour, I did not threaten or bribe. Terry the Handicapper was adamant. The maximum, the absolute all-time best handicap he could possibly give me was 38 laps. Stunned at my success, I shot back to the pits before he could change his mind.

By about 9.00 pm we had tidied up and retired to our hotel for a meal, where we were joined by Paul and Sharon – our pit wall time-keeper. The forecast was for rain in the morning, the 10th June, and it was not an exhilarating thought to go to bed with.

However, the next morning dawned bright and clear, and when we arrived at the circuit I was delighted to find – oh wonder of wonders – our handicap had gone up to 42 laps. Now we could really give the rest of them a run for their money!

It had been decided to start the race with our fastest cars, so it was Peter Garland who went to the collection area to lead us off.

The green flag lap was led out by an Austin 7 with two special passengers – competitors from the first every Birkett in 1951 – so no-one had warm tyres as the lights went green. That didn’t stop Peter. From 6th on the grid he stormed into third place with the Porker, a 935

turbo with about 700 BHP, in the lead. As we leapt onto the pit wall they came around Coram and, as they went down the pit straight Peter got by the Mallock that was in second. He and the Mallock swapped back and forth for several laps – Peter had the grunt on the straights, whilst the Mallock went round corners!

Meantime the indispensable Sharon was taking lap times. She did so for the next 12 hours (and 500+ laps) with only a single short break. I can’t say “Thank You” enough.

Within 4 laps Peter had beaten the best time that year by a Morgan, and went on to do so 18 times in the next 38 laps! What a drive. It was like clockwork. Lap after lap he was under 01:20 – he only exceeded it half a dozen times. Things started to move in our direction when the 953 came to a halt out on the circuit.

After nearly an hour we had a faultless changeover for Rick Lloyd to go out. The system we run is that there is always a driver in his car, dressed up and ready to go (in theory) sitting in the pit lane in case something happens. Another driver and car in nearly as ready a state is in the pit garage. Other cars and drivers and nearby and on-call. Once the driver on the track is given the “IN” signal (and seen it!) he turns to go into the paddock and we can release the new. No matter how smooth you are you lose the best part of 25 seconds on each change.

When Rick went out he clearly had the bit between his teeth. Within a couple of laps he was under his best time of the year by 2 seconds! He continued to beat that time until the Safety Car came out and then – shortly afterwards – Rick suffered a potential disaster when his throttle cable snapped! Luckily he managed to limp back to the pit lane and Keith went out

A view from the Pits (cont)

rather earlier than he expected – leaving a trail of rubber from garage to track.

At about the same time we received the official results for the 1 hour point which showed us 3rd on scratch (42 sec. down) and 1st on handicap by 0.7 of a lap. It was good to see the team at the top of the leaderboard, but there were 11 hours to go and the figures were based on one of our fastest drivers. We had to keep pushing.

That's exactly what Keith was doing. Within 5 laps he'd beaten his personal best and went on to do so time and time again. Not only that. In his 45 lap session he beat Peter's long-standing lap record twice. A faultless drive which, by the time he came in on lap 108, had put us 2.2 laps clear on handicap and kept us up in 2nd place on scratch.

Mind you, there was something wrong with the figures. Because the Safety Car had been out for 10 minutes (with all the cars following behind at 40mph) we were issued with a revised handicap. Ours had somehow dropped from 42 at 8.00am to just 31 by 11.08am. There was something wrong somewhere. What was going to happen to our lead – we were going backwards! A quick trip to the office revealed all. My powers of advocacy are clearly not what they were. Just 4 minutes before the race started the handicapper had reduced our handicap from 42 laps to 31! Without notice of it there was no chance to appeal before the race, and it's impossible once the race starts! The only consolation was that the results we'd had up to then had been based on the 31 lap figure. Phew!

The next changeover involved a close brush with the pit wall as Graham gave his car a bit of welly out of the garage and down the pit lane. We were lucky with our pit position. Being garage 5 we were near the entrance to the track so

that there was less risk of speeding in the pit lane and less distance to cover from when the other car had turned off at the other end of the pit lane.

Grahame's car had only come out the previous day after some major works and it was his first race in a Morgan for some time. As a previous member of a Birkett winning team he knew what was needed (don't fall off!) and his lap times gradually came down to the 01.20s.

While all the racing was going on the cars that came in, broken or otherwise, had to be sorted out. The invaluable back-up provided by John, Miles and Ian ("Irreplaceable") Grimes paid off. They were hard at work on Rick's car which, thanks to the hoarding tendencies of farmers, was being fitted with a Discovery throttle cable.

Next out was Rob and, again, the change went well. He was sharing Rick's car and was soon circulating in the 01.21 bracket. Apart from a 4 lap Safety Car rest he continued until lap 183 when Chris went out. Up to now all drivers had been in Class A cars. Chris is in class B but, just like Peter, Keith and Rick, he was regularly beating his personal best until lap 200. The 3 hour records showed us 2.7 laps clear of the rest on handicap – and still in 2nd on scratch!

At this point James was due out next, so he was sitting in his car dressed up, strapped in and ready to go. He had a newspaper with him (boring this racing lark ...) and, this being 2000, various supplements, sections, inserts and offers etc. were liberally spread around the cockpit, bonnet and tonneau. Standing on the pit wall I watched Chris negotiate Coram and come through Russell when, horror of horrors, he turned into the pit lane! As I ran across the pit lane screaming it was clear that James was absorbed in what was in front of him. It

wasn't page 3, and he doesn't strike me as a crossword addict, but whatever it was he didn't register my presence until I was on top of him. Suddenly he was awake and papers, supplements, sections, inserts and offers were flying around the garage like confetti. The car fired up first time, and James shot out onto the track. We'd hardly lost 5 seconds.

As soon as he was out James started pushing and, on his second lap, beat his personal best. He did it 21 times in 31 laps. By this time we had the 4 hour results – we'd moved 3 laps ahead on handicap and were still 2nd on scratch.

By now I was a little concerned at having had 2 breakdowns. Rick's car had been fixed, but Chris' needed a real looking at – it turned out that the prop-shaft had caught up with some insulating material and they didn't mix too well. Peter, who had risked marital discord to race with us, had intended to leave early – so I asked him to prep. his car to go out again (Sorry Gilly!).

He went out again without any drama (as if!) at about the time the 5 hour results came out. By this time the "slower" (everything's relative!) cars had done their first stints and our handicap lead had dropped to 1.4 laps and we were down to 3rd on scratch. We needed some fast laps to stay where we were.

Peter duly obliged with 18 of his 38 laps being better the 01:19! It was a stunning performance. By the time he came in the 6 hour result showed us to be back to 3 laps ahead on handicap. Sadly we were still in 3rd on scratch – 8 laps down on the beastly Porkers – and 7 down on the Mallocks – but then you can't use one of those cars (as you can Simon McDermott's Class A Morgan) to drive home to Worcester!

The cycle of drivers had started again now, so it was

Rick's turn to put the pedal to the metal: off he went. Despite all that had gone before, with drivers beating their personal best time after time and time, this session was special. Very special. Rick bettered his season's personal best 37 times in 41 laps. Just think about that.

He then went further. On his 36th lap of the session, the 318th of the race, he smashed the 4 year old lap record by over ½ a second, with a lap of 01:17.14. Congratulations are due.

By the time Keith went out for his 2nd session we had the 7 hour positions. We were still in 3rd on scratch, but had now pulled out to 4.7 laps clear on handicap.

Keith's session was interrupted by a brief Safety Car foray, but otherwise all went well. This was another superb drive with 24 of 35 laps bettering his times in the April race.

I'd decided to place Peter's marital bliss in jeopardy again in order to ensure that we kept our lead so he went out again shortly after the 8 hour mark. We were still in 3rd on scratch, but down to a 4.4 lap advantage on handicap.

You may think that a 4 lap advantage is a safe cushion to have. Not in a 12 hour race it isn't. One breakdown can cost you the best part of a lap. A bad driver change can lose half a lap. With four hours and five or more driver changes to go 4 laps was not at all comfortable.

Peter did a short session of 29 laps – another 7 PBs – but suffered with several laps of the SC. By the time he came in I thought it prudent to let him get away home. He hadn't made it by the time the race finished so I'm watching my back!

Sadly the SC was out because Jan Bulinski's SuperSports had virtually destroyed its engine when a high pressure oil line disconnected itself and

A view from the Pits (cont)

emptied the contents of the sump along the circuit from Coram to the pit straight. After a few calls to and deliveries from Blue Circle the resulting mess was cleaned up (what would they have done in the rain!?) and racing resumed.

Shortly after than Rob went out and proceeded to put in over 30 consecutive laps under 01:23. Excellent times in the conditions, which were just a little slippery. It is that sort of driving that the Birkett needs. Consistency. A single spin can cost the team a large part of a lap – or more if the car is stuck in the scenery. The 9 hour results came in while Rob was circulating and we had pushed our lead on handicap up to 9 laps whilst still running 3rd on scratch.

Grahame took over from Rob and followed his example. A 30 lap session of regularity and good sense. Just what we needed at the time.

Just before he came in the 10 hour sheets were published and the Morgan Challenge was leading by 8 laps on handicap and running 3rd, 9 laps down, on scratch. By now, with 2 hours to go, a degree of confidence was being felt as Chris went out. He'd only had about 30 laps so far, due to the prop-shaft gremlin attack, so it was intended he'd run for up to an hour. Sadly, before he'd got into his stride, events repeated themselves and the alarm went for full panic stations.

Chris was coming down the pit lane entrance after just 15 laps. Worse than that Mr Lloyd was so confident that he was sitting in his car, reading the paper à la James – but with his helmet off, gloves on the steering wheel (inside out?) and his belts undone. Oh Rick. You won't do that again! Will you?

The panic was plain to see – and hear – but it's pretty difficult for people to put gloves and helmets on someone else – there may be a

game show in there somewhere. The result of that little bit of relaxation was that we lost 30 seconds on the changeover – nearly half a lap – or ½ a second a lap over a 60 lap period. We were lucky. Chris' clutch had disintegrated out on the circuit. He didn't know that but he came in without changing gear. As soon as he tried to change gear in the Paddock – no drive at all. If that had happened on the circuit we'd have lost at least a lap.

Rick's forgiven now – he did about 12 PB laps in his 19 lap session – but we actually lost 1 lap of our lead (down to 7 laps) in the hour between 10 and 11 immediately before he went out.

Finally, with about 20 minutes to go, Keith went out to bring the team home. He didn't want a time put out on the Pit Board – just a countdown! Despite this he pushed quite hard and we finished the race 7 laps ahead on handicap and in 3rd place on scratch. We'd done 512 laps – or 999.5 miles at an overall average of 83 mph. Last year the +4s won by 3 laps. It just goes to show that if you're wearing "The Right Trousers" a +8 makes more than two of a +4!

My thanks go to everyone involved in the win. In no particular order:-

All at the Morgan factory for building great cars, Mark and Serena for keeping the racing going, Robin and Kathleen and the 750MC, the Marshals, timekeepers and handicapper but, most of all, the drivers Keith, Chris, Grahame, Rick, James, Rob and Peter, and the back up, Ian, John, Miles, Nicky, Oliver, Sharon, Paul and Sue – and with abject apologies to anyone I've forgotten.

Martin Kurrein

Birkett 12 hour: MORGANS for FUN and Other Sto

On Saturday 10th June there was a very special event: a 12 hour version of the annual Birkett, held in addition to the annual Autumn 6 hour race, to celebrate 50 years of the Birkett and the year 2000. There were 4 Morgan teams entered. This is how they did on a fine and unexpectedly sunny day at Snetterton.

The outcome: Martin Kurrein's (very very serious) Morgan Challenge team (Ahlers, Lloyd, Bryant, Wells, Acklam and Paterson, joined at the last minute by Garland) won the handicap by a convincing margin, with the class A boys sharing most of the time and consistently doing 1.18s (lap record 1.17.69).

Class B (the largest class entry) was won by Morgans for Fun (Orebi Gann team of Mary Lindsay, Leigh Sebba, Kelvin Laidlaw, Chris Dady, Jack Bellinger and SJOG) (the big boys having won the handicap event overall).

The third Morgan team, Plus 4 Plus, did well, coming mid field after losing James (piston), Sumner (head gasket) and Bulinski (engine seize after oil dumped from high pressure hose fitting fail).

The fourth Morgan team sadly didn't run (Springall, White, Burry, Horsman, Garland and Williams) as Springall cars both out of action, Horsman gearboxless, Williams not ready, Burry throttle problems. Garland was invited to join Martin's team as regulations allowed more than 6 drivers as long as only 6 cars, and Lloyd and Wells were sharing Rick's car, allowing Peter to be the 6th car.

Those were the facts. A fantastic Morgan achievement, showing car and driver determination and stamina!

Speaking for my team, we set out to have a fun time which was why we went in for the event at all. A once in a 50 year event is something which we didn't want to miss, particularly as we weren't sure

what state our cars would be in for the next one. I was at a meeting in San Francisco for the early part of the week, and flew back overnight Thursday for a rapid drive with Kate and our car to Snetterton for scrutineering and qualifying. Our team had only been completed on Monday; originally, four of us were going to do the race (which would have meant 3 hours driving each - possible but tough), and then at Mallory Chris Dady and Jack Bellinger courageously agreed to be part of this unique event if they could get wifely permission, which both managed within 24 hours.

Jack even persuaded Sally to come to the track, where she was one of the invaluable pit wall team, along with a number of other volunteers press-ganged by Mary and Chris including Mick Tuxworth and family, John Goodman and Bill Flint. John Lindsay ran the mechanics team, Vic Champness, Duncan Hurwood and Phil Brown; all of us were under the overall team managership of Andy Downes and his son James, who made the 12 hours run like clockwork; Kate ran the pitwall team and deputised as team manager when Andy allowed himself to go to the gents. Some names from the past there!

The race started at 9 am on Saturday, and Mary led off for us. I ran second, followed by Leigh, Chris, Jack and Kelvin bringing up the end of the cycle. Our plan was to do 1 hour each; in the event, making use of pace car outings (of which there were fortunately very few), we slightly varied the timings. Throughout the first 6 hours, our team ran between 2nd and 4th with the Morgan Challenge team always unassailably in the lead. Each team member managed consistent times with no serious alarms, excursions or even spins with a single exception: Jack had to come in a few minutes ahead of

schedule with a strange noise from his rear (the car that is), later traced to the differential, which was making enough noise to be worrying; unfortunately, some new cogs (which are as rare as Bellinger himself) are now needed.

We ran the same order in the second half, and tried to persuade the Clerk to allow Jack out in my car. Unfortunately, as he hadn't tested or qualified in it, he wasn't allow to do so, so I ran 2nd and 6th in the second six hours. Mary out first found trouble stopping her car which slowed her a little although she still put in great times; when she was back the mechanics team found that she had no linings left on her shoes: amazing how effective metal on metal had been! My car did fine for its second stint, and Leigh then went and put in a sterling performance with consistent timings lap after lap. Chris went out with manifold and exhaust rebuilt by the

mechanics since his previous outing, and took the 4/4 4 seater below the crucial 1:30, a great achievement. Kelvin had the difficult 7 pm run, by which time the sun was low enough to be a serious distraction, and he too put in some very consistent laps, until about 15 minutes from the end of his time he heard some noises from the transmission which he wanted to check as he intended to drive the car home (which he successfully did).

Thus, after two runs, I went out for an extended third one, and was pleased that the car lasted fine to the end of the race although by then running on fumes alone, and put in my fastest laps of the day in the last half dozen. As Kate said, I like longer races, although I don't recommend trans-Atlantic flying as a normal part of race preparation!

We did this race for fun and were delighted and amazed to win the class - a great day out and a wonderful event.

Our thanks go to the pit wall team for covering the 12 hours so effectively; to the mechanics for a first class service that would have done credit to any professional team, to Kate for catering for us all during the whole day (some people even commented that they now recognise the tin that the cheese straws come in!), and to Andy for showing that a team manager can be human, fun, and run a well drilled team that copes with everything that arises - and get results!

If the other Morgan team had made it to the grid, nearly every eligible regular of the Race Series would have been out: a real tribute to the nature and spirit of the Morgans and their drivers. No other series was so well represented, which was a disappointment to the organisers (the 750 Motor Club) as competitors were afraid of messing up their hopes in their own race series and clearly lacked our

confidence in their steeds. Instead of the 39 teams normally making the Autumn race, there were only 17 entrants; despite that, it was a great day for everyone. Martin achieved his ambition, and finally won a Birkett which he has hankered after for years - and what a one to win; the Plus 4s did a fantastic job coping with 3 cars' failing and still finishing in a creditable position; and the Morgans for Fun team did just what we wanted: had a barrel of fun! The team also presented Mary and me with a hat trick: she and I have had the pleasure of 3 team races in 18 months, and 3 firsts.

The other two Morgan teams will doubtless have their own bits to add to the description of the day - and we are sure that any necessary repairs are underway in preparation for Castle Combe on 1st/2nd July.

Simon Orebi Gann



The 'Holly' Birkett (A Team Manager's Perspective)

A race for Teams of cars, one that lasts for 6 hours, run in a relay style, with entrants ranging from full-race Porsches through single-seater Mallocks to the evergreen Austin 7s, what kind of a motor race is that? – The 'Holly' Birkett Six Hour Relay Race – At least it's normally a six hour race, but this year to celebrate the 50th – Yes the 50th anniversary of the first six hour race, the 750 Motor Club put on a 12 Hour race in June to supplement the annual six hour jamboree due in October. So what's it all about? Well in 1951 the 750 Motor Club's organising committee (led by Mr. Holland Birkett – the source of the race's modern name) hosted what was then, and is now a unique event – a long distance race for teams, to be run like a relay each team having one car at a time racing on the circuit and each having to hand over the 'baton' before the next car could compete. Then to make things interesting, as well as an out and out 'scratch' race based on absolute distance covered during the six hours, a handicap system was devised such that all teams could compete on an 'equal' basis and any team could win regardless of raw speed or performance. This formula is still in use today and it is what gives the Birkett its truly unique status creating a level of interest for drivers, mechanics, timekeepers, pit-crew and of course Team Managers that is unrivalled. Spectators? they don't have a clue about what might be going on!

This then is the backdrop to what follows...

A 'phone call sometime in April from Simon Orebi-Gann with a persuasive offer – would I like to manage a team in the 12 Hour Relay? the team was to include Simon himself, Leigh Sebba, Kelvin Laidlaw and Mary Lindsay. Now Mary Lindsay was the second person I ever met in

the Morgan Sports Car Club (the first being her husband John) and she got me into this motor racing lark in about nineteen seventy too-long-ago. The first race I ever went to was the Birkett Six Hour as a lowly team 'runner' (slave). By 1978 two Morgan teams were running in the race and I had blagged my way up to Team Manager – just until I started racing myself you understand – since that time I ran a Relay Team pretty much every year until 1986 when I retired from active competition. Mary organised and drove in most of those teams and her presence was a tempting lure for a comeback, however extreme pressures at work and insufficient spare time at home mitigated against it – I hedged and hoped they would find another candidate (mug). Further extremely polite and persuasive calls from Simon followed, with less than two weeks until the race still I hesitated – then Mary rang and I knew it was serious! Two new additions in the form of Chris Dady and Jack 'dogbreath' Bellinger had bolstered the numbers but it was the team name that clinched it. With "MORGANS FOR FUN" I finally realised we were going to have a seriously good time and preparations began in earnest. Simon (the key protagonist) was away in California for the week before the race and with things busy at work I feared the cards were stacked against us – I had reckoned without the other partners in Team Orebi-Gann – Kate and Mary. I think they planned the whole thing – they certainly organised it all, obstacles were simply swept away, accommodation was booked, tickets were sent, mechanics and crew were engaged, handicappers were argued with, tactics were hatched, all tied together with transatlantic Email.

And so it was that I slipped

away from the office early on Friday and raced home to throw all the gear in the car and set off with 14 year old son James on the laborious Friday night journey to Snetterton amongst the weekend traffic. The race organisers had arranged scrutineering during late afternoon and qualifying for Friday evening finishing at 8:30 pm, this was so the race could run 9 am until 9 pm on Saturday and finish whilst it was still light. By the time James and I arrived the drivers had all sorted themselves out and got qualified but I was met with a hail of angst about the handicap that had been meted out to us. Off to Race Control for the first of many skirmishes with a man who has to know all the details about all the cars and all the drivers and all the lap times and all the tactics and all the weather and arrange for all the cars to finish at the same time – and he believes he does... Having done this for many years I was expecting to meet old friends, handicappers Alan Lupton and Robin Birchall and breeze through, but to my surprise there was a new kid in town and I had to build a rapport fast. Telling him he had got his sums wrong seemed crass, but as all the other teams had already told him the same no damage was done, he wouldn't budge on the handicap but I did learn a little about the way it was calculated. With a false air of calm wisdom I went back to break the news to the team, told them not to worry and retired to the White Lodge for a pint and the pre-race drivers meal – another good piece of work by Kate. Any hopes of working out how to beat the handicapper disappeared quickly as the food appeared and the Team Owner's recommendation of Steak and Kidney pie proved another smart move. More beer and banter followed before I retired after midnight my

head full of lap-times and tactics, with the alarm set for 6 am – it was all going a little bit too fast.

Saturday dawned bright and sunny before I realised I had woken up at 3 am and it was just the street light – more dreams of pace-cars and flag marshals, then it really was bright and sunny and time to go. Snetterton circuit early on a fine morning is a wonderful place to be but there was work to be done. All my worrying had spotted an error in the numbers, the handicapper really had got his sums wrong, a little discussion followed by some deft keystrokes on his calculator and we had a big adjustment in our favour. Smug? I would have been but Martin Kurrein's powerful +8 Morgan Challenge team were going to lap us 60 times during the twelve hours and our handicap was only 42 laps better than theirs, no matter how I tried I could not convince the handicapper how fast Peter Garland and company really are. Next stop the Manager's briefing with the ever dependable Kate at my side... "look out for slower cars... no speeding in the pit lane... this is not a sprint race... if you break down await free recovery... Oh and above all have fun" – a good omen for a team with a name such as ours.

We were so well organised in pit No.13 (!) that I missed the start, I sauntered onto the pit wall to watch the grid come round on the parade lap and chat with the timekeepers thinking the cars were weaving to warm up their tyres, in actual fact they were dicing for the lead! No matter, look cool and assured perhaps nobody will notice. In determining the running order of the cars for the race I had decided to ask Mary to start for two reasons, firstly she starts so well (some say with a Moss box +8 she has to), secondly she knows what to do and where to be and simply does it without fuss or

needing to be reminded. Thankfully the red +8 was on the grid in good time and away with the rest of the pack before I had even realised it – smart move. The race plan was uncomplicated, six cars, twelve hours, two hours each in two one-hour stints with a running order as follows for the first six hours;

Mary Lindsay	+8
Simon Orebi-Gann	+8
Leigh Sebba	+8
Chris Dady	+4
Jack Bellinger	+8
Kelvin Laidlaw	+8

all being well we hoped to simply repeat the feat for the second six hours.

The race. Mary was away and soon in the swing on a track she knows so well, laps times quickly came down to 1m 30s and then 1m 29s and produced the solid start I wanted, this race is not won in the first few minutes but it can be lost. For the Morgan Challenge +8s Peter Garland was really flying doing 1m 17s and 1m 18s and we had been lapped twice in the first 25 minutes, I was beginning to think I should have argued longer and harder with the handicapper. Never mind, Mary just popped out those times lap after lap without drama and drama is the enemy in a long race such as this. By 10 o'clock she had completed 39 laps and Morgans For Fun held a respectable 6th place on handicap, the Plus Four Plus team had managed to get ahead of us with 40 laps and were doing really well in 3rd, whilst Garland had the +8s well ahead on 45 laps in 1st. After 67 minutes and 44 laps Mary was in and away went Simon in what was our fastest car, with all his electronics he didn't really need the pit-board but James and Sam Tuxworth held it out anyway, Sally Bellinger updated the lap charts and Sam's mum Wumf with Kate Orebi-Gann ran the stopwatches. After dialling himself into the groove Simon was quick,

lapping consistently around the 1m 24s mark, the car was running without a flutter and I felt optimistic we must be improving our showing. Updated positions came out at two hours – 78 laps and 2nd place behind the big 8s (87 laps) they were getting away as I had feared, Plus Four Plus dropped to 7th. We left Simon out as long as we could to maximise his speed advantage and brought him in when he had done 50 laps, another smooth handover saw Leigh Sebba out on his home track in his first relay for many many years. After a nightmare Challenge race at Snetterton earlier in the season Leigh had been going really well (1m 32s) when after half an hour his lap times suddenly dropped by nearly ten seconds, just as I was agonising about what might be wrong the Safety Car went out whilst the track marshals cleared up some oil (the reason for Leigh's slow times) and we tried to take advantage by making a car/driver change, apologising to Leigh for shortening his session.

Chris Dady left the pit road right on midday (1/4 race distance) and I had the feeling that the 2-litre twin cam might not prove quick enough for the job – just shows what management know – in fact Chris was probably the driver in our team who out-drove his expected times by the most. As he went out the three hour positions showed us holding 2nd now 13 laps behind the +8s and the Plus Four Plus team in 8th a further 4 laps behind us. That Norfolk 4-seater of Mr. Dady can really fly, straight down to 1m 30s no fuss at all, and then a 1m 29s. When one driver is on the circuit the next driver is in the pits, belted up, helmet on and ready to go at a moments notice, to help keep their attention the pit crew show the pit-board to them with the lap time on it. Jack was reading the latest edition of Loaded but rapidly

discarded it when he saw that 1m 29s, his dander was well and truly up. As we hung out the FUEL sign Chris suddenly pointed to the pits as he came by – the driver's signal saying he's coming in next time around – in a moment Jack had fired the V8 in 123 WAR and was ready to go resulting in our usual textbook changeover. Chris had managed 30 laps before he heard a "funny noise" and had decided caution was the best course of action, as our excellent team of mechanics (John Lindsay, Phil Brown, Vic Champness and Duncan Hurwood) serviced the car ready for its next stint it transpired that the exhaust manifold had come loose. Within three laps Jack had hit the 1m 29s mark and then he regularly made 1m 28s, the Safety Car came out briefly to keep us awake and the Handicap positions at four hours had the +8s 1st, Morgans For Fun 3rd (16 laps down) and Plus Four Plus holding 8th (5 laps behind). As he came to the end of his hour Jack really had the red +8 flying with a series of 1m 28s and 1m 29s laps "Good For A Grin" as he would say, then just before 2 pm in he came releasing the final member of the team Kelvin to take us up to halfway. After a few minutes the timekeepers on the pit wall commented how much easier it was to spot Kelvin's white +8 coming round Coram the long right hander and thus get the pit board ready in good time. Positions at five hours were +8s 1st, Morgans For Fun 3rd (19 laps down) and Plus Four Plus losing another place to 9th after dramas hopefully reported elsewhere. At this point we began to experience a drama of our own, during those last few frantic laps Jack had begun to hear worrying noises from the back axle, after test drives up and down the paddock accompanied by much sucking of teeth by the mechanics they drained the

oil. More deliberation over the metal pieces found in the oil followed by worried looks and much pacing up and down as the truth dawned that Jack's car was done and would take no further part. (To borrow a quote from Simon "some new cogs (which are as rare as Bellinger himself) are now needed" subsequent examination by Messrs. John Smith and John Lindsay of Moss box and axle fame showed 20 teeth missing from the crownwheel and 3 from the pinion!). Kelvin meanwhile was having a merry old time showing off his particular bravado style of driving and circulating like his predecessors in the 1m 29s range – a walk in the park, he was having so much fun we left him out for a good long time. Despite forecasts of mixed weather it was turning out to be a perfectly tranquil warm and sunny day, given our race plan and an almost trouble-free run I told all around who would listen "it doesn't come any better than this" but I don't think they shared my optimism – this race was only just reaching half way...

It is at this juncture that I need to do the speech and say a heartfelt "Thank You" to all those willing and press-ganged volunteers who helped both myself and the drivers to have such a good time;

THANK YOU – THANK YOU – THANK YOU – THANK YOU – THANK YOU

The mechanics – Duncan Hurwood, Vic Champness and Phil Brown ably led by John Lindsay. The pit crew, timekeepers and other helpers – Mick, Sam and Wumf Tuxworth, Sally Bellinger, James Downes, Bill Flint and daughter Monica, Alan Hepburn, David Kennett and, John Goodman, if I have missed anybody then I apologise and thank you all the same. The biggest thanks of all go to Kate Orebi Gann –

if Mary was superb in the pre-race organisation of personnel and all matters technical, then Kate was equally impressive on the day itself. Not only were the pit crew superbly organised working a loose and friendly rota system, but having bought up half of Marks & Spencer she laid on the most generous spread of food and drink throughout the whole day, we even had ice lollies halfway through the morning. At the end of the race there was champagne for all and team photographs but by far Kate's biggest contribution was her cool calm manner in managing the manager and basically running the whole show, why they ever asked for my help remains a mystery!

THANK YOU – THANK YOU – THANK YOU – THANK YOU

Out on the ribbon of tarmac the halfway point came and the +8s still held 1st, Morgans For Fun had lost a place to 4th (24 laps down) and Plus Four Plus were holding 9th (a further 11 laps down). Although 4th we were quite happy as the team in 3rd, the spooneristically named 'Betty Swollocks Sextet' (actually a team of rather nice Lotus Elans), and those in 2nd 'The Hart Attacks' (Mallock single-seaters) were less than half a handicap lap ahead of us. Immediately we learned of Jack's fate both Mary and Simon generously offered him use of their cars for his second run in the race. Jack was sorely tempted. As he deliberated Kelvin finally came in after 1 hour 20 minutes and 52 laps and we sent Mary on her way for the second time. By now it was three in the afternoon, the track temperature was high and a mixture of race rubber and oil from other's misdemeanours meant the lap times were a second or more slower at around 1m 32s than they were when Mary set out in the morning session.

Sitting strapped in waiting to go next Simon and Kate managed to convince the hapless Jack to have a crack in the Orebi Gann +8, so leaving Kate with her guiding hand on the tiller I went off to speak to the Clerk Of The Course in what turned out to be a vain attempt to get 'approval' for Jack to drive in a second car. Nothing doing, because he had not tested or qualified in Simon's car our request was politely but firmly declined (a decision which I have to say Jack took in very good heart) and so we traipsed off the handicapper to let him know that one car was dead and that Simon in the quick car would be going for a third stint. In the pits no one was more disappointed than Simon that Jack was not going to get his fair share of the driving, with Mary's faultless second drive coming to a close he had to concentrate on his own contribution with the knowledge that he would also have to summon the energy to do the final hour of the race some five hours later.

Once the changeover to Simon was complete the positions at seven hours were posted – +8s 1st, Morgans For Fun 4th (30 laps down), Plus Four Plus slipping away to 10th, however with our fastest car racing again we hoped we might improve. In the garage Mary was explaining how she had no brakes and lots of pedal travel when the mechanics turned up carrying the brake shoe and its lining – one in each hand! another crisis narrowly averted. Sterling work soon had the old war-horse patched up and ready to go out again if necessary. Orebi Gann repeated his morning performance until after 34 laps the Safety Car went out again, we quickly called him in but by the time he came round the Safety Car was in and we gained no advantage on the change to Leigh. Eight hours saw +8s 1st, Morgans For Fun back up to 3rd (34

laps down), Plus Four Plus still 10th. As with Mary, Leigh's afternoon times were a little slower than in the morning but the plan was to give him a longer second stint to make up for a shortened first one – it was not to be. After 45 minutes of very smooth and steady driving the Safety Car was out again for a prolonged period and we managed another of our customary smooth changeovers to Chris as the field dawdled around behind and we apologised again to Leigh for a second short stint. It transpired that the oil on the track that necessitated about half a ton of cement to mop up (and resulted in a snowstorm of dust when the race restarted) was the result of Jan Bulinski's engine in the Plus 4 dumping all its contents on the track on its way to a seizure. Six o'clock and only three hours left – +8s 1st (inevitably), Morgans For Fun 4th (40 laps behind), Plus Four Plus improving to 9th (14 laps down), the race was beginning to wind up for a frantic finish. Understandably with all the oil and cement dust Chris was lapping slightly slower second time around but this is a quick car and in what seemed no time at all 38 laps were complete and he was heading for the pits to hand over to the 'Flying Doctor'. Ten hour positions +8s 1st, Morgans For Fun 4th (44 laps down), Plus Four Plus 9th.

Now the reason that Kelvin was last in the original running order was because just as Mary and Jack are great starters, Kelvin just loves finishing, I have run him on the anchor leg in so many 6 Hour Relays and he really relishes bringing the team home. The last hour of the race is also the most frantic as all the fast cars are out attempting to make up places before the finish, to drive well in this situation requires a cool head and a decisive but careful style. Best laid plans

and all that, with Jack sitting on the sidelines Kelvin was promoted to run 11th and give us time to turn around both Simon and his car for a final push – we were hoping to get 3rd place and a podium finish. For the second time Kelvin was out to enjoy himself, having enthralled us with motor racing stories about Le Mans from the 50s and 60s in the pits, he did the same thing out on the track although as the others had found the track was driving a little slower than it had been in the morning. We started hanging out the FUEL? board to make sure there were no last minute abhorractions and finally called him in with just about an hour and ten minutes to the finish. The mantle was then on Simon's shoulders for the third time and I harboured slight concerns about his stamina after his hectic week in California and two hard hot drives earlier in the day. After his usual few laps to get on the pace we had 1m 25s, then 1m 24s and I finally began to feel we would get our team home without having had any major incidents. The penultimate set of positions was – +8s 1st, Morgans For Fun still 4th (47 laps down), Plus Four Plus holding 9th. During the wait before he went out for the final time Simon had asked if I could indicate our 11 hour position to him with the pit board and how far behind the next team we were, I made up a board showing 4th and that we were 3 laps down on the team in 3rd so that he would know to take it steady as there was no chance of catching up. The board went out and I'm sure he acknowledged it but he kept the hammer down to the extent that his fastest laps of the day came 8 laps from the end (1m 23.78s) and then 3 laps from the end (1m

23.95s). I have done this type of race before and despite it being the final hour we maintained a reserve driver and car in the pits ready to go, on the basis that it's not over until it's over. This short straw was drawn by Mary (complete with relined brakes), we were just chatting about this and that as she waited patiently and uncomplaining when we witnessed a very foolhardy event. It was nothing to do with motor cars, but across the track from the pits a hot-air balloon came into view, it got closer and closer and came as if to land just outside the circuit right opposite us. Suddenly the burner came on and as it drifted towards the track (12 hour motor race in full swing!) it rose and passed overhead by no more than 50-100 feet to land in the paddock, the basket was full of people waving – we waved back but with our fists – it was a very foolhardy thing to do and I noticed the Chief scrutineer making a note of the aviation reference number no doubt for a complaint to the appropriate body and quite rightly so. With just a couple of laps left we let Mary out of the car to cheer Simon home from the pit wall with the rest of the crew – I stayed back in the pits and watched everyone shouting and waving just happy that they were all having FUN! Simon cruised past and went into Parc Ferme and it was all over.

Kate's organisational skills came to the fore once again as she produced cold champagne for everyone and we all gathered round the Plus 8 celebrating and posing for Team photographs having had one hell of a good time. My son James was kindly presented with a commemorative 750 MC polo shirt by Kate and Simon which really made it a day he will remember and I received a bottle of whisky – presumably to help me forget! Leigh had to go promptly as he was

flying to Boston the next day and as we packed up in the pit and loaded up all the mechanics gear Kelvin and Chris both drove their Morgans homewards, Jack's RAC truck arrived to take the stricken +8 home else he would have driven as well! Mary always drives home. So it was that the Orebi Ganns, the Lindsays, myself and James made our way to Tyrrell's bar for the presentations and to show our support for the winning +8 team. As I had been unable to get a set of results at 12 hours we had no idea where we had actually finished but we had had so much fun we didn't really mind. There was much joking and cheering as the Porsche Team took the laurels on Scratch, the big 8s won the Handicap by a clear 6 laps (much to the handicapper's chagrin), Betty Swollocks took Class A, the Hart Attack Mallocks Class C. Morgans For Fun had indeed got 4th, to our surprise just a lap behind the Mallocks in 3rd, but a huge cheer went up as it was announced that we had won Class B – we could not believe our luck, we did it all for fun and scooped an unexpected trophy at the end. The hard men from Plus Four Plus comfortably held on to their 9th place at the flag despite only having three cars left at the end.

If you weren't there did you miss out? You bet!

My personal thanks go to Mary and John Lindsay, Kate and Simon Orebi Gann and to 'number one son' James – The 'Holly' Birkett was the most fun I have had in years, it was just wonderful.

*Andy Downes
'Skip' Manager
Team Orebi Gann*

Transponders

These will be in use at BDC this year for the first time. They will be issued to drivers at signing on in return for race licences. Simon Towle tells me they cost £300, so please remember to collect your licence and return your transponder or he will be after you for the money!

Timing will certainly be more accurate and they tell me practise sheets and results should appear more quickly. GOOD!

Morris Stapleton Trophy

At the drivers meeting last November it was agreed I would speak to Simon about the race becoming a staggered handicap. We hoped this would give a greater number of drivers a chance of winning thereby increasing the number of cars on the grid. I have spoken to Simon at length about this, unfortunately with 4 other handicaps and an 11 race programme they do not have enough time to run another handicap race. We discussed alternatives, but I felt few if any would be acceptable bearing in mind the feeling at the drivers meeting.

I suggested the race should be divided into simple classes determined by capacity with all other regulations as in previous Stapleton Trophy races. In return BDC have agreed to make awards to first in classes and the Stapleton Trophy will be awarded to the overall winner as usual.

I have spoken to Bruce Stapleton and he agrees with the arrangement for this year and we will review it again for next.

These regulations will also be used by the Morgan Sports Car Club for the race at Lydden Hill in August at the Mog2000 event. Both these races need YOUR support!

Serena

Reluctant Sale

The multiple championship and class winning AEL +8 is for sale due to the retirement of its present custodian.

The car has been maintained regardless of cost for the past 7 years following a ground up rebuild. Presented ready to race, but equally suitable for road use, she has a fresh (3 races - 1 wet) John Eales 3.9 efi engine and has just been fitted with an R380 gearbox, BTR axle and close ratio rack etc. Spare set of wheel and tyres etc. etc.

Brain James trailer also available.

Offers on £20K

Martin Kurrein
Home 020 7253 6122
Work 020 7520 4029
AEL@mkurrein.co.uk

Caste Combe - 1st and 2nd July 2000

This is a two day meeting and, for those of you who do not know, it is their 50th anniversary. A Morgan series I 4/4 won the very first race and the Morgan Challenge will open the day's racing on Sunday (having practised on Saturday!)

There will be a cavalcade at lunchtime on Sunday, which will hopefully include the Aero8 and one or two other Morgans. If you have a Series I and would like to take part, please let me know as soon as possible.

On Saturday evening there will be a BBQ in the paddock organised by the wonderful wives of our drivers! Hope to see as many of you as possible.

Serena

12 Hours Racing

Why am I sitting here with a left knee the size of a football? Well, I worked out that 3 hours racing at Snetterton is equal to over 1000 gear changes or to put it another way, changing gear on average every 10 seconds for 3 hours ... ouch!!! And believe you me, the moss box is not the most forgiving of boxes.

Is all this suffering worthwhile? You bet. For 6 historic +4s to complete the Holly Birkett 12 Hour Race is an achievement in itself – to finish 9th on scratch and 9th on handicap is nothing more than miraculous. Saturday 10th June went something like this ...

Matt Taylerson, Jan Bulinski, David James, Peter Sargent, Barry Sumner and I all turned up at Snetterton at 8.00am to be greeted with clear blue skies. As all cars had been scrutineered the previous evening, there was nothing much to do but to assemble Matt on the grid and position the remaining cars in the garage.

Brian and Julian from Techniques had already set up their workshop in the adjoining garage and John and Charles had secured a spot on the pit wall. The final, and most important member

of our team, Doug Taylerson was applying his managerial skills to secure the best handicap against opposition including 2 teams of Morgan +8s, Porches, BMWs, Caterhams and Austin 7's !!!

The green lights came on promptly at 9.00am and the 16 strong field roared off into then sun. Matt soon latched onto the back of Mary Lindsay's +8 and proceeded to post a string of impressive times in the 1:29 bracket. This was all too much for Mary as entering the Esses for the umpteenth time, she lost it and let Matt through. By the end of the first hour, Matt had pulled out a lead of over half a lap on the +8s.

The hand over to Jan went smoothly and the +4 team moved confidently into the 2nd hour. Jan's session was pretty straight forward and came in on the hour to hand over to me. The track was in perfect condition and it was very difficult to hold back a car that just wanted to go. With the pit wall crew indicating 1:30, that was quick enough and I maintained a self imposed limit of 6000rpm throughout the session.

As the clock struck mid day, the pace car came out and I



Jan Bulinski and Choc Ices ready to go out before a high pressure oil line failed

quickly came into the pits to hand over to Barry. Barry was piloting one of his (seemingly) never-ending supplies of flat rad +4s. Having demolished 'Black Sheep' and an Isle of Man dry stone wall, this car is the London-Sydney rally car in racing guise. After a confident few laps, an ominous grey smoke began to appear and Barry immediately came into the pits. A quick inspection suggested a minor head gasket leak and the car was retired.

The Sarge took to the track shrugging off the dozen beers or so consumed the previous night and posted a string of respectable times. Arriving back in the pits one hour

later, he handed over to David. David was quickly into his stride when passing the pits for only the 7th time, the engine sounded truly shocking. David struggled into the pits to release Matt for his second session and we all peered under the bonnet. A compression test revealed that the engine had gone onto 3 cylinders and another +4 was out.

The time was now just 1.30pm and with only one third of the race completed, we had lost one third of the team. For me this was the low point of the day, as 9.00pm seemed such a long time away. We were now asking the remaining members to up





John Clarke's Super Sports

their track time from two to three hours. A considerable mountain to climb when you consider these cars normally race for only 20 minutes every couple of weeks!!

Oblivious to the retirement of David, Matt blistered around Snetterton's curves posting lap times in the high 1:20's lap after lap. His hand over to Jan and Jan's hand over to me was uneventful and soon we had past the half way mark. In the meantime, Brian and Julian had worked tirelessly in the pits checking and servicing each car as it came in, their only comfort being a constant stream of tea.

After 45 minutes the pace car came out and I was happy to hand over to the Sarge. The weather was now distinctly hot and the previous late night session was beginning to look as one of our less clever tactics. The Sarge came in on the scheduled hour streaming with sweat and releasing Jan for his last session. It certainly proved that way, as nearing the end of his allotted time, an oil pipe let go and liberally spread the entire contents of

the sump up Senna Straight. The car stuttered to a halt around Riches and into retirement. Jan showed his mettle and ran with the transponder back to the pits where I had recently departed.

My last session ran perfectly with the car responding well to fettling by Brian and Julian. The sun was now very low as the clock moved towards 8.00pm making entry into Russell virtually blind.

With just one hour to go, the Sarge left the pit lane and it looked after all that we could finish. With one car on the track and two cars still operative in the pits it was beginning to look comfortable.

At 9.00pm sharp, the chequered flag came out and all the team members lined up on the pit wall to cheer the cars home.

Back in the bar, we learnt that the +8 teams had come 1st and 3rd on handicap with the +4s finishing an incredible 9th on scratch and handicap. Not much excuse was

required to sink another few beers!!

For the record, the +4 team completed 444 laps at an average lap time of 1:37 mins equivalent to an average 72 mph. If you exclude laps lost to the pace car this average

rises to 75 mph or an average lap time of 1:33 mins.

Completing the Birkett 12 Hour race gave me as much satisfaction as winning the 6 hour race the previous year. Racing for 12 hours is an enormous undertaking and puts into perspective the vast organisation and driver stamina required to compete in the Le Mans 24 hour race. Mind you, given the chance I would jump at it but whether my knees would stand the strain remains to be seen!!

A heartfelt thanks to Charles and John who held out the pit board some 500 times and to Brian and Julian who must have completed more than 12 services. Thanks also to Caroline for serving up delicious food throughout the day and finally, commiserations to Barry and David and especially to Jan who now have some very sick cars to put right.

*John Clarke
Team Plus Four Plus*



The next driver is always ready and alert ...

Circuit	Mallory Park		Length	1.35 miles									
Date	4-Jun-00		Weather/track	Sunny/dry									
PRACTICE													
Pos	No	Class	Driver	Car	Time (mins:secs)	Lap	Behind (secs)	kph	mph				
1	99	A	Matthew Wurr	+8	51.53	8		151.78	94.31				
2	20	A	Simon McDermott	+8	51.82	8	0.29	150.93	93.79				
3	29	A	Keith Ahlers	+8	52.30	6	0.77	149.55	92.93				
4	21	C	James Paterson	+8	52.67	7	1.14	148.50	92.27				
5	37	A	Rick Lloyd	+8	53.46	5	1.93	146.30	90.91				
6	1	B	Peter Horsman	+8	54.39	8	2.86	143.80	89.35				
7	13	B	Chris Acklam	+8	54.46	6	2.93	143.62	89.24				
8	50	C	Paul Burry	+8	54.61	8	3.08	143.22	88.99				
9	14	B	Grahame Walker	+8	54.76	7	3.23	142.83	88.75				
10	51	E	Alan Wickenden	4/4	55.99	5	4.46	139.69	86.80				
11	17	D	Jack Bellinger	+8	56.23	7	4.70	139.10	86.43				
12	45	C	Andy Green	+8	56.40	8	4.87	138.68	86.17				
13	35	A	Chris Springall	+8	56.45	3	4.92	138.55	86.09				
14	39	C	Simon Orebi Gann	+8	56.56	8	5.03	138.29	85.93				
15	15	B	James Bellinger	4/4	56.96	4	5.43	137.31	85.32				
16	25	C	Daniel Ward	+8	57.76	4	6.23	135.41	84.14				
17	7	D	Mary Lindsay	+8	58.17	5	6.64	134.46	83.55				
18	42	D	Jeremy Holden	+8	58.84	4	7.31	132.93	82.60				
19	55	B	Philip McKelvey	+8	59.16	5	7.63	132.21	82.15				
20	18	E	John Clarke	+4	59.72	6	8.19	130.97	81.38				
21	71	D	Kelvin Laidlaw	+8	1:00.03	7	8.50	130.29	80.96				
22	19	E	Chris Dady	4/4	1:00.03	7	8.50	130.29	80.96				
23	11	E	David James	+4	1:00.69	4	9.16	128.87	80.08				
24	34	E	Peter Sargeant	+4	1:01.35	7	9.82	127.49	79.22				
25	44	E	Stephen Wheatley	4/4	1:01.50	3	9.97	127.18	79.02				
26	49	D	Paul Chauveau	+8	1:01.66	4	10.13	126.85	78.82				
RACE													
Pos	No	Class	Driver	Car	Race time (mins:secs)	Laps	Behind (secs)	kph	mph	Best lap	on	kph	mph
1	99	A	Matthew Wurr	+8	15:44.32	18		149.09	92.64	51.34	3	152.35	94.66
2	29	A	Keith Ahlers	+8	15:45.02	18	00.70	148.98	92.57	51.14	18	152.94	95.03
3	20	A	Simon McDermott	+8	15:48.09	18	03.77	148.49	92.27	51.63	15	151.49	94.13
4	37	A	Rick Lloyd	+8	16:13.27	18	28.95	144.65	89.88	52.62	4	148.64	92.36
5	13	B	Chris Acklam	+8	16:13.66	18	29.34	144.59	89.85	52.92	16	147.80	91.84
6	21	C	James Paterson	+8	16:16.71	18	32.39	144.14	89.57	52.86	3	147.96	91.94
7	50	C	Paul Burry	+8	16:31.90	18	47.58	141.94	88.19	53.84	2	145.27	90.27
8	14	B	Grahame Walker	+8	16:33.49	18	49.17	141.71	88.05	53.90	16	145.11	90.17
9	1	B	Peter Horsman	+8	16:34.12	18	49.80	141.62	88.00	54.14	8	144.47	89.77
10	39	C	Simon Orebi Gann	+8	15:57.09	17	1 lap	138.93	86.32	55.08	11	142.00	88.24
11	25	C	Daniel Ward	+8	16:13.21	17	1 lap	136.62	84.89	55.95	8	139.79	86.86
12	17	D	Jack Bellinger	+8	16:18.95	17	1 lap	135.82	84.40	56.24	7	139.07	86.42
13	51	E	Alan Wickenden	4/4	16:20.32	17	1 lap	135.63	84.28	56.59	14	138.21	85.88
14	55	B	Philip McKelvey	+8	16:21.30	17	1 lap	135.50	84.19	56.27	14	139.00	86.37
15	7	D	Mary Lindsay	+8	16:25.09	17	1 lap	134.98	83.87	56.73	5	137.87	85.67
16	15	B	James Bellinger	4/4	16:30.76	17	1 lap	134.20	83.39	56.49	16	138.46	86.03
17	19	E	Chris Dady	4/4	15:56.86	16	2 laps	130.78	81.27	58.29	13	134.18	83.38
18	71	D	Kelvin Laidlaw	+8	16:01.98	16	2 laps	130.09	80.83	58.65	16	133.36	82.86
19	18	E	John Clarke	+4	16:04.22	16	2 laps	129.79	80.65	58.63	10	133.40	82.89
20	34	E	Peter Sargeant	+4	16:07.99	16	2 laps	129.28	80.33	59.05	13	132.45	82.30
21	49	D	Paul Chauveau	+8	16:25.51	16	2 laps	126.98	78.90	59.66	16	131.10	81.46
22	44	E	Stephen Wheatley	4/4	16:37.80	16	2 laps	125.42	77.93	1:00.56	14	129.15	80.25
23	11	E	David James	+4	16:39.64	16	2 laps	125.19	77.79	1:00.61	13	129.04	80.18
Not classified													
45	C	Andy Green	+8	5:58.55	6			130.88	81.33	56.90	2	137.46	85.41
Fastest laps													
					(mins:secs)	on	kph	mph					
A	Keith Ahlers				51.14	18	152.94	95.03					
B	Chris Acklam				52.92	16	147.80	91.84	New lap record. Class change				
C	James Paterson				52.86	3	147.96	91.94	New lap record. Class change				
D	Jack Bellinger				56.24		139.07	86.42	New lap record. Class change				
E	Alan Wickenden				56.59	14	138.21	85.88	New lap record. Class change				
Previous Class Lap Records													
					(secs)	kph	mph						
18/5/97	A	Peter Garland	+8	50.01		156.40	97.18						
28/4/96	B	Malcolm Paul	+8	52.11		150.09	93.26						
	C	Alan Wickenden	+4	54.81		142.70	88.67						
18/5/97	D	Chris Springall	+8	55.49		140.95	87.58						
18/5/97	E	Peter Horsman	+8	56.43		138.60	86.12						

Qualifying & Race Results: Race 3

FOURTH RACE Castle Combe Sat 30 Jun/Sun 1 July



Date for last entries

was 11 June

Testing:

Testing available but limited and there are strict noise controls. Cost is **£220 full day, £135 half day (108dBA) or £155 full day, £95 half day (105dBA)**. Must book and pay in advance. Tel: 01249 782929

Changes

Two new chicanes put in last year before Old Paddock and Westway.

Petrol:

Available from Circuit Motors adjoining the paddock.

Circuit length

1.864 miles

Lap records

Morgans

Class A 1:16.36
Peter Garland

Class B 1:16.85
Rick Lloyd

Class C 1:21.26
Chris Springall

Class D 1:22.12
Peter Horsman

Class E 1:43.68
Brian Jenkins

Spare Tickets

Any spare tickets that you don't want, please send to Chris Acklam who will distribute them.

Morgan Motor Company Challenge

Any information, stories, photos or anything remotely interesting to participants in the Race Series to Chris Acklam at The Old Vicarage, Sellindge, Ashford, Kent TN25 6EH.

Tel: +44 (0)1303 813803 Fax: +44 (0)1303 813737 email: chris@acklam.co.uk