

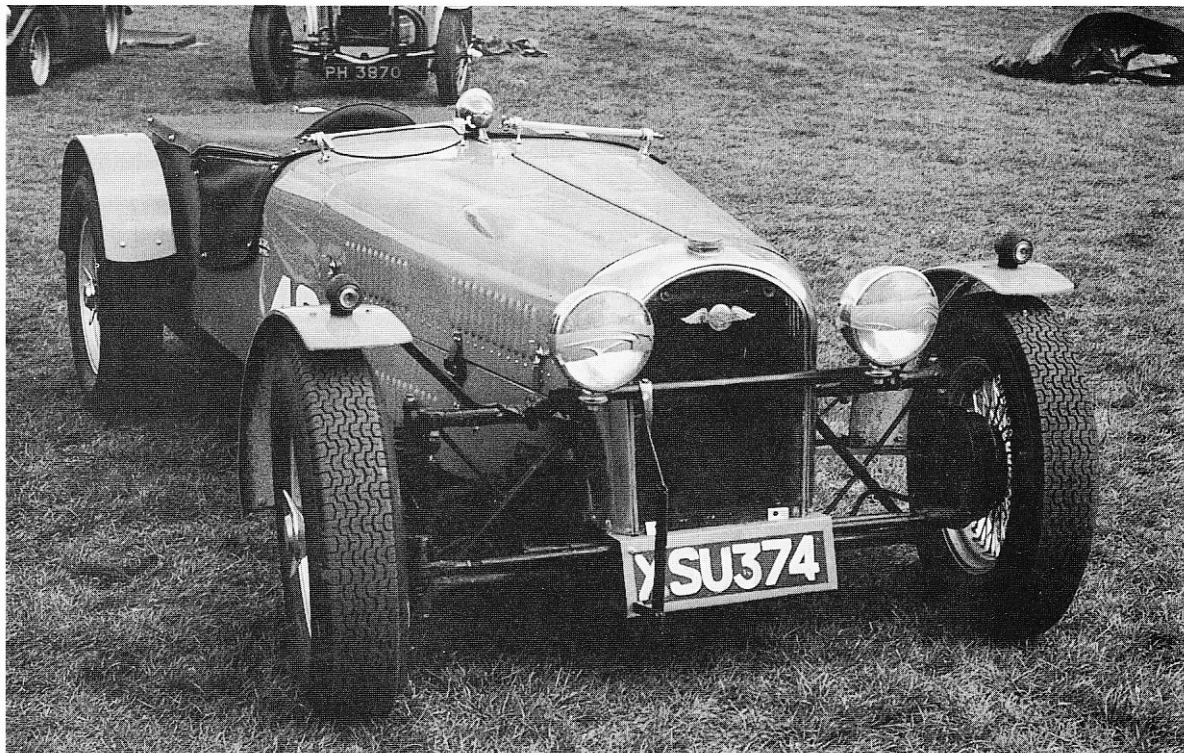
Morgan-Riley

The Morgan 4/4 model is one of those evergreen cars that despite being introduced some 50+ years ago is still in current production, and so popular that prospective owners are prepared to wait several years before they can take delivery of a new one. True, over the intervening period the car has been subjected to many minor “updates”, but it still uses

John Mowatt's Morgan powered-by-Riley Special has a deceptively modest appearance that belies an impressive all-round performance.

the same 1930s formula of z-section pressed steel chassis, Morgan's own sliding pillar ifs and a metal-clad wooden body frame.

The prototype, first seen in 1935, was derived from Morgan's F-type three-wheeler, the “F” indicating the use of a Ford engine (933 cc side valve). Although this first four-wheeled Morgan retained the Ford engine, subsequent production versions used overhead-inlet, side-exhaust Coventry Climax engines, and it wasn't until the 1950s that Morgan again decided to fit Ford motors. The



1122 cc capacity of the Climax unit was ill-suited to classes used in motor racing at the time, so a special sleeved-down 1098 cc version was offered to those Morgan owners of a sporting disposition who wished to compete in the up to 1100 cc category. Later in the Thirties, the Coventry Climax engine was superseded by a 1267 cc motor manufactured by Standard, this being an overhead valve version of their "Flying Ten" engine, and the power output went up from 34 to 40 bhp as a result. This engine was also used in the Morgans produced immediately after the war, until the 4/4 model was temporarily dropped from the range to be replaced by the model which used the 2-litre Standard Vanguard engine initially.

Many different engines have been used in the 4/4 Morgan over the years, including a variety of Ford engines and the Fiat twin-cam unit, but to my knowledge a Riley engine was never offered as an option by the Malvern factory, which is why the Morgan-Riley is special. This deceptively fast alliance of Morgan 4/4 and Riley 12/4 components uses a 1500 cc Riley engine reputedly modified to produce something over 100 bhp. To make good use of the available power, the car has been rebodied with a lightweight aluminium body vaguely in the style of the factory offering but lacking doors and not carrying the twin spare wheels that are characteristic of these early Morgan sports cars. The full length original wings have been disposed of in favour of cycle wings, and the car sits on 16 in wire wheels; not in itself unusual for a 1930s sports car until one recalls that these early flat radiator Morgans were normally fitted with pressed steel disc wheels.

This mixture of a lightweight chassis, that is blessed with good manners, and a reliable well-tuned engine is proving very successful in VSCC sprints and hillclimbs. Although it is a relative newcomer to the vintage racing scene, it is becoming a leading contender in its class, which it has won on several occasions.

Morgan-Riley

Technical Specification Data

Date of Origin: 1934-36

ENGINE

Type: Riley

Capacity: 1496 cc

No. of Cylinders: 4

Valve Operation: ohv

Estimated Power Output: 100 bhp

Carburation:

GEARBOX

Type:

No. of Ratios: 4

CHASSIS

Type: Morgan

FRONT AXLE

Type:

Suspension: 2 x Coil springs

REAR AXLE

Type:

Suspension: 2 x Semi-elliptics

BRAKES

Type: Drums (all round)

Actuation: Hydraulic

WHEELS

Wheel Size: 16 in

Tyre Size: 550 x 16 (front)

600 x 16 (rear)

OVERALL DIMENSIONS

Length: 140 in

Wheelbase: 92 in

Track: 45 in (front),

45 in (rear)