

Our favourite car

and how to use her



The last summer of the last century one of my teenage dreams came true - my wife and I bought our Morgan. She was born in Malvern 1977, as a Plus 8. She became our freedom fighter, taking us away from boring week days.

By Ulla and Petter Rognstad

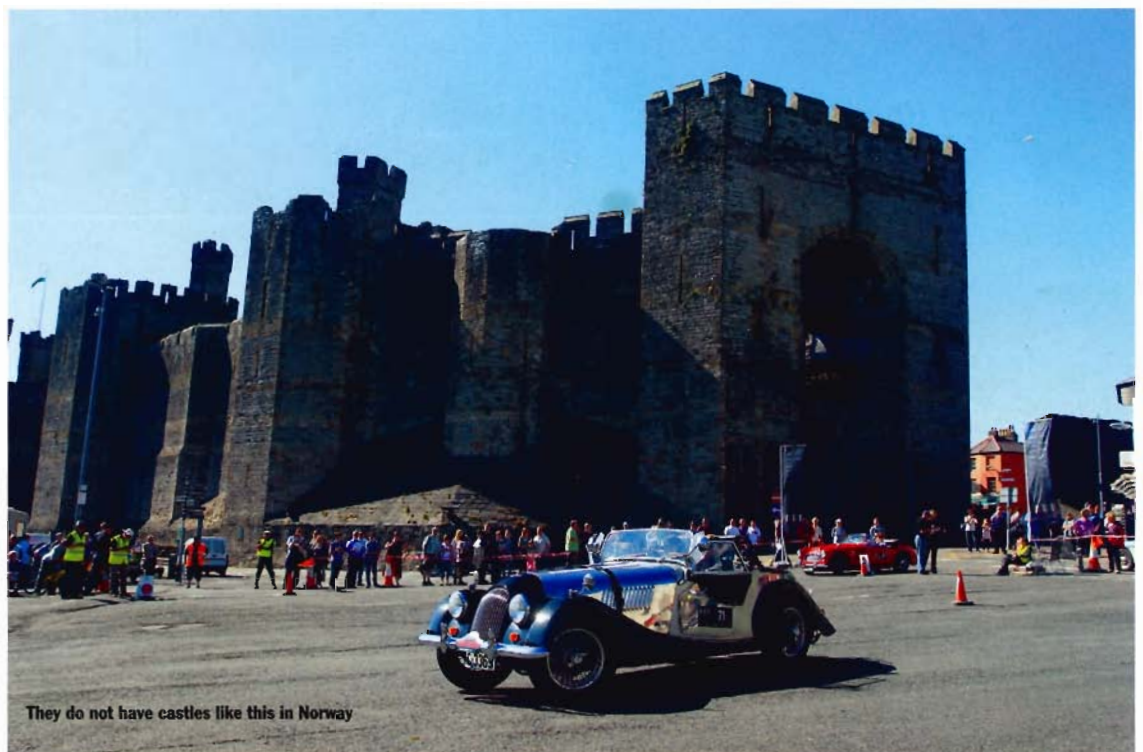
To realise another dream we went to a Norwegian Classic Car Rally - Challenge. My wife Ulla was inspired by the competition as co-driver and navigator. I must admit that I can live with it as well. Our Morgan performed well and we went to more events. Some friends of ours had seen announcements for an upcoming event in Wales, but they were a bit scared of driving on the "wrong" side of the road. After some discussion we decided to give it a try and entry forms were sent. What luck! We have now participated eight times in nine years. The one year we dropped out was because we had arranged a pilgrimage to Malvern and Stoke Lacy for the Norwegian Morgan Sports Car Club, but that is another story. That year we suffered from intense abstinence and the year after we kept on with what has now been a tradition.

The transport from Oslo to Llandudno gives us at least two days with cozy roads and social relaxation on overnight ferries with our fellow Norwegian competitors.

In Llandudno we were booked into hotels on the Promenade. The day before the rally took place, there was an instruction meeting plus training session for those who are newcomers. We do follow this every year to get acclimatised and not forget what we did last year. A practice run follows, so that we learn what we will meet up with in the next few days. We also carry out a small route to test our navigation, a regularity section, as well as a driving test on a closed circuit. Here you can hear and smell that boys are boys. Before the welcome dinner we have to go to scrutineering, a small test to see that the cars are technically compliant and safe to do the rally.

The dinner is a social event and we meet with old and new friends over drinks. Afterwards we prepare the road book for Day One and you can feel an atmosphere of high-strung nerves in the bar area. That is why we have the extra beer the night before the start!

Day One starts with the cars lined up on the Promenade ready for the start and on display for tourists and the concours d'elegance jury. We start out



They do not have castles like this in Norway

The Norwegian Plus 4 powering up the hill in 2nd gear

with one minute intervals between the cars so that with 135 competitors this takes more than two hours. The first road section leads to the first test, often on a closed rally road on The Great Orm known from famous rallies (WRC, etc.). The day goes on with navigation and regularity sections, morning tea and more rallying in gorgeous landscapes and lovely narrow Morgan roads.

The navigation follow simple and clear instructions as tulips with arrows telling what direction you have to follow. Simple as it can be, but when adrenaline kicks in sometimes you and your navigator find a wrong way and then even more adrenaline makes the day very interesting.

Regularities require a combination of navigation skills and time keeping. The average speed is known and for each second you are too late or early at the control point, you earn one penalty point. Sounds simple, but we have learned that this is what that separates us from the "professional" crews, even though it gives a lot of fun. You can imagine the stress when you find that your navigation has gone wrong. In such a situation this year we were hit from behind by a Welsh Stone Wall. Shit happens and our panel beater now has got another job. As soon as we achieved the right rhythm and reached more control points with 0 points what happens? Yes, a farmer with a tractor wider than the road pops up in front of us. Nobody has told him about our average speed being far greater than his. Guess what, we did to cope with our average speed when the farmer left our track...

Driving tests are real fun. The main thing here is to be calm, forget that you are competing on time with your 'race car.' Read the rules and the test instructions. Even though boys are boys and Morgan are real sports



Left and right: Same bend, interesting lean angles compared



Should have had the sidescreens on 'dear'





The Norwegian Corvette was the bravest and having the most fun through the water splash



FINISH



cars. Can life be better?

At dinner and in the bar we mingle with good friends again, aware that next day in the competition they are all ready to kill you.

Day Two and Three continue with a progression in the challenges. There are service teams following the rally and those guys are fantastic. They do whatever

they can to bring unlucky cars back to the rally after most kinds of incidents. We have seen them swapping clutches and straightening crashed panels on the roadside. This year our fellow Norwegian Morgan died during a driving test. The engine was called back to life again, although this was so time consuming that they missed the finish line, but the car brought them

Below and left: Ulla and Petter really enjoyed their trip over, as always



home to Norway and the engine is still alive & kicking. The rally team is really concerned about participants and they do what they can to bring all the cars to the finish Line.

Saturday evening is the gala Awards Dinner, a black tie party. Good food, charity and results with Awards. Afterwards there is a big party in the bar of the Imperial Hotel.

Sunday morning we start with a nice English breakfast before we leave our friends, promising to see each other next year.

Our ferry to Denmark leaves on Monday so we go to a wonderful place close to our ferry port - Melvyn and Sindy's Pit Stop Accommodation Experience. Even our friends in their Chevrolet Corvette Sting Ray enjoyed the place. Those of you who have not spent a night there have missed a lot, believe me.

By now we are home again and planning for next year's Three Castles Welsh Classic Trial has already started. We recommend this as one of the best ways to enjoy your Classic Car!

For more information : www.three-castles.co.uk

The sign says it all

