



MOG TRAVELS

OVER THE ALPINE HILLS AND FAR AWAY, A FINE MORGAN GETAWAY

Following on from last month's Alpine adventure, it seems that a lot of Mogs found themselves braving the snow this summer to get some mountain air. Five Morgans joined Sarah Dowding, the Director of touring company Classic Travelling, for this year's Trans-Alpine Tour. Right, where can we sign up to go mountaineering next summer?

Morgans were well represented on this year's Trans-Alpine Tour, with five Morgans and owners from the UK, USA and Australia. We also had another US Morgan-owning couple, but they were in a hire car, as their Morgan is kept in Colorado. We were also travelling with other classics – Jaguars, Austin Healeys and Aston Martins.

Lyle Honess from Australia was in his Plus 8, and Phil and Elaine Fisher from California were in their Plus 4 four-seater – both cars are kept in the UK. We also had Richard and Melanie Grey in their Plus 8, Alan and Bev Johnson in their Plus 4, and me in my little but very well-travelled 4/4.

Our two-week trip was blessed with stunning weather and we only had one day of rain and hoods up – not bad considering that only a week or two before, a lot of Europe had been flooded and the rain seemed biblical.

Having met at Dover we journeyed across France, stopping overnight in beautiful chateau

hotels in Picardy and then in stunning Alsace and the Vosges – our first mountains of the trip.

We then descended to the plain of the mighty Rhine River, and crossed the river border into Germany on a tiny ferry before continuing to Bodensee/Lake Constance for a night at the charming town of Lindau, which looks across the lake to Austria.

Our one rainy day followed as we visited the incredible fantasy castles of King Ludwig at Neuschwanstein and Hohenschwangau and then on to Oberammergau, home of the famed Passion Plays. The scenery in southern Bavaria is lovely; it was a shame we didn't see it in all its glory, as the cloud was rather low. We headed on to Tegernsee and our first two-night stop at Bad Wiessee on the lake shore, staying at a beautiful small hotel of which we had exclusive use.

Above:
Descending the
Stelvio Pass
towards Bormio

Below: Swiss cows
admiring the
Fishers' Morgan

The sun shone on our day off and most of us enjoyed a day on or near the lake, using the time to fettle with the cars. I had knocked a kerb the day before and the wheels seemed to be out of alignment, causing shakes, but a quick swap with the spare and problem solved. The only real problem so far was with the mechanic's own van, so they took my Morgan to collect a spare part and test it on the way.



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The next day we pressed on through the mountains to Berchtesgaden, a little enclave of Germany seemingly totally surrounded by Austria, and famed for being the location of Hitler's Eagle's Nest. This was a fascinating visit to the top and affords some incredible views for miles and miles around as it's at a height of 1,834m (6,017ft). We also visited the hard-hitting Dokumentation Center, which told the rise and fall of the Nazis – a sobering and fascinating museum. Then it was on to Austria and Kitzbuhel for another two-night stay.

Top right: The
Johnson's Morgan
at Lenzerheide,
Switzerland

Below: Flying
through the Alps

Bottom: In Alsace,
France



Kitzbuhel is a real gem of a town, famed for its skiing, but just as lovely in summer. We stayed at the luxury Hotel Kitzhof (with superb garage facilities) and indulged in the spa, outstanding food and utter relaxation. The temperature was well into the 30s and some intrepid souls went for a hike in the high Alps while others pottered around the town or relaxed.



Leaving "Kitz" via the Thurn Pass and the Gerlos Pass, with a visit to the Krimml waterfall, took us along the Inn Valley, past the Swarovski factory (lots of jewellery purchases for the girls) and Innsbruck to the little town of Imst for the night.

The next day was our big mountain passes day, with driving in three countries! Everyone was up early and raring to go. We climbed the long ascent up to the Resia Pass and crossed into Italy, passing a village that was "drowned" to become a dam; now just the spire peeps out from the water.

It's a fun descent into Mal. We drove into the little medieval village of Glorenza, a walled beauty, and then continued to the Stelvio Pass, the second-highest Alpine pass. The motorbikes become a lot more numerous around the famed Alpine passes, along with the crazy cyclists. However, we actually had a fabulous climb up the Stelvio Pass, as it was closed for a bike race and marathon from the Bormio side, which meant a



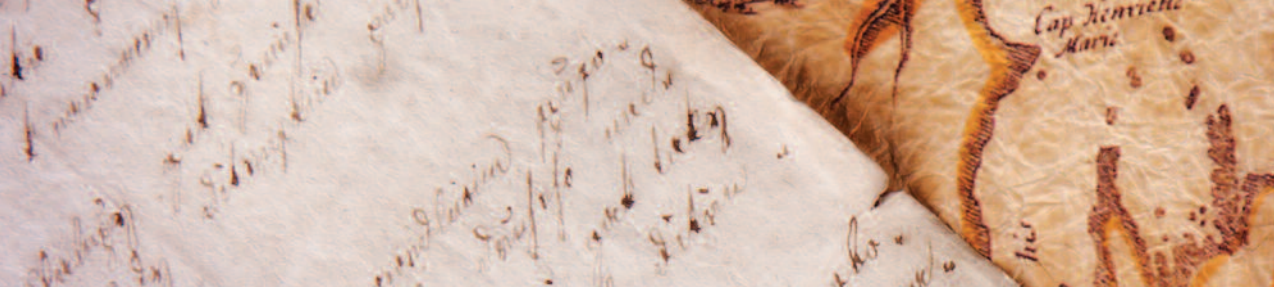
thrilling and spirited drive without the worry of oncoming traffic. However, it did mean an enforced lunch stop, as we watched runners and cyclists reach the 2,757m (9,045ft) col.

Once the road re-opened we continued down towards Bormio, turned off for the Foscagno Pass and Livigno, an unusual tax-free haven of cheap fuel and alcohol (yes, we stocked up on both). We climbed out of Livigno and crossed the Swiss border onto the Bernina Pass, which descends to St Moritz.

One last pass, the Julier Pass, took us to Lenzerheide, where we stayed for two nights in a stunning converted farm – one of the most beautiful hotels I have ever stayed in. It was probably the most thrilling day of the tour, with great weather, awesome driving, fun company and to finish in such luxury with views to die for just topped it off perfectly. ➔

CLASSIC
TRAVELLING

The Trans-Alpine Tour will take place again in June 2016 as a group tour, but if you cannot wait until then, the tour can be taken as a self-drive, independent tour at any time to suit you. See www.classictravelling.com for full details.



“WE LEFT LENZERHEIDE FOR ANOTHER PERFECT DRIVING DAY OF BLUE SKIES, SNOW-COVERED ALPS, OPEN ROADS AND FUN”

A well-earned rest day, again with glorious weather, took most of us into the mountains hiking. Some of the group trekked down into town for a fabulous classic car show and returned most impressed with the quality and rarity of vehicles on show.

Above: Ascending the Stelvio Pass

Below: At the top of the Resia Pass between Austria & Italy

Middle: Near Kitzbuhel, Austria

We left Lenzerheide for another perfect driving day of blue skies, snow-covered Alps, open roads and fun, with the wonderful drive across the Oberalp Pass to Andermatt and then the Furkha Pass and Grimsel Pass.

The latter had only opened just two days prior to our drive, due to the sheer amount of snow – and it was well over 20ft deep in places. However, it was melting fast in the high summer temperatures (into the 30s still) and gentians, edelweiss and rare Alpine plants were plentiful – truly beautiful.

We descended to Meiringen, passing the Reichenbach Falls (of Sherlock Holmes fame), and continued along an impossibly blue Brienz See to Interlaken. Then it was onto Gstaad for another two-night stay, with a well-earned cheese fondue for dinner.



Above: At the top of the Oberalppass in Switzerland

Right: Overlooking the Krimml Falls in Austria



Another day off for relaxing was welcome, particularly as the temperature was 35°C – not bad for a ski resort! We decided to visit the medieval hilltop village of Gruyères in the early evening and enjoy dinner of Raclette (yes, more cheese) on the ramparts overlooking the valley.

We were now leaving the Alps and making our way home, crossing the Fribourg plain in Switzerland (but not before a cheeky visit to the Cailler chocolate factory) and up into the Jura Mountains, through watchmaker’s valley of la Chaux de Fonds and Le Locle.

This entire area is dedicated to horology with all the names here: Rolex, Cartier, Ebel, Le Tissot, Tag Heuer etc. The Horologie Museum is well worth a few hours of your time – just fascinating. We crossed the Jura

to our penultimate hotel, near Bescancon, narrowly missing a major storm.

Our penultimate day took us cross country, via Epernay and the Champagne region, back to our first hotel near Laon for a final dinner. We returned significantly more tanned, more relaxed, much happier and we had all enjoyed a magnificent tour and made some wonderful friends.

All the Morgans performed faultlessly, which could not be said of all the cars. However, our trusty mechanics (Dan Monk of Winchester Classics and Joe Coleman of Move My Motor) ensured everyone returned safely

and on time. Two of the Morgan owners fell in love with their cars again. Both couples had been considering selling (how could they?!) but luckily both Morgans are now well and truly part of their families. I guess it sometimes takes a wonderful trip like this to really see why Morgans are such great touring cars. **MOG**

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THANKS TO

Winchester Classics
(www.winchesterclassics.co.uk)
Hampshire-based classic car garage, specialising in Morgans.

Move My Motor
(www.movemymotor.net)
Vehicle logistics and classic car transport anywhere in the UK and Europe.