



It has been Forty-one years plus of Morgan Sports Cars meeting at the Bird in Hand.

Can you remember the year that Concorde made its maiden test flight into London; when the crippled spacecraft Apollo thirteen crew made an orbit round the moon to return to earth safely by the skin of their teeth and the year the Beatles finally broke up? You can't? Well, the year was 1970. Travel to the moon and the prospect of supersonic transport for the wealthy few, indicated an age of great technological advancement. However, a small sports car manufacturer nestled in the Malvern Hills was still making its wears of coach built vehicles at the rate of about nine cars a week. To be fair they had just introduced an electrifying V8 powered model that was causing some interest but they were still locked into the past and their traditional methods. I am of course talking about one of the greatest of British products – the Morgan Sports car.

[Picture caption: Forty plus years of Morgan Sports cars at the Bird In Hand]

To service the growing interest in four wheeled Morgan sports cars (up until the early 1950s they still built three wheelers) the Morgan Sports Car Club (MSCC) was formed. As the club grew regional groups were set up round the country to support and build the membership. A London Centre was one of the early ones and they still meet up today despite congestion and parking charges. Incidentally, the Morgan Motor Company has now reintroduced the Morgan three-wheeler. It just goes to prove that if you wait and keep something long enough, you will be back in fashion.

A couple of members of the London Centre, the late Arthur Neal and the late Chris Rowe lived in the Maidenhead/Bracknell area and they felt travelling to London to meet fellow Morgan owners was time consuming and they thought it would be nice, possibly, to set up another Centre nearer their homes. After some research, they honed in on a venue and during one wet cold night back in November 1970, they arranged a meeting, which we call a noggin, at the Bird In Hand.

The noggin was held on the first Thursday of the month in question and I am pleased to say that the Thames Valley Centre as we are now known, we were originally called the Reading Centre, have met at the Bird in Hand in this manner ever since.

In celebration of this fact, in 2010, we decided to hold a fortieth anniversary dinner held in November to coincide with the very month back in 1970 our Centre was formed. We filled the dining area in the Bird in Bird with over seventy guests with presentations and speeches covering our forty years of existence. Happily, the son of one our founders, Denzil Rowe, could join us and he appropriately received a presentation from the Centre in honour of his late father Chris Rowe. Denzil

still drives his father's Morgan; Chris would be very proud to know this and I am sure he is watching over his son when he is out and about driving his Morgan.

Natasha and her team from the Bird In Hand gave us a great deal of support during our anniversary dinner without which the evening wouldn't have been as enjoyable or as successful. Therefore, as a thank you, we promised to present to Natasha a framed photograph of our Morgan Sports Cars at the Bird In Hand. The treasurer of our Centre, Mike Aldrich organised the fortieth anniversary dinner and our thank you photo shoot. So one quiet Sunday back in July we lined up at the Bird In Hand for a photo call. We plan to present this photo to Natasha and that one copy will be mounted behind the bar at the Bird In Hand. We also hope to have a copy framed that can advertise our presence at the bar so people will know when we meet up for a drink at the Bird In Hand.

It was good to see for one day only, Morgan only parking at the Bird In Hand. I would like to thank Natasha and her team for all their help and assistance, we still hold our meetings at the Bird In Hand and I hope this will continue for the foreseeable future.

As this is our first contribution to the Bird In Hand newsletter, after nearly forty-one years of meeting up at the Bird In Hand, long overdue I would say, I would like to dedicate this article to our founders Arthur Neal and Chris Rowe. Without them we would not be here and all the fun and good times we have been fortunate to enjoy, would not have happened.

[Picture caption: Mike and Pam Aldrich arrive at the Bird In Hand photo shoot]

In the future I hope to keep you updated with our activities that all stem from our base here at the Bird In Hand. New members are welcome – you do not need a Morgan to join, just an interest. I hope our involvement with the Bird In Hand will continue for a long time to come. Don't forget we meet on the first evening Thursday of each month at the Bird In Hand, of course.

Roger Bluff

Centre Secretary,

Thames Valley Centre, Morgan Sports Car Club.