



Here at MOG we're well aware of the adventurous nature of Morgan owners who are all too keen to get their four-wheeled wonders – and three-wheeled ones – on tour! But, when it comes to touring, it's not just a question of rolling the Mog out of the garage and hitting the highway without a care in the world. It takes a bit more thought and planning if your trip is to be memorable for all the right reasons. Fail to prepare, and prepare to fail!

In this special feature on the art of touring, Sarah Dowding, Director of Classic Travelling Motoring Tours, presents her top preparation tips, with additional expert guidance from Dan Monk of Winchester Classics.



**AN IDEAL TRAVEL COMPANION**

I have owned my 1981 Morgan 4/4 for 16 years and in that time I've travelled extensively, having visited 30 countries on three continents in the car. I organise classic car tours for a living and so spend quite a bit of time each year preparing and packing my Morgan for its next adventure. Here are some of the things I have discovered on how to make life as easy and stress-free as possible for Morgan travel.

Most Morgans are relatively simple to work on so country garages can often carry out adequate rudimentary repairs, although the newer models have more complex engines that may require specialist attention from the engine provider (Ford or BMW). Morgan dealers and specialists will be few and far between outside the UK, so have the details for local agents in the countries to which you're travelling.



Travelling with a group of Morgan owners, or other classic car owners, ensures that a spread of advice is available should problems occur – although sometimes it may be of conflicting opinions! If in doubt over any parts for your car, either get it replaced before you go or carry a spare. >



### PREPARATION, PREPARATION, PREPARATION

The very best thing to prepare your Morgan is to drive it regularly for a few weeks before you go, as this will help identify any niggles. Do get a full service as well or at least a check up by a Morgan specialist. Brakes, cooling and tyres are some of the most important parts. At the very least give the car a full spanner check, tightening any nuts and bolts, especially on the exhaust and wing stays. As Morgans have quite stiff suspension the hard ride can cause quite a few things to shake loose over time.



## DAN'S CHECK LIST

- ✓ Tax and MOT: ensure these are both up to date
- ✓ Check your insurance is valid for the countries to be visited
- ✓ Change the oil in the engine if it hasn't been done recently
- ✓ Check the gear and diff oils
- ✓ Check anti-freeze/coolant levels. It's possible to run the car on 100% anti-freeze/coolant if you're going to some extremely hot (or cold) conditions – as Sarah did in South Africa when it was 46°C
- ✓ Grease all the suspension points and carry a grease gun in the car if you're planning on doing more than 1,000 miles
- ✓ If you have a cam belt then ensure it's been changed at the recommended intervals. Check the fan belt too
- ✓ Tyres: check the pressure and top up if necessary.
  - \* If your tyres have inner tubes carry at least one spare. Inner tubes are very hard to get now, especially abroad. Also date check your tyres
  - \* The week and year of manufacture of the tyre is always marked on the sidewall. A tyre marked 2501 was manufactured in week 25 of 2001. Manufacturers usually also mark tyres to show which factory they were made in, so they can trace where and when a faulty tyre was made
  - \* Find a string of numbers and letters close to the tyres bead. Usually starting with DOT at the end you will find the three or four numbers relating to your tyre age. If your tyres have just three numbers they will have been made pre-2000 and even if they still have plenty of tread on them replace the tyres as they may be subject to rubber corrosion. Signs of ageing can include cracking in the sidewall area due to ozone attack, and discolouring if they come into contact with certain chemicals
  - \* If your tyres are over 10-years-old then replace them, regardless of what their condition looks like. I've had two blowouts on old tyres that looked in good condition. Do remember to take a jack and know where your jacking points are
- ✓ Basic tool kit: make sure you include screw drivers, WD-40, cable ties, adjustable spanner, socket spanner, gloves, gaffer tape, Looktite/Superglue, two spare Bosch 5-pin relays (for fuel pump and fan operation), ignition coil, points and condenser (for non-electronic ignition cars), spare spark plugs, jubilee clips, spare hoses, spare fuses, and long-nosed pliers or fuse removal tool. A lot of this should be able to fit in the tool box under the bonnet
- ✓ Know what compulsory products you need for travelling abroad. This varies from country to country, but usually includes high-visibility jackets/vests (one per occupant and these must be kept in the cabin of the car, so you can access them without exiting the vehicle), warning triangle, country of origin sticker (there are some much more stylish items than the ubiquitous stickers!), and spare bulbs. A fire extinguisher and first aid kits are also recommended
- ✓ Documents: insurance and registration. These must be originals, but take photocopies to have a spare with you and a copy at home
- ✓ Most early or traditional Morgans have a temperature switch (also known as an over switch) at the bottom of the radiator. Sometimes this fails or can corrode, so some form of emery paper plus insulating tape is advisable. Older Morgans, in particular the Plus 8, can give problems with the 'sender unit' that fits into radiator, so taking a spare is advisable. Alternatively carry a small piece of wire with two male spade connectors to bridge the switch and run the fan continuously. However, do remember to isolate the battery when stopped so the battery isn't drained
- ✓ Standard Morgan interior mirrors have a tendency to fall off at about three years of age, from experience. The alternative is to fit a lighter mirror, such as those sold by Librands. Halfords sell a special adhesive kit for attaching interior mirrors to glass and is well worth taking, or an alternative is to carry a simple spare rear view mirror which uses a sucker to attach to mirror
- ✓ A further problem with the standard mirror is that having the hood up or carrying luggage on the luggage rack can partially obscure the rear view. Using an additional sucker type mirror is a cheap and simple solution, although purpose built interior mirrors that are height adjustable are available, although more costly
- ✓ Ensure you have breakdown cover, including repatriation cover if travelling abroad. This is often included with many classic car insurance policies
- ✓ If in any doubt ask a Morgan specialist for advice



### NO INCH WASTED

My best investment has been the fitted luggage from Hillsalive (available from MMC). It really has made packing my Morgan (and other classics) a piece of cake. It's incredibly sturdy and I have tested it to the max, including airline travel, and it's great! It fits behind the seats and makes optimum use of the space. Soft holdalls from other manufacturers are great, along with a variety of carrier bags to wrap things and fit into the nooks and crannies.

Packing cubes are also excellent, so I can keep all my clothes folded and neat, even when I need something from the bottom of the case. A very useful website for travellers, and all your travel requirements, is [www.travelparaphernalia.co.uk](http://www.travelparaphernalia.co.uk) I have used this many times and I'm impressed both with the products and service.



Make sure you don't over pack, though. I suggest taking layers rather than thick clothing. Don't forget that the wind-chill can make the temperature feel a lot cooler. It's also often much cooler in the morning, when you may need jackets and gloves, and then strip down to t-shirts by lunch time.

A luggage rack is essential for touring in a Morgan, as are some form of securing straps. Four-seater Morgan owners have the luxury of heaps of luggage space (without passengers), but a luggage rack can also be fitted. The luggage racks with side-screen storage make the most sense, even if you don't travel that much.

If you're using a suitcase on the luggage rack (I use old leather cases where possible as they look so much better), then line it with a bin liner or plastic sheeting on the bottom and also the lid. I also have a waterproof backpack cover that fits over the top for rain, although bespoke waterproof covers are also available from some Morgan specialists.

Don't forget to pack at least two luggage straps, although bungee cords can also be used (albeit not as stylish). Bungee cords are extremely useful to strap extras (such as any purchases on your travels) to the suitcase/luggage rack. I also have a plastic-covered chain (or a long bike lock will do) to secure my case to the luggage rack. This both stops the case being opened as well as being removed – peace of mind when stopped on day visits. Morgan's own Autosafe is perfect to protect small and valuable assets, for example sat nav systems, and is available to purchase online.

I suggest trying to buy the smallest warning triangle and tool kits possible. Many of these items can then fit under the seats. Water bottles (500ml) are also useful, both for your drinks and topping up the radiator. Clear plastic A3 zip files are very useful for maps and guide books – keeping them dry, wind proof and in one place. I have added net pockets on either side of the transmission tunnel for maps etc., which I purchased from a yacht chandlers. ➤



If you don't have a locking glove box (and even if you do), it's prudent to ensure that you have a secure place for your documents (passports etc.) with a lockable cash box secured under the bonnet on top of the passenger foot well.

When the rain comes it can be a nightmare to keep everything dry. Think ahead by carrying spare bin liners, as they can keep all sorts of things dry, including my legs when the rain comes in through the bonnet! Jay cloths are a must too, and are again handy for mopping up. Put old newspapers under the carpets in the footwell, which are another useful tool for mopping up damp patches from water ingress. An added benefit is that they can then be thrown away and replaced.

It's important not to forget the driver, so make sure you pack a peaked cap, crucial if you don't have sun visors and recommended even if you do. I like baseball caps as they can fit well on the head and be tightened. Many hats can have a tendency to whip off at speed or when passing lorries. Sunglasses and high-factor sun cream are also essential.

Also take gloves, even if you're visiting a hot country – thin gloves will stop you from burning in the sun when your hands are clamped to the steering wheel. If you're travelling in the EU ensure you have a European Health Insurance Card (EHIC) ([www.ehic.org.uk](http://www.ehic.org.uk)). Also ensure that you have adequate and valid travel insurance.



#### GOING FURTHER AFIELD

Most of you will probably be familiar with cross-channel ferries to get you into continental and western Europe (France, Belgium, Netherlands, Spain and Denmark). It's also possible to take the ferries onwards from other countries to get to Scandinavia, the Baltic States and Greece, and seriously cut down your travel times. Don't forget there are also some excellent Motorail services, taking your car by train from and to the following locations:

- Dusseldorf (Germany) to Narbonne (south France), Alessandria and Bolzano (Italy), Munich (Germany), and Innsbruck, Salzburg and Villach (Austria)
- 's-Hertogenbosch (Netherlands) to Alessandria and Livorno (Italy) and Koper (Slovenia)
- Paris (France) to southern France ➤

From these locations it's then possible for onwards journeys (by ferry or Motorail) to Italy, Greece, Turkey and north Africa.

For the really intrepid among you it's also possible to ship your Morgan to other continents. My Morgan has been to the USA twice and to South Africa. I have used both containers and roll-on/roll-off shipping and not had any problems.



Depending on the length of your tour, it's often cheaper to ship your car than hire a vehicle when there. Last year (2012) it was just over £1,900 return to ship our cars to New York (USA). The price included all shipping, marine insurance, customs and handling. Expect to pay in the region of £4,000-5,000 for container shipping, although the price depends on how many vehicles are in a container. We have had three Morgans in a 40ft container, which helps keep the costs down. Don't forget you will also need motor insurance for those countries to be visited once outside Europe. Ask your insurance company for advice, or I have used [www.hagertyinsurance.co.uk](http://www.hagertyinsurance.co.uk)

All in all Morgans make great touring cars. When looked after and used regularly they make very reliable and fun vehicles in which to travel. When driving your Morgan abroad expect to get chatting to lots of locals whenever you stop. Wave back to lots of passers-by and other cars and I guarantee you'll put a huge smile on everyone's faces. **MOG**

## READY, SET, ADVENTURE!

As you are reading this, the Nordkapp Challenge 2013 team will be just a few days' drive away from reaching their goal. At the time of going to print, the team – Morgan owners Simon Murphy, John Richards and Brian Voakes; the Morgan Motor Company's Steve Morris and Tim Whitworth; and MOG publisher Matti Rogers – were still in the UK, stocking up on supplies and making sure that their Morgans were in tiptop condition. These behind-the-scenes photos show the Morgans as they were being wrapped ready for their adventure.

To find out how the team got on, read our exclusive report in the July issue. To donate and support the team's chosen charity, The Marfan Trust, visit

<http://uk.virginmoneygiving.com/team/driven-at-heart>

