

## How the Morgan Challenge series began

It seems hard to believe now, but in the 1970s and early 1980s the only race solely for Morgan Sports Cars took place at the annual Bentley Drivers Club Meeting. Held at Silverstone over the August Bank Holiday weekend, participants raced on scratch for the Morris Stapleton Trophy. Aside from this, Morgan racers jostled with other marques in the Combined One Make Car Club's handicap races hosted by the 750 Motor Club and Mary Lindsay arranged a series of Morgan-Porsche Challenge races and special Morgan classes within other club races. These were supported by a variety of mainly road-going Morgans, the drivers of which had succumbed to some serious arm-twisting by Mary.

In 1984 a conversation took place in the bar at Brands Hatch between Rick Bourne and Richard Casswell (then Chairman of the Morgan Sports Car Club) who shared the view that Morgans should have their own dedicated race series. And so Morgan Only Racing was born, Rick attacked the project with gusto and persuaded the 750 MC to host races at their Meetings in 1985.

Racing started in an open format running to a fiendish handicap system that rewarded actual performance against the potential performance of the car (nobody understood it really) before evolving into the Class-based system in use today. One aspect of the Morgan Challenge racing that endures is that it accommodates all Morgan models regardless of age or modification, there is even an Invitation Class for those one-off specials that don't fit anywhere else – if it's a Morgan it's welcome.

The flagship Morgan +8 is the mainstay of the grid in both standard form and various levels of modification, also prominent are the more recent 3-litre V6 Roasters, whilst the smaller-engined 4/4s occur throughout the classes and are highly competitive.

Following that confident but slightly shaky start in the 80s the racing has gone from strength to strength and it is now one of the best supported marque Championships around – some of the original 1985 cars and competitors remain at the heart and it certainly lives up to its reputation of being the friendliest !