

## **The 2018 Morgan Combined Drivers Dinner and Prize Giving 24<sup>th</sup> November 2018**

### **An account of events by our intrepid reporter Bob Bull.**

With the racing over, and the closed season looming it remained only for the Annual Dining Experience, and Prize Giving to be endured before everybody could relax for a few months. Well, probably not everyone, no doubt certain officials will be beavering away for some time organising next season's calendar.

The dinner was held at the Stratford Manor Hotel not far from the Bard's hometown, and a very nice venue it was, even nicer when you are transported there by Peter and Vanessa Cole, as was your scribe, such a charming couple. As usual the drivers met to discuss how to make the class structure even more arcane, and one waits with trepidation to hear how many more letters have been added to the list, making the reporter's task ever more complicated.

Much praise is due to Michele Bailey who organised the dinner on behalf of both the Aero Challenge and the Speed Mog Series as the two disciplines were combining their resources in a joint celebration of their respective season's successes. With many of the drivers competing in both series it was a happy marriage that added much to the occasion.

The meal was consumed amidst much hilarity as the wine flowed ever more freely, and by the attractions of a carefully crafted 'Odd-one-Out;' competition which, sadly failed to garner many correct answers, being much too sophisticated for the average Morgan driver it would seem. (Note to self; must take a look at the Sun Brain Teasers before next year). The number of gentlemen leaving the tables at frequent intervals for brief visits elsewhere suggested that wine did indeed flow very freely. A form of class segregation was evident as the 'Moggers' and 'Drivers' sat apart from each other, although a few individuals carried a form of dual membership, that was demonstrated during the next part of proceedings as they stepped up during both presentations.

Once the repast had been digested the highlight of the evening, Prize Presentation, got underway, Katy Thompson doing the honours for the Aero bit and Simon Baines demonstrating excellent Master of Ceremonies skills for the SM fraternity, with Mark Evans doing his best to look important despite the 'assistance' of a small boy. To break up the monotony each set of awards was alternated between Katy and Simon, while group presenting of Class awards also helped cut down on the on the time spent away from the bar. I will not attempt to bore you all with a detailed 'who-won-what' suffice to say the it was nice to see the outgoing Champion of the last two years, Elliott Paterson, travelling down from the frozen North to hand over the Peter Collins Tray to Champion elect, Tim Parsons. Dominic House relinquished the Tony Morgan-Tipp Trophy to Phil Thomas, a well

deserved winner of the 'Mr Nice Guy' award. (I would have voted for you Phil), and Katy got a bunch of flowers. Small return for all of her efforts over the year, but no doubt the intention was well meant.

Amongst the many and varied attendees one noted the presence of the new VSCC President, International racing star, John Emberson, and a number of luminaries presumably of MMC fame, who graced the top table alongside Chairman Ahlers. A number of well known faces were missing from the crowd including Mary Lindsay, problems at home, Simon and Kate Orebi Gann, maybe they could not afford the ticket price, and Peter Rafter, although he is probably still on his way there.

As the evening dragged in to night the guest slowly melted away either to the bar or to bed, but I heard that the 'factory boys' were still there at 3.30 am. Whether they were too inebriated to move or because there was still more wine to be drunk, we will probably never know.

Personally I 'melted' away at 12.30am sneaking out a thermos flask I found on the table. I hope it was not meant for someone else.

Congratulations to Michele Bailey for organising affairs, Katy, Simon, and Peter Sargeant for their presentation skills, and to all of those who carried off silverware, or assorted goodies. Mark Evans is also to be commended for managing to smile throughout, and for his sang froid in coping with a precocious junior assistant. Really Mrs Thompson he should have been in bed hours ago!

The Caption Competition.

This item was not intended to be a feature of the evening just a bit of fun for anyone who fancied their wit, so I was unprepared to judge the entries when called upon to do so. Unfortunately this meant endeavouring to interpret some very squiggly writing while trying to decide on a winner without having studied the answers beforehand.. Under stress much of the humour passed me by, and various allusions missed completely, I must therefore apologise to those whose amusing and incisive captions were really quite excellent. The prize (had there been a prize) caption was wrongly attributed to Tim Parson where as a close perusal of paperwork revealed that it was Simon Sherry who emerged as winner. Congratulations, and thanks to Keith for not objecting to being the subject of the exercise.

As always any complaints should be made in triplicate by November 25<sup>th</sup> 2018 to the EU General Medical and Clerical council of Botswana.