

**George Beatty Sterne:  
The Life, Racing Career, and  
Dedication to the Morgan Sports Car**

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## Acknowledgments

*Marv Coulthard*

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I wish to thank Morgan Owners Group Northwest (MOGNW) club members Mike Powley, Al Allinson, Dave Colis and Ted Carew-Gibson for their contributions. I also thank Mike Currie, Vern Dale-Johnson, Phil Dauphinee, Vince Howlett, Tom Johnston, Ted Laturmus, Dr. Ernie and Lynn Ledgerwood, Dave Ogilvy, and Gerry Wilburn. Special thanks to Mike Proctor for sharing his extensive personal archives and to Tom Rossiter and Nicole Strickland of the Vancouver Sun and Alan Daniels of the Vancouver Province. And, of course, thanks to the Sports Car Club of British Columbia (SCCBC).

A collection of video tapes and slides of sports car racing, including Morgan #4 racing at Westwood during the 1960s and 1970s, is available for purchase from Mike Gee.

## Forward

*Steve Hutchens, Morgan Owners Group Northwest Historian*

Marv Coulthard has assembled a masterpiece. He set out to tell the story of G. B. Sterne's long history with Morgan and of his racing success with the marque and accomplished these tasks very well. I believe, however, that Marv has accomplished more than he set out to do when he started collecting stories and photos of GB.

As I worked on transitioning the vast content Marv assembled from website format to book form, I realized that the story of George Beatty Sterne is the story of a man cut from different cloth. GB, as most people referred to him, was an icon of the sports car racing world, but he was also a man who pursued his passion with uncommon intensity and focus. Together with his wife Lydia, they formed a team that gives the story added depth.

GB's story is one of racing in another era, when cars were driven to the track, raced, then driven home. His story will be of interest not only to the Morgan community of the Pacific Northwest but also to enthusiasts everywhere who enjoy reading about rugged individualists who make a mark on the world. I hope readers will enjoy these stories and see the man behind them and the woman who supported him. GB was a giant of his time, and we thank Marv Coulthard for bringing all of this material together.



# Chapter 1

## George Beatty Sterne: A Life of Racing Stories

George Beatty Sterne was a well-known icon of sports car history in the Pacific Northwest. Everyone called him "GB."

My first recollection of GB is watching him race at Westwood back in the early 1960s. Westwood was the Sports Car Club of British Columbia's famous race track of 1.8 miles, up and down and around the hillside in North Coquitlam.

I owned a Triumph TR3 at the time and soon learned that the Morgan GB was driving could run rings around the Triumph. "Damn," I said, "I don't get it. It has the same engine." Now in later life, I have driven both cars and well understand the reasons why.

I remember GB at one of the Sunday races when there was a "Le Mans" start. The flag was dropped and the drivers all ran across the track to their cars parked diagonally at the side of the track in their poll positions. GB was in the 3rd or 4th row. As the other drivers leaped in their cars, started their engines and left in a cloud of smoke, GB was still standing there, deliberately searching the pockets of his racing suit for his keys. He was the last to pull out of the pits, but he finished in first place. Such is the racing career of GB Sterne.

For the past several years I have been collecting stories of George Beatty Sterne and this book tells his story. When I asked around of friends and members of our Morgan club for stories of GB, one of my early replies was, "There are more G. B. Sterne stories than spokes on all four wheels of a Morgan."

He was right, and these stories are both entertaining and tell us a lot about George Beatty Sterne. With so many stories, let's start our GB saga by delving back through some old newspaper clippings and race programs.



From a Vancouver Newspaper dated July 1959: *Over-exuberant driver misses the hairpin in his Morgan sports car Sunday in one of seven races held at the opening day of the Sports Car Club of B.C.'s Westwood Racing circuit. More than 18,000 spectators turned out to see the racing at the new \$120,000 track in Coquitlam.*



First drivers' meeting at Westwood, July 1959

### 1959



Westwood 1959

### 1962

**MORGAN SPORTS CARS**

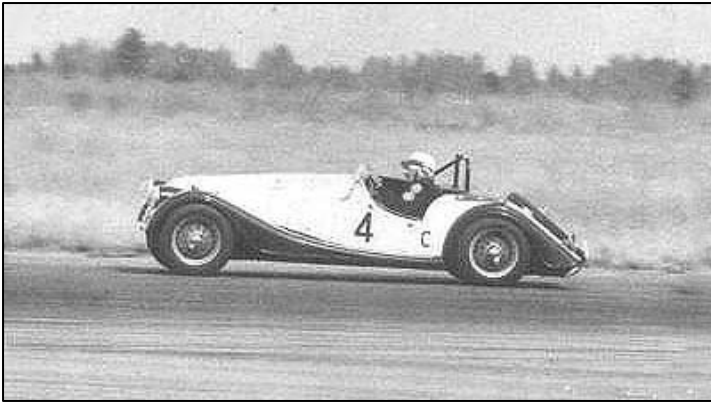
- PIRELLI TIRES • WHEEL BALANCING • RACE TUNING • ENGINE RE-BUILDING  
REASONABLE RATES  
HERBERT JOHNSON HELMETS • NEW AND USED SPORTS CARS  
NEW — 120 H.P. MORGAN SUPER SPORTS - Class C Production

**STERNE'S GARAGE**  
Morgan Distributor for Western Canada and Washington U.S.A.  
10305 PATRICIA BAY HWY., • SYDNEY, B. C. • GR 5-2233

Sterne's Garage advertisement 1962

# 1963

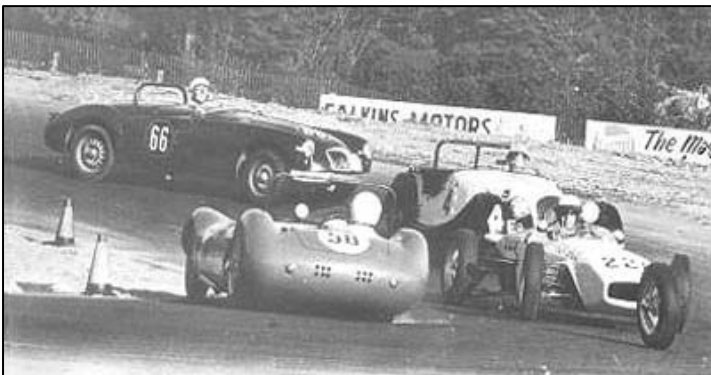
Four photos from Western Wheel Magazine, Sep. 1963



*Consistent D Production winner each year, George Sterne is after the C Production championship for 1963 in the Morgan. Fine driving determination and with his wife as pit manager, George and the Morgan are hard to beat.*



*Lydia Lays down the Law: Mrs. George Sterne of the Victoria Motor Sport Club explains certain rules concerning novice requirements. Husband George listens intently.*



*Ron Moscrop loses a wheel in the Hairpin at Westwood*

- (4) G. B. Sterne, Sidney - Morgan SS
- (58) Ron Moscrop, Vancouver - Elva
- (66) R. Harness, Spokane - MGA
- (220) Chuck Blaylock, N. Vancouver - Lotus 18



Fall 1963: GB wins ICSCC Championship Class D Production for 1963



Follow the Leader - George Sterne leads a Corvette and a Porsche



◀ From a Westwood race day program in 1963

### Ron Moscrop Takes Top Car Club Honour

The Sports Car Club of B.C. Tuesday named its top drivers for 1963. Ron Moscrop was named sportsman of the year and received the Pat Piggot trophy.

Over-all production class winner was Deter Moennich; over-all modified winner, George Sterne.

Winners by class:

**Production Class:** (GT) John Razelle; (C) George Sterne; (D) Chuck McKaig; (E) Charles Barratt; (F) Deter Moennich; (G) Dave Ogilvy; (H) Dave Marshall and (I) Rudy Von Hertzberg

**Modified Class:** (C) John Razelle; (D) Gordie McMillan; (E) George Sterne; (F) Mike Proctor; (G) Ken Finnigan

**Formula Junior Class:** (1) Eric Faulks; (2) J. Stanley Brown; (3) Peter Ray

**Compact Class:** (1) Norman Cousins; (2) Pete Heater; (3) Mike Scriabin

**Ladies Class:** Karen Hall

## 1964

### Sterne Shares Bows In Twilight Race

Vancouver Sun  
September 1964

Veteran George Sterne, the man who has never missed a race at Westwood, and newcomer Dave Ogilvy pooled their driving talents Saturday to take the fourth annual Twilight Endurance race at Westwood. The Vancouver pair, driving a Morgan, covered 173 laps and 311.4 miles during the grueling five hour race, held during a continual downpour. They averaged 64 miles per hour.

Sterne and Ogilvy equally shared the driving chores and beat 26 other entries, eight of which failed to finish. The winners jockeyed their way into the lead after three hours when early leader, Jerry Bruihl of Portland, called it quits after his Lotus-Osca developed engine trouble.

Moments later, Sterne fled past Corvette driver Jim Reese of Seattle who found his bigger vehicle harder to handle on the slippery track.

Reese, who never threatened after loosing his brief lead, settled for second place, five laps off the pace. John Lye and Joe Cunningham finished third in their TR Special. The race was the last of the 1964 season at Westwood.

### The Rain No Pain to Them

The Vancouver Province  
September 1964

Veteran racer George Sterne, the man who has never missed a race at Westwood, and newcomer Dave Ogilvy parlayed their driving talent to take the fourth annual five hour endurance event at Westwood on Saturday. The pair racked up 173 miles in the twilight race that was held un-

der a continual downpour.

The two Vancouver drivers, who equally shared five hours of driving, topped the field of 26 entries, eight of which failed to finish. The Sterne-Ogilvy entry jockeyed into their lead at the three hour mark after early leader Jerry Bruihl of Portland called it quits when his Lotus developed engine problems. Bruihl's exit put the Morgan team in second place but only for a short while, as Sterne sailed past Corvette driver Jim Reese who found his big American mount difficult to handle on the slippery track.

In winning, Sterne and Ogilvy travelled 311.4 miles, averaging 64 mph. Jim Reese failed to threaten after losing his brief lead and settled for second place, five laps off the pace. John Lye and Joe Cunningham of Nanaimo nailed down third spot with their TR Special, one lap behind Reese. Dan McMahan and Bob Rinde, both of Portland and driving an Alfa, finished fourth.

[See Dave Ogilvy's memories of GB and of this race on page 14.]



◀ Race driver G. B. Sterne, who leads the conference standings in two divisions, pilots his Morgan SS in the Sun Fall Trophy races Sunday at Westwood

▼ GB on the Track at Westwood





Stirling Moss visits with Miss Westwood and GB in 1965



GB is in the second row beside the Corvette

## 1968

A page from the program at the Edmonton Speedway in the summer of 1968



In the pits at Westwood: GB is in pit #4 on the left (see white box). In pit #1 is Jim Murray's Plus 4 SS, car #10.



#4 George ('GB') Sterne—Burnaby, B.C.



GB is in the lower left, almost out of the photo.

The team of "GB" and Lydia Sterne are by no means strangers on the Edmonton scene. Now residents of B.C., George was raised and educated here in Edmonton. He served three years with the Edmonton Police Department until the Second World War broke out. It was then "GB" found his place in the Royal Canadian Navy.

After the war, the Sternes moved to the west coast and took up residence in Burnaby. In 1952 George purchased his first sports car, an MG TD, and started his career in the art of sports car driving. Going full force into the racing sport, he was granted the Western Canadian Distributorship for the Morgan Motor Company of England. By 1957 he was the proud driver of a Morgan himself.

Since that time, "GB" has bagged 247 assorted racing trophies and gained some of the most coveted titles in the sport. Lydia, his wife, has handled the wrenches for the operation while George does the driving, quite a dedicated team you must agree!

At the present time, this 55 year old track veteran is the Novice License Director for the International Conference of Sports Car Clubs, and wife Lydia does the record keeping for the Novice Programme.

Our hats are off to you George and Lydia, and thanks for taking the time to come up and see Edmonton and the new racing complex here at Speedway Park.

## 1972

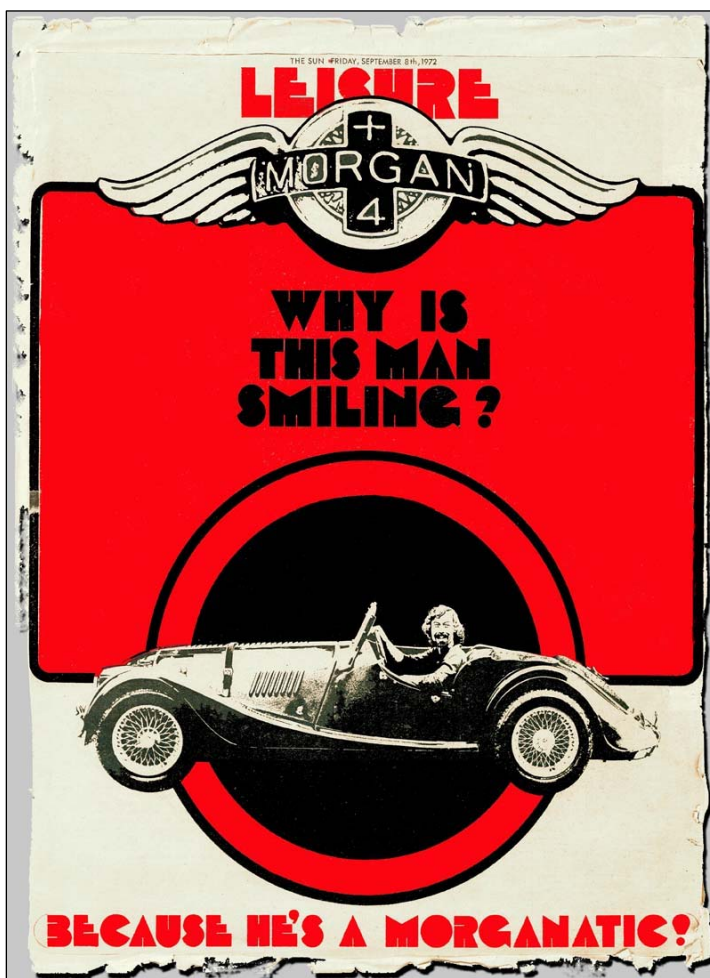
### Dream Car Comes to Anxious Tom

*The Fabulous Morgan Motor Car*

By Tom Rossiter

Photos by Patrick Demwell

Vancouver Sun, September 8th, 1972



I always wanted a Morgan of my very own. Trouble was, people keep asking outrageous prices for them. There are about 50 Morgans on the Lower Mainland of B.C., and not many more in the rest of the country.

They have not been imported into this country since 1970. Many people want one. Few are willing to sell. It's a simple question of supply and demand. If you're selling a Morgan, you don't bother paying for a classified ad listing

all kinds of special equipment. Two words are all you need: "Morgan. Call 000-0000." The ad I saw was unusually comprehensive: "1966 Morgan call 000-0000."

One of the advantages (maybe the only one) of being a reporter is that you see the classifieds in The Sun's three-star edition before almost anybody else in the city. I called 000-0000. I was at the address five minutes later.

When you are considering buying a Morgan you do not kick the tires, and you do not ask how the engine is. You are polite. Always remember, if you appear, well, unacceptable, unworthy of the sacred trust of owning a Morgan, your friend might decide to sell it to somebody else.

You do not bargain. Both you and he know he will get his price. Chances are he is asking more than he paid for it, or about the same if the car has been allowed to deteriorate.

Any information he volunteers about the condition of the car is a bonus. You greet almost with relief the disclosure that the oil hasn't been changed in recent memory. "Thank God he told me," you think. You ask him, politely, if he will please take you for a test drive.

It has been said that it is not the springs that flea as a Morgan is driven. The frame bends. Morgan springs are said to be so stiff you carry pieces of rubber for passengers to insert between their teeth before setting off.

The seats don't help. They are plywood. No springs. No foam rubber. There are inner tubes inside leather cushions, and you inflate to suit.

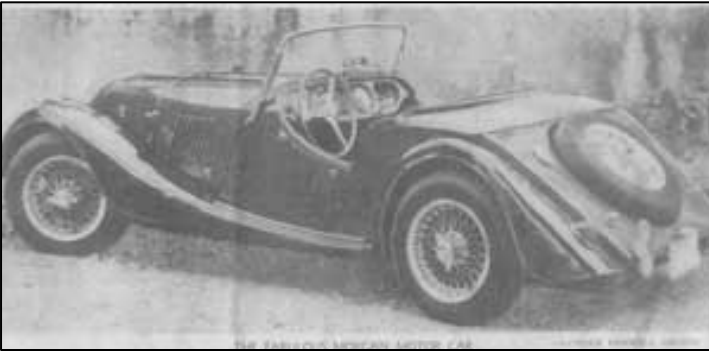
From the cockpit, all you see is a great long bonnet, well ventilated with louvers. Below and to the sides are the sweeping fenders. You can lean out over the cutaway doors, past the running board and touch the ground. You could even touch the road with your elbows, although it is recommended that you park the Morgan first.

It is somewhat disconcerting at first to see the doors flexing against their hinges and banging on the body as you drive. The car rattles everywhere. You either like this sort of throb or you don't. For me, it was love at first sight.

My new Morgan is a 1966 Plus 4 model, powered by a TR4 engine. With only about 1800 pounds to carry, the 100 horsepower up front make the car a brisk performer. EEG-393 was raced for four years. George Sterne won three consecutive production car championships at the wheel, and its next owner won another.

The paint is chipped now, and we just finished straightening out the rear fenders. The wooden dashboard needs refinishing. The seatback won't fit right and the bumpers are neatly curled into a chrome variation on a Mr. Peter of the Waldorf creation. The speedometer doesn't meter. The driver's inner tube leaks. The oil filler cap fell off last night.

But a fellow in a brand-new TR6 asked me how much I wanted for it, and I finally get respect from Porsche drivers. I've always wanted a Ferrari of my very own ... and a chance to visit a real champion!



Dave Collis drink coffee and talk about Morgan cars. Outside the sun beats down and hundreds of cars and trucks whine by and honk at each other, but inside is a different world. You can open the big doors at each end of the garage and a refreshing breeze blows through. "Natural air-conditioning," George calls it.

"Morgan still makes them like they used to," the sales brochure says, and it's true. The outboard fender wings sweep gracefully down to running boards below the cut-away doors, the headlamps bug out up front, and the spare tire is mounted on the vertical slab petrol tank.

In an automotive age of plastic radiator grilles, "genuine vinyl" upholstery, polyethylene wood-grain appliqué and a thousand other compromises between craftsmanship and the giant corporation's profit-and-loss statement, the Morgan symbolizes a human craving that transcends the automobile itself and demands something better than the mass-production ethic.

Deep within many of us, there is something soul satisfying in the fact that the Morgan car has not changed much since 1936, when the late H. F. S. Morgan began building - "constructing" he would have said - a line of four-wheeled sports cars alongside his redoubtable sporting three-wheelers.

The decision to build four-wheel cars was greeted by British motorsport enthusiasts of the period as something of a bloodless revolution in the Morgan factory, an unfortunate pandering to the popular will, as it were. Morgan himself, assured the press that three wheeled production would continue. Since then, however, time has stood still at the Morgan Motor Company in Malvern Link, Worcestershire.

At any given time there will be about 95 cars in various stages of assembly in the Morgan works - and only 90 men building them. This is certainly not Detroit.

"It takes three months to build a (Morgan) car," Bob Sterne says. "You should see it. All the fancy bending that takes place to fit the hinges. They fold the metal over wire and hammer by hand to finish the edges.

"The grille pieces come from 12-foot pieces of brass. The guy cuts it to fit the opening, then they bend it by hand. Then he stands there looking at it, holding it up and comparing it to the other pieces for that grille. Then they take it all off and have it chromed."

The grille, of course, has been a matter of some controversy among Morganatics ever since Morgan substituted the current curved nose for the old stand-up radiator shell and flared the headlamps into the wings in 1954. Peter Morgan has said he prefers the older style.

"The big problem is the headlamps," Peter (P. H. G. Morgan) told a *Road and Track* correspondent. "Our supplier discontinued making individually mounted lamps, so we were forced to the present design."

The *Road and Track* writer was like an Islamic trekking to Mecca, and finding there Allah himself, and asking the

Fingers gloved in fireproof Nomex gauntlets squeeze the MGB's steering wheel, then relax, then drum on the rim. Out of the cockpit of a Datsun 1600 roadster tumbles the butt of a last-minute cigarette. An itchy leadfoot in an aging Alfa 2600 Spider watches his revolution counter needle jump as he blips the gas pedal. The bright Sunday sun over Westwood race track is dulled by blue exhaust fumes.

It is three minutes to race time for production sport cars. It seems like three hours. The cars are lined up the staging lane, grouped by class. So the car you must beat is the one beside you. The drivers are strapped like Kamikaze pilots. They polish mirrors again, fiddle with their helmets.

Bullfighters call this the most difficult time of all. Now is when the "waters of nervousness" come. You are buckled into a racing car, covered mouth-to-toes in Nomex and from the shoulders up in a cylindrical space-type Bell Star helmet, you cannot relieve yourself of the waters of nervousness.

Race drivers tend to be young men. Only in youth do you retain the split-second reflexes. Only a young man still possessed with dreams of glory would place his budding life between a few inches of rubber on the road and the mountain pines that ring Westwood's asphalt.

The countdown to race time continues. There is a strange silence. All the cars are switched off to save gasoline. Too much gas in the tank is too heavy to be competitive. Too little is worse.

Heat shimmers off the track, blurring the trees beyond and reflecting the mountains in a mirage on the pavement. The sun glares off the smooth, polished flanks of the racers and throws stiletto shafts of light off the streamlined chrome mirrors. The drivers pull on their helmets. Marie Leathley unfurls the checkered flag at the start-finish line.

But wait. Where is George Sterne?

Friday afternoon is a quiet time at Sterne Motors, a small shop just east of Boundary Road, on the Grandview Highway, Burnaby. A small sign announces Morgan Cars, and there is a genuine Morgan Plus 8 with only 8,000 miles on it in the showroom window.

Lunchtime extends past 2 p.m. at Sterne's. In the cool gloom, old George Sterne, his son Bob, and mechanic



Revered One whether the rumor about God being dead was true.

George and Bob Sterne once made the pilgrimage to Malvern Link. You would think that anything Peter Morgan said during their visit came down from the works office engraved in Arabic letters on granite.

"I was in England in '68," George says. "That was the first time I ever saw anybody from the factory. They never sent any reps. We did business by correspondence and three or four long-distance phone calls in all those years."

The Morgan is a car you simply cannot walk into a showroom and buy. Something that is available for neither love nor money is the stuff of legends. People still tell outrageous stories about the car.

Bob Sterne shakes his head when he tells you that a man once plunked the full price of a Morgan down on Morgan Junior's desk and Peter told him to take his money and come back in 13 months and his car would be ready.

"We tried to get them to commit themselves to 23 cars a year," George says. "The largest number I ever received in any year was 20."

Since January, 1970, there have been none.

You can buy a brand new Morgan that looks like a 1936 Morgan anywhere in the world except here or the United States. Canada virtually copied the U.S. auto safety equipment regulations of 1968 and applied them two years later to cars built here or imported. Prices on used Morgans have risen to a form of highway robbery - before you even get to the highway.

Cortina-engined 4/4s, the continuation of a long British tradition of low-powered but light weight, precise-handling sports cars, are worth something less than \$3,000 as automobiles. Excellent examples are commanding more than \$4,000 these days, an outrageous price.

George Sterne says the Plus 8 is not for sale. But an offer of \$7,500 might change his mind. All that money for a crude, unrefined (but fast) car, different from the humble 4/4 only in that under its centre-hinged butterfly bonnet lurks a 3.5 litre Rover V8 engine. The Morganatic must think he is buying more than a machine.

You buy a Morgan to recapture something you probably never knew. Something you feel in your bones the first time you shift the gears in an MG. The MG is not enough, though, because they changed the car to catch the whims of fashion. You buy a Morgan to feel how it must have been for the Bentley Boys or Count Johnny Lurani or the great Tazio Nuvolari to blast around Brooklands or twist through the mountain switchbacks of the Mille Miglia, sitting high with Richtofen leather helmets and goggles in their hairy vintage racers.

They peered over their long centre-hinged bonnets past outboard fenders, arms flapping to turn big 17-inch steering wheels. First you saw the standup radiator, then the spare tire as the Bentley 4 1/2 S and Hispanos blatted by.

Morgans bring it all back. And it is fitting that the Mor-

gan man should be George Sterne, a racer of the old school, a grizzled white-haired man who competed on motorcycles in his youth. Sterne won the last of several Pacific Northwest motorcycle championships in 1931.

He's still at it - between four wheels now - blasting the youngsters off the track in his Morgan Plus 8, winner of an even dozen Pacific Northwest Sports Car Conference championships since 1954. Sterne turned 60 last April. When Sterne started racing his MG TD in 1954, you drove to the track, taped over the headlamps, removed the bumpers and muffler and painted on some numbers, and presto ... instant racer.

Maybe you fiddled with the carburetors for that little competitive edge, but that sort of thing was frowned upon. After three or four hours of fun, you bundled your wife and junior into the TD and drove home.

No more. To win now, you need a specially-prepared and modified car. A winning Spitfire will cost close to \$3,000 from the showroom, and about \$15,000 more for goodies to make it a winner. You need a trailer to bring it to the track, because it would be impractical and illegal on the road. And, of course, a tow car.

So you glance around Sterne Motors for the car that has dominated West Coast production sports car racing in these parts since Sterne imported it in 1969. Where is this stark, stripped, modified Morgan Plus 8 that has left the best Westwood has to offer in its exhaust fumes as predictably as death, taxes, and the rising cost of crankshaft bearings?

"This is the race car," Sterne the Elder says. With a kid's cookie-jar theft grin he points to a black and white Morgan on the garage hoist.

The car has a windshield, a heater, street tires, a stock muffler. Fair enough, you say. Except that racing cars have none of these. And - can this be? - a radio. A vision occurs: World Champion Jackie Stewart approaches the hairpin Masta Kink at Spa, Belgium, and blows the corner, the race, and the Belgium Grand Prix trying to tune in the Brussels FM rock station. An announcement for all you guys who've been trying to beat G. B. Sterne all these years: He races with a radio in his car. Mind you, he takes off the aerial for the race.

Today, when racing cars are so speed tuned that they stall at anything below 3,000 RPM (or 60 miles per hour in fourth gear), George Sterne drives his racing car to work everyday. He drives it to the races, too. And, if the race is out of town, he screws on a trailer hitch and pulls a trailer with his racing tires on it.

"They flipped in Edmonton when they saw me. They weren't going to let me into the track. They said, "Where's your racing car?" I said, "Back there in the trailer."

"This is the way racing used to be years ago. Not many guys still do it. That other thing (special track cars, trailers, tow cars) is too expensive. Not many guys can keep up with it," George says.

Bob Sterne adds: "A Datsun 240Z from Pete Brock costs \$20,000. Then it'll cost you \$1,200 a weekend for an engine rebuild. Then if your unlucky enough to blow an engine, that's \$3,500. Nobody can keep up with that."

George pointed to the Plus 8. "Believe it or not that car never had the rocker covers off, let alone the heads, for three years on the track. It got valves, clutch, bearings and rings this spring," he said, "and, more than halfway through the racing season, I haven't done anything since. Haven't even had a spark plug out. It's silly, but that's true.

When it's worn out you have to bore it. Fine. But that costs money - boring, new pistons and so on. I refuse to spend that money just to get a few more bloody horse-power," he says.

"The Morgan has 36,200 miles on it, and half of that's flat out on the racetrack. That car's been to Mexico . . . Christ, I've been all over the country in it," George says. "I decided to prove to the buying public how good a Morgan was - just the way the company built it," he says. "It's not built as a race car. It's an ordinary road car."

It was around 1956 that George was looking for something to replace his 1952 MG TD. "I needed some more room but I needed a sports car. My son Bob got so big (he's now 240 pounds on a six-foot-four-inch frame) that we couldn't stuff him in any longer."

By 1956 Morris Garages had discarded outboard fenders and standup radiators and were about to introduce the streamlined MGA. Sterne was miffed at such outright flouting of tradition. When he saw a Morgan in an English sports car magazine, he ordered one.

"I thought if I liked an open sports car like the TD but with more space, others probably would, too," George explains. Sterne wrote to the Morgan Motor Company to suggest starting a west coast dealership, but Morgan replied that he should direct his inquiries to the Canadian Morgan dealer in Windsor, Ontario.

"They said they were pleased that I was interested in their cars, but what good would it be to have an agency here when they didn't have any cars to supply? It took me nine months of correspondence to become a dealer. I finally wrote a very patriotic letter saying Canada was part of the Commonwealth and they were neglecting British subjects on the West Coast. Then they agreed. They told me not to expect more than 3 or 4 cars a year."

George snickers. "Heh, heh! I got nine cars in the first 18 months. It was never any trouble to sell all the Morgans I could get out of the company. The reason I race the Morgan is because it is fun and it is advertising. The kind of people who buy the Morgan are the people who go out to the tracks. Half the people I know who own Morgans never drive fast but they like to think they can race anybody in any car and win."

The long Sterne Motors lunch hour is over, and Bob and George Sterne direct their attention to the black-and-white

Plus 8. They are preparing the car for a Conference of Sports Car Clubs meet at Westwood. All they do is bleed the brake lines. And, oh yes, they also polish the car. Then they turn their attention to customers' cars.

~~~~~  
"Where is old George, old G. B. Sterne?" they are asking. All the entries are lined up for the production sports car race. Bob Sterne is sitting in his Morgan 4/4, and George's Plus 8 rival, Al Allinson, gets a good luck kiss from his wife, Elsie. The three young Allinsons are decked out in orange and black shirts, to match their father's race car.

George is sitting in his old Cortina station wagon. He slowly zips on his Nomex overalls. He is very calm, and converses quietly with Lydia, who is Mrs. Sterne. Lydia is a good person to talk to before a race. She raced the TD and they say she was very competitive in her own Morgan Super Sport a few years back.

She wears matching glasses and earrings with a checkered flag pattern, and a checkered baseball cap with a Morgan crest on the front. Several stop watches hang from her neck, over her nylon racing jacket. Like the rest of the Westwood racing fraternity, she calls her husband G. B. When Lydia announces that she is off to the timer's stand, it is a good sign that G. B. will soon climb into his car.

This particular Sunday, George had qualified fifth fastest of all the cars at the track. The only cars with faster qualifying times were the exotic sports-racing prototypes - the Brabhams and Chevrons and other pure racers - and a couple of Grand Prix-style open wheeled racers. He beat most of the pure racers in practice. Old George beat them in his Morgan, a 1936 design with a front suspension patented in 1910.

Still, he is angry with his lap of 1.19:8. "Somebody spilled oil on the track," he says, by way of apology.

Lydia helps George into the Morgan, buckles him in, and pats him on the shoulder. The Plus 8 burbles off to join the competition.

Because the Plus 8's of Sterne and Allinson are the most powerful motorcars on the track, they start at the back of the grid, along with a hapless Mustang. Halfway through the race, Allinson had passed a pack of MGs and Datsuns and closed the gap between himself and Sterne to about three seconds. It was as close as he came.

Sterne had been motoring around Westwood in almost leisurely fashion, lapping everybody but Allinson at least twice. Number four would scream down the straight. Then, with only a subtle change in the exhaust note, George shifts down to third under the overhead bridge preparing for the Carousel, a sweeping, banked turn. Then, touch the brakes. Down into second. It is all so smooth, like an automatic transmission. No unseemly grinding, no loud blating from too many revs. Then he accelerates through the Carousel.

Somebody standing at the wire mesh fence watches, like

a ballet enthusiast watching Nureyev lifting Dame Margot Fonteyn at the climax of a spectacular pas de deux. He tells the sweet young thing beside him that if you fly over the course in a helicopter the curves and straights will spell out S-T-E-R-N-E. "Really?" she asks.

Sterne steps up the pace when he sees Allinson's orange car in his rear-view mirror behind him in the straight. He steps up the pace. He lops about two seconds off his lap times. Allinson closes the gap to about 10 seconds, but runs out of time.

Ho hum! Sterne wins again.

Lydia shares G.B.'s victory lap, the checkered flag flapping in her hands and setting off her glasses, earrings, and cap. Later, she drinks beer while the rest of her family enjoy vodka screwdrivers while the sun sets. Al Allinson's Morgan is aboard its trailer, while George's car has its bumpers, muffler and windshield mounted for the drive home.

Allinson is a good sport about it all. "Why does he beat me? I guess it's the radio that makes him faster, huh? Or maybe it's just 14 more years' experience."

[MC: Thanks to Graham Bailey for finding the rest of this article for me. Cheers Graham.]



Sterne's business card circa 1972

## 1974

### VETERAN DRIVER COLLECTS HIS

Special to Westwood  
July 1974 Westwood

Westwood is fifteen years old this July, but it is a youngster compared to one of the drivers. George Beatty Sterne, known to one and all as "G.B.," is now 62 years old. At the first race of this year he won his 170th first place trophy.

"G.B." started sports car racing at age 42, attending his first race in October, 1954, in a MG TD. He joined the Sports Car Club of British Columbia in 1955, and raced at

Abbotsford and other circuits in his MG until the fall of 1956. At this time he became Western Canada Importer for Morgan Sports Cars, and in 1957 began racing a Morgan Four-Seater. In 1958, "G.B." won his first race, and also his first racing Championship, with the International Conference of Sports Car Clubs.

The first I.C.S.C.C. race was held in 1956, and since then "G.B." has only missed one race. In July 1959, Westwood Racing Circuit was opened, and "G.B." was there. Since that time, he has only missed three regular race weekends at Westwood (an average of about seven weekends a year), and has competed in ten of the fourteen endurance events. Also in 1959, "G.B." won his way onto the Racing Drivers Committee of the S.C.C.B.C., and has been active there ever since.

"G.B." is now driving his sixth Morgan sports car, and since 1956 has raced no other make. To date, he has won a total of 389 trophies, 170 of which are first; 26 S.C.C.B.C. Championships, 8 of which were overalls; 17 I.C.S.C.C. Championships; and 2 C.A.S.C. B.C. Region Championships, 1 of which was an overall. Included in his 170 race wins was a first overall in the 1964 Westwood Enduro, with co-driver Dave Ogilvy. In addition, "G.B." and co-driver Richard Evans won the Index of Performance Award in the 1968 Enduro.

Believing in strictly production racing, "G.B." has always driven his car to the track. The most distant race he has attended in this manner was the C.A.S.C. National Championships at Mosport, Ontario, in 1972. Both "G.B." and his son Robert qualified locally for the trip, and drove nearly 3,000 miles to the runoffs, towing a small trailer of racing tires behind their cars.

"G.B.'s" immediate family includes his wife, Lydia, a son, Robert and his wife Margaret; and another son William, his wife Fay, and their three sons. Bob started racing a Morgan in 1970, and works with his father in the Morgan dealership. Bill, on the other hand, is a Lieutenant-Colonel in the Air Force, preferring his speed a little higher off the ground. Both Lydia and Margaret are very keen about racing, and double as the pit crew. "G.B." and Bob have co-driven in two endurance races in Morgans, of course.

In addition to his driving efforts, "G.B." has been a hard worker. He was a charter member of the Victoria Motor Sports Club, and was president twice. He was also a charter member of the I.C.S.C.C., was Vice-President for five years and Novice License Director for three. He has also served as both V.M.S.C. and S.C.C.B.C. representative to the I.C.S.C.C. In addition, in 1969, he was nominee for the "Sportsman of the Year Award" presented by the Columbian Newspaper.

"G.B." Sterne and his son Bob are both driving the same car this year, a white and black Morgan 4/4, "G.B." under his familiar number 4, and his son as number 14.



G. B. Sterne—Morgan

### **Move over Stirling, George has you beaten - Getting his start at 42, he's won 170 auto races**

The Vancouver Sun  
By Alan Daniels  
Saturday, July 13, 1974

George B. Sterne, who is 62 and a racing driver, wishes to make a minor amendment to the Guinness Book of World Records.

The book lists former world champion Stirling Moss as the most successful racing car driver ever, the winner of 167 races, including 16 Grand Prix titles.\* "I have won 170 races, as of April 7 this year," says Sterne. "Of course, Stirling Moss is famous and I am nobody, but first place is first place and I have the trophies to prove it."

*[\* MC's note: A memo from Gerry Wilburn corrects the above statement. Says Wilburn, "I noticed one glaring error in the story by Alan Daniels. Sir Stirling Moss NEVER was World Champion. He was the most successful driver NOT TO HAVE BEEN World Champion. He also holds the record for having won the most F1 races by a non-champion. That record was eclipsed for a short time by Nigel Mansel, but he went on to win a championship and gave the record back to Sir Stirling."]*

Indeed he has. Trophies are packed three deep into cabinets flanking his living room fireplace and they overflow to the offices of Sterne Motors on Grandview Highway, a shiny accompaniment to the usual bare breasted calendar girls so beloved by the motor trade.

"I have 389 trophies in all," Sterne says. "I was hoping to break 400 this year, but I don't think I'm going to make it.

"I drive what is essentially a showroom production line car, but I compete in the modified class, which means I reel against drivers who have spent maybe \$5,000 or more hotting up their cars, and the only place I should ever finish is dead last.

"But, you know, the hotter you make a car, the more brittle it becomes. Some of those guys go past me like I'm tied to a stump, but 15 minutes after the start they can be sitting on the sideline with something or other broken down.

"If you don't finish a race and get the checkered flag, you don't win anything in this business."

Sterne was 41 when he became a racing driver - the age when most drivers have retired. He raced a 4 seater Morgan.

"My boy was just a lad and we had to have a four-seater to get us about," he says. "I used to pack the family and a picnic basket and drive to the track, enter the race, and, hopefully, drive home again.

"It was always a bit of a joke on Vancouver Island where we lived. The Morgan four-seater was not a handsome car. People used to say I drove the fastest pick-up truck on the island."

Success, however - and there was plenty of that - did not spoil G. B. Sterne. Two years ago he qualified for the national finals at Mosport.

"Every other driver put their car on a trailer to get it to Mosport," he says. "I hitched a trailer (full of spare parts) and drove there. When we got to Mosport, we unhooked the trailer and drove the race, hooked the trailer back up again and drove home - via California.

"We recon we did 8,000 miles on that trip - including what I drove in the race."

Sterne's motor racing debut was less than auspicious.

"It was at a B.C. Sports Car Club meeting at Abbotsford Airport in 1954," he recalls, "and it was rather a sad experience. I rolled my car, an old MG TD, on to its side.

"We figured later that my tires were too soft for racing. Nobody had told me you have to put more air in your tires.

"We didn't have racing tires in those days. Today everybody is trained. We have a drivers' school and only drivers who reach a certain proficiency are allowed to race. In the old days we didn't even have roll bars.

"Anyway, my car wasn't badly damaged, but I had taken off the windshield to run the race and when the car went on its side it damaged the bracket and it was impossible to put the windshield back in.

"It was pouring with rain and I had to drive from Abbotsford to Vancouver that night to find a place where it could be fixed at least good enough to get us home. Without the windshield on we couldn't put the roof up. My wife was with me and she got soaked. I was surprised after that, that I ever got her near a race track again. Actually, she is as keen as I am."

The Sternes helped found the International Conference

of Sports Car Clubs which sanctions regular races in Oregon, Washington, and British Columbia.

On Sunday at the Westwood circuit, Port Coquitlam, Sterne and his familiar Morgan will join 200 other drivers competing in six races. The day will revive special memories. Sterne was on the starting line when Westwood first opened 15 years ago this month.

"I have been around the Westwood track probably twice as many times as anyone else in North America," he says. "People say I could go round it blindfolded, and they're probably right."

Isn't motor racing supposed to be dangerous?

G. B. Sterne smiles indulgently. "They tell me that at some tracks in Europe, protesters carry signs saying 'Motor racing is dangerous.' Certainly, to a point, that is true. So is mountain climbing, but you don't hear a public hue and cry when somebody falls off a mountain. Racing drivers know what they are doing, Their cars are as mechanically perfect as they can make them and usually they're all going in the same direction."

"A lot of drivers feel the most dangerous part is towing their cars to the track.

"The International Conference has sanctioned hundreds of races and hundreds of thousands of miles of high speed driving and the number of serious accidents has been negligible. The percentages are so low you can practically forget it."

### **Westwood Gets Sterne Reminder The Vancouver Province, October 7, 1974**

COQUITIAM—The years go by and Burnaby's G. B. Sterne keeps right on winning international conference driving championships.

Sterne, who has driven a Morgan at Westwood circuit since the 1.8 mile circuit opened in 1959, Sunday won his 18th conference class title. He finished fifth in his class but it was good enough to clinch the E Improved Production title. Entering Sunday's 10th and final ICSCC meet of the season, Sterne led his class by 12 points.

The other B.C. driver who clinched a class title Sunday was Ken Coupland of Trail. Coupland is preparing his Chevron for next weekend's season-ending Province 500 Endurance test, but drove a Toyota Sunday and still finished high enough to take C Sports Racing.

A bid by Portland's Don Smethers to win three class titles failed when he first blew the engine in his Porsche during practice, borrowed another Porsche from Portland's Gord Barron but could not overtake Coupland in sports racing. Smethers did win E Production by one point over Burnaby's Al Allinson but that was the only title he earned.

Ron Householder of Portland led from start to finish and had the days fastest lap of 1:06.6 in winning the featured Formula event.

That left it to a driver with the unlikely name of Hubart Kuckelkorn of Kelowna to narrowly win the \$500, 15-lap Formula V special race over Bob Boyd of Camby, Oregon.

## **1975**

### **Auto Biography**

By Nicole Strickland

Pat Wallace, Editor

Friday, September 12, 1975

If I stand long enough staring at the cars in George Sterne's lot, perhaps Elvis Presley will come along and buy me a used one. Failing that, maybe we'll strike oil on our property and then I'll purchase one of those lovely, funky sports cars.

Actually, we have discovered oil. It's on the driveway and it comes from the leak in my Volkswagen's crank-case . . . and I'm still no closer to owning a Morgan.

Morgans - for many years the object of my covetous admiration - are George Sterne's business, or more accurately they were, until federal regulations prohibited the importing of the snazzy little roadsters into North America.

I am not the only person in town with a mania for Morgans. George Sterne has two of his own - one for racing, one for street driving. His son Bob owns one, too, as do about 75 other lower mainlanders.

All of them, including the Sternes, are driving older model cars - no Morgan made after January 1, 1971 may be import into Canada. The reason: the cars don't comply with federal regulations. "Don't call them safety regulations," growls Sterne.

Morgans don't have padded head rests, padded sun visors or padded dash boards. They lack door buzzers, five m.p.h. crash bumpers, side marker lights and reflectors. Not that England's Morgan Motor Company hasn't tried to meet our standards. A small family business in operation since 1910, the company takes a full three months to construct one car. Every model is hand assembled and hand painted. There is no assembly line production.

Building one car per day, the company is two to three years behind on orders from all over the world. Because of government regulations, there are no orders from Canada and the United States.

"At first Morgan tried to adhere to the regulations," says Sterne, who formerly sold the cars and now repairs the few remaining in town, "but their first regulation car took three years to build and in that period the regulations changed half-a-dozen times.

"It's pretty doubtful if the cars will ever be sold in North America again. It all depends so much on the regulations and if the regulations keep changing there isn't a hope."

The great charm of the cars stems from their styling -

while the engine is mechanically modern, the design of the car's frame is 90 years old.

Says Sterne: "The car is different - at the moment, there's nothing like it anywhere else in the world."

Sterne's involvement with the cars arose because "I wanted one for myself, so I decided to open a dealership." His Sterne Motors shop on Burnaby's Grandview highway opened 11 years ago.

Now a 63-year-old grandfather, Sterne still races his 1970 4/4 Morgan with the 1600cc Cortina engine. He guesses he has "more than 395 trophies" won racing Morgans over the past 18 years.

Wife Lydia, a former racer herself who now does the books at the shop, corrects the man she calls Super Sport: "You have 397 trophies, dear."

Sterne rubs his short grey brush cut and defers to his wife's more-up-to-date count.

Of Morgans, he says: "The original roadsters built 50 years ago had no windshield or tops. The car was open and the driver wore goggles."

And even today, no one would give the Morgan a five-star rating for comfort.

"In this day and age," says Sterne, rising to the defence of the car we both dote on, "90 per cent of our driving is done on good roads. Morgans don't provide a cushion soft ride, but compare favourably with most sports cars.

"The Morgan's big thing is that it's completely different, and can out-stop and out-start almost anything on the road."

Used machines, says Sterne, appreciate in value "at a fantastic rate - one bought for \$5,500 a few years ago recently sold for \$8,500."

The new cars start at \$5,500 for the Cortina engine models and over \$9,500 for, the two-seater V8.

Says Sterne, "Up to 1967, there were four Morgan importers in North America: Los Angeles, New York, Windsor, and me. New York folded. L.A. still dabbles with Morgans but doesn't stock a great many parts. The place in Windsor has practically gone out of any business related to Morgans. I seem to be the only one left who still stocks parts or attempts to get them.

"Even at that, we have to order parts a year in advance, and ship them all over North America."

Sterne permits me a minute or two in the driver's seat of his two-seater racer. "This is the last car Customs allowed into the country, far as I know" he says.

I smell the leather seats. Commandingly yank the wood-rimmed steering wheel. Adjust the rear view mirror. Play with the gearshift knob.

Regardless, I'll go on dreaming and get that crankcase leak repaired after all.

## CHAPTER 2

### Friends Share Stories



#### MOGNW friends visit the Sternes, September 1988

Several Morgan Owners Group Northwest members gather at the Sterne residence in Deep Bay, near Qualicum Beach, B.C., in late September 1988. The event was a lunch stop on a club tour of Vancouver Island. GB and Lydia are in front of the three rows of Morgans with their white over black Plus 8. Left to right:

**Front Row** - Bill Hayter, Woody Thomson, Roland & Pat Gilbert, Stu Rulka, and Bert McCabe

**Centre Row** - Mike & Rosemarie Powley, Jean Tinnea, Glen & Louise Jewett, Bob & Janis Hauge, and Dick & Nancy Dice

**Back Row** - Ted Carew-Gibson, Dennis Morrison, Dave & Thea Wellington and Thor Frohn-Neilsen

**Now for some  
personal stories about GB  
from the memories  
of friends and colleagues**

**Al Allinson**

I was never able to beat GB until one Sunday at Westwood. I came out of the hairpin hot on GB's tail up through the esses. He began to pull over in front of me as

usual, expecting me to back off. I didn't this time and we hooked. I hooked his rear fender with the front bumper, and literally removed it from his car. He backed off and let me pass and we both finished the race with me in first place and GB a very close second. When GB came to me later in the pits, I expected the worst but he shook my hand and said, "Al, now you're learning how to race!"

Then there's the story of a Plus 8 in 1969. The factory changed a car that GB sold to a California resident from right to left hand drive. The Californian flew up to Van-

cover with plates under his arm and drove the yellow Plus 8 home. He drove it around LA for some time until *Road and Track* spotted it. They asked if they could do a road test. Unfortunately, a US customs person read the road test and the vehicle was impounded. The last I heard of it the Plus 8 was in a US warehouse impound.

### **Dave Collis**

Dave worked at Sterne Motors in Burnaby for many year and relates the story of an argument between GB and his wife Lydia, who looked after the books and correspondence for the business. The air was blue in the shop for some time and Dave, Bob and everyone else went outside to the lot and/or the parts shed until the air was clear.

Dave also tells me of the time, mentioned in another article, when GB pulled the turn signal trick on him. He says GB used this one and the stab the brake lights with the left foot trick many times on the track.

### **Mike Currie**

One of my favourite stories about these two (GB and Lydia) is how Denny Howlett and I were marshalling on the outside of Turn 3 during the 7-hour Enduro at Westwood. It was a cold, miserable day and early evening. In fact, it was down-right ugly, if I recall correctly.

During a lull in the proceedings (all the cars were on the other side of the circuit, I suppose) we heard a crashing and swearing in the bushes. We could see a flashlight shining on the foliage and we learned some interesting phraseology as Lydia Sterne came stomping through the underbrush carrying a flashlight and a couple of thermos. One thermos contained hot soup, the other coffee very liberally laced with RUM (or is it the other way around?). Anyway, she'd decided that us folks on the outside of three, who had no way of getting through the infield and up to the paddock, really needed some sustenance. So, she'd loaded up and walked in the dark around the perimeter of the track (through the underbrush and stumps) all the way from the pits to Turn 3 to bring us a hot drink. What a woman!

When Stirling Moss visited Vancouver he was introduced to George and Lydia. They compared trophy rooms. In those days, Lydia used to keep only the current trophies in the living room cabinet. George had won so many that they were stored elsewhere. After some calculation, it was determined that George had more trophies than Stirling.

I recall we ran into GB and Lydia on the way to Monterey for the first Can-Am in '66. We caught up to them just before the Redwood Forests in Northern California. George was driving his current Morgan with their little trailer attached to the back. Driving along sedately at highway speeds they came to the windy roads through the Red-

woods and George promptly sped up and drove through there like a bat out of hell. When the highway resumed beyond the Forest, George slowed down to a more normal speed. Fun to watch someone drift a Morgan with a trailer on the back.

### **Vern Dale-Johnson**

I used to work corner 3 at Westwood. One club race I watched GB come into the corner three abreast - can't remember who was on the outside and inside, seems to me an Alfa Guiletta Sprint and a Mini might be appropriate. GB got about half way through the corner, still three abreast and obviously he was not pleased... A quick flick of the wrists right and left knocked both into spins - one to the outside and one right at us! GB powered through and disappeared up the hill.

### **Phil Dauphinee**

Although I did not know GB personally, I did see him race many times at Westwood, visit his Morgan dealership numerous times to dream and was in the Simon Fraser Sports Car Club at the same time his son Bob was member. The president of the SFU club arranged through GB to purchase one of the first Plus 8's when he started his first job upon his graduation. This had been kept a secret except on a need to know basis.

Most of us thought he would buy a Datsun 240Z as his university car was a Datsun Fairlady and his favourite item of apparel was a Datsun logoed jacket. We were all blown away when he showed up at a gymkhana in a SFU parking lot with a new yellow body black-fendered Plus 8. I am pretty sure that was the first time I saw Bob Sterne's green 4/4 and there is a good chance GB and Lydia Sterne were there too.

That was just about the peak of my Morgan experiences which started when I had two grade twelve teachers who had Morgans at Argyle Secondary in North Vancouver. Mr. Haffenden, an English teacher, had a new black Plus 4 four-seater. He actually named one of his sons Morgan and went on to own almost a dozen Morgans. Mr. Ludgate was perhaps the second owner of a green 4/4 with Brookland's screens and Union Jacks on the side cowl.

### **Dave Ogilvy**

The car that GB and I drove in the 1964 Semperit Five Hour Endurance Race was the Super Sport Model. GB drove the car to Westwood, removed the muffler, windshield and other extraneous items and qualified the car.

We ran the event mostly in the rain, added two quarts of oil and of course gasoline on a total of, I believe, four pit stops. I do remember GB started and finished the race and



we were penalized for two of his off road excursions. Even with the penalty laps we came out victorious. Following the race GB re-installed the muffler, windscreen etc. and drove the car home. He was living in Burnaby at the time but none the less quite an advertisement for the car. Because money was paid for that event there were no trophies. GB and I won the event and first prize was \$60.00. Big Deal! GB said since he supplied the car the money split would be as follows; \$30 to me, \$30 to him and \$30 for the car. I said no problem. GB took his \$60 and had a trophy made for first place. He was a trophy nut you know.

I looked very hard at buying a Morgan for the 1965 season and I was torn between returning to production car racing or buying a true race car. I talked to Bob McLean about the dilemma and he influenced my decision a great deal. The result was my purchase of the Cooper. GB never had much use for me after that.

I have another somewhat amusing story about GB which occurred at the CASC year end runoff races at Mosport. Again GB and Lydia had driven the Super Sport from Vancouver to Toronto towing a trailer for their gear and spare bits. GB used a very old crash helmet which looked like something Sterling Moss would have used in his earlier days. The BC region of CASC allowed this excuse for safety to go by, but when GB showed up at Tech Inspection at Mosport they shut him down saying he would have to up-grade his helmet if he wished to race. The poop hit the fan big time and it was GB against the entire CASC army. I was the BC rep. for CASC and I was asked to see if I could solve the problem. GB agreed reluctantly to use a new but borrowed helmet and so I went with him to one of the safety equipment suppliers to get an approved helmet. Here comes the humourous part. The sales person on seeing GB's old helmet laughed out loud and said, "I can see the problem here" and he promptly threw GB's old helmet into a 45 gallon garbage can. GB went ballistic and I thought CASC would wind up with a law suit, however, he calmed down, retrieved his old helmet, ran the event with a borrowed helmet and again drove the car home to Vancouver. GB had a conference production prepared car and was competing against the equivalent of SCCA prepared cars so he did not finish well but he did go back racing at Westwood with the old helmet. GB was to say the least a stubborn man with well thought out ideas that always benefitted Morgan Cars where possible, and who can blame him for that. I liked the man but he drove me nuts sometimes.

### **Ted Laturnus**

One of the reasons I've owned Morgans over the years is because Sterne's shop in Burnaby was on Beresford Street. I used to pass it twice a day to and from high school. The first time I saw one of the cars, it was a green

Plus 4, I just about wet my pants. I vowed to get one then and there and after a few years, I did. I also saw Sterne kicking ass out at Westwood multi times in the sixties and early seventies.

### **Dr. and Mrs. Ernie Ledgerwood**

We bought George's Plus Four Super Sport at the end of the 1965 season and ran it for two years in under 2litre configuration under ICSCC #99. We spent a lot of time with George and Lydia as Morgan owner and driver, as well as in our various official capacities they were both tireless in their work for Westwood, the Club and Conference and in their support for Morgan owners and drivers.

George remained a patient of Ernie's for some time after we quit racing and we have stayed in touch since.

We have many happy memories of both the Sternes but a couple really stand out. Ernie was on the front row of the grid of a production race one race day, with GB driving the middle car. GB had come out from the false grid smoking a cigarette, which he was finishing in a leisurely way. Jim McRae was backing through the grid, checking each car and driver in turn, pointing his furred flag at each driver and getting a high sign in return. As he got to the front, GB leaned overboard to butt his cigarette out on the track beside the car. Quick as a wink, Jim flagged the field away, leaving GB sitting like a rock in a stream with cars streaming past on either side.

We both have very happy memories of Lydia approaching in the pits as the flag fell at the end of the day with her famous detergent bottle and handful of tiny containers, dispensing gimlets left and right.

Together with Bob and Hilda Randall, GB and Lydia were the centre of away race social life and many a novice was rescued when Lydia produced just the thing he needed from a corner of the Morgan they had driven to the track.

As you can see, it is impossible to remember GB without Lydia or Lydia without GB. They have been an example of teamwork for us all.

*[Ernie Ledgerwood was a member of SCCBC 1964-1970, Vice-President and in charge of the Westwood medical facility; a member of RDC; an ICSCC Medical Officer and Race Steward. Lynn Ledgerwood was a member SCCBC Ladies' Division and President 1968-1970.]*

### **Gerry Wilburn**

Gerry tells his version of the same story about the first Plus 8 in the United States: Most of Al's story matches the history of R7081 (engine 41400045A and gearbox 4607), owned for many years by Jim Belardi. It was brought into the U.S.A. through Canada by Scott McMillian. It was

from Sterne (19 June 1969) and Scott, I believe, carried up the plates. He told the SMOG nazis that it had a Rover engine and they looked that up on the lists and said that Rovers were approved.

Number 7081 was (and is) yellow with black wings, and was reputedly the first Plus 8 in the USA. It was the subject of the R&T Road Test in 1969. Scott sold the car to Jim Belardi about 1970 and Jim has had it ever since.

Many years later, Jim was visited by a sympathetic Customs Inspector (he owned an Austin Healy). After looking

at the car he said that he would get back to Jim. He called a few days later and said that he had good news and bad news. The bad news was that the car was illegal as hell. The good news was that he did not have to do anything about it. It seems that around 1972 someone else on the West Coast smuggled in several Morgans and one of them was involved in a fatal accident. Customs was looking for the rest of those cars.

I think that this was the story that Al Allinson heard.

# Chapter 3

## The Sterne Garages

From 1946 to 1976 GB owned and operated three garages. Earlier the business was called Sterne's Garage and later it became Sterne Motors.

### Sterne's Garage 1946-1960



Sterne's Garage opened for business in 1946 on the old Pat Bay Highway on the Saanich Peninsula near Sidney, British Columbia. The address on the business licence is East Saanich Road, R.M.D. Next door to the garage was a cottage that belonged to GB's parents. When the highway bypassed the location about 1960, the address was changed to 10612 McDonald Park Road, the current address.

Note the manual gas (petrol) pumps in these photos. A 10 gallon glass reservoir was up top and marked off in gallons. Gasoline was pumped manually from underground

tanks with a long lever on the side of the pump. Gravity was used to dispensed into the vehicle by a hose and nozzle with a pistol grip similar to the ones used to this day.

The oil rack can be seen in the second photo. Oil was served from glass bottles with a screw-on metal spout. They were refilled locally at the station from bulk 45 gallon oil drums.

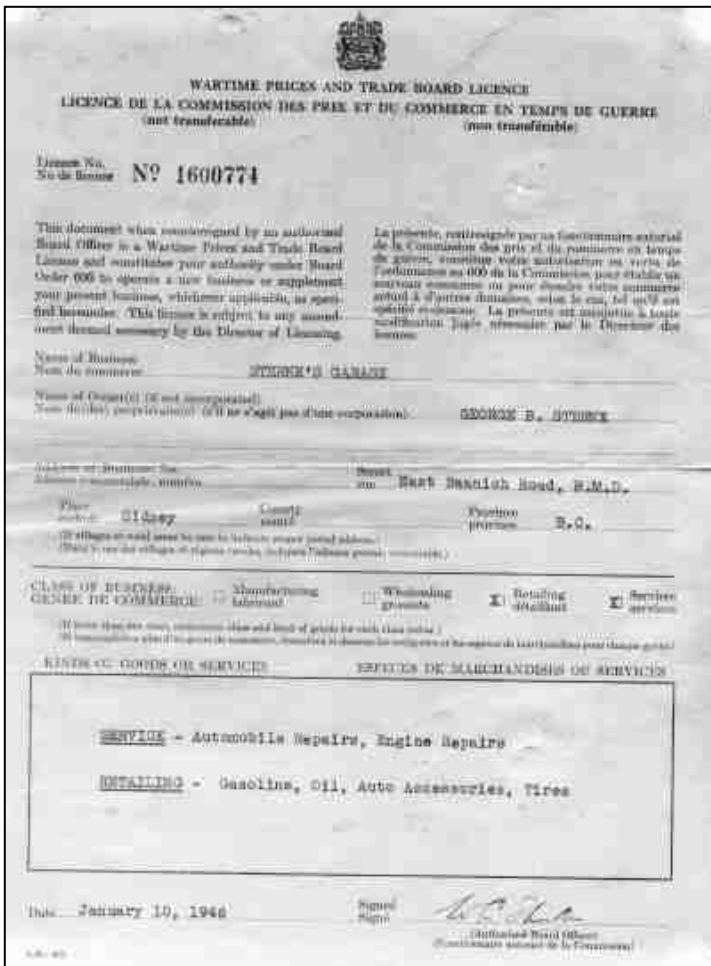
In the colour photo below, taken on June 19th, 2004, a group of MOGNW members visited this historic location and parked their cars in the parking lot. The building is still there and still in use, currently by the Coyote Canvas Company. Some of the Morgans were sold and first serviced from this building. This was probably the most Morgans the building had ever seen.



Sterne's Garage Proprietor 1950

Bill Sterne recalls a memory of his dad in the early days of the shop on the Pat Bay Highway in Sidney. "Dad would be under a Morgan of some sort, often his own, getting it prepared for the next weekend's races at Westwood. The hose across the pumps would give the ever familiar 'ding

ding' and on the first one he would usually ignore it. When it happened the second time he would grudgingly mumble a few words to himself and slide out from under the car to attend to the pumps. What he really disliked were the damn Chevron giveaways of those days, the plates or drinking glasses, because they had nothing to do with cars, let alone Morgans."



Sterne's original business licence



Sterne's first Morgan - 1956

This photo was taken in front of the first Sterne's Garage early in 1957 and is the first car GB brought in, a 1936 Plus 4 2-Seater, #3504. It was sold to and raced by Alex James. There is another Morgan visible in the garage. The building was originally built as a blacksmith shop and had huge fir beams, hand-hewn with an adze, that were supported underneath with steel rods and turnbuckles. It had no posts, quite a feat for a wooden building that

large. The building is still there, although the part that used to be the office is now incorporated in the house, attached, at the left.



Sterne's Garage Coaster

## Sterne's Garage 1960-1963

I recently heard a story about GB's second location on Highway 17, the new Pat Bay Highway, but do not know of its authenticity. The story says that when the Provincial Government built the new Pat Bay Highway in 1958-59 to service the new BC Ferries terminals in Swartz Bay, GB kicked up such a fuss with the Department of Highways about the loss of business that he was sold the new property at a pretty good price. He and the bank built the new building at 10305 Patricia Bay Highway which became a popular fueling station as it was the last one before the ferries.



The official opening was on Dec. 7th, 1960. The facility included new modern electric fuel pumps and a showroom for his Morgans. As you can see in the photo, it was a gala event with the radio station CJVI in attendance. The Ga-

rage was later painted white with blue trim to match the Chevron colours. It was a familiar sight to locals and tourists alike for many years.

**Proprietor Of New Garage Is Exponent of Road Racing in the West: Top Driver Of Year Is Newest Award For Sidney Race Driver**

*Saanich Peninsula and Gulf Island Review*  
Wednesday, December 7th, 1960

Saturday will mark an important event in the life of Sterne's Garage, North Saanich. On Saturday morning the public new premises on the Patricia Bay Highway will be formally opened.

After trading on the old highway for 14 years, George B. Sterne will be established in the last service station this side of Tsawwassen Beach. Move follows rerouting of the old highway, which left the old unit in a dead traffic artery. The new station is on the new highway, north of Sandown race track, where the new road forks away from the old. The building is approached from either highway.

The new station is not only a new landmark on the highway, it is also among the most distinctive stations on Vancouver Island and has no counterpart anywhere on the North American continent. Built of western lumber, it is finished in natural wood and represents a marked departure from the formalized architecture of the majority of stations. In addition to its service facilities, the new structure also boasts accommodation upstairs for the proprietors, George and Lydia Sterne, and a pleasing showroom for Morgan cars, of which the garage is the distributor for Western Canada and Washington.

**ERECTED BY GARDNER**

Sterne's Garage has been a familiar point on the old highway out to Swartz Bay for many years. It was erected by G. A. Gardner on the property of his father, the late J. S. Gardner, prior to the Second World War. Materials used in its construction were in part brought from Piers Island, where a Doukhobor prison farm was maintained some three decades ago.

Mr. Gardner operated the station until the outbreak of war. For a time it remained open until the proprietor was engaged in the welding of the steel water line linking Patricia Bay Airport with the Elk Lake water system. Mr. Gardner was engaged on a full-time basis on that project, employing his own portable equipment. The task took up most of the hours in the day and the garage was closed when there was neither staff available to tend it nor sales for gasoline or service to justify it.

**NAVAL SERVICE**

In the meantime, George Sterne, native of Ontario and a resident of Edmonton since the age of four, had been serv-

ing in the naval reserve. For nearly six years he had been chief engineer in submarine chasers serving in the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans. Came 1945 and his farewell to war, when the prairie man decided to transfer his affection to the coast. Having seen Vancouver Island, he was determined to reside here.

On January 2, 1946, the old service station became Sterne's Garage. GB Sterne and his wife and family moved into Sidney, later bringing his parents, Mr. and Mrs. W. H. Sterne to reside near them. They have never looked beyond the peninsula community.

Development of his business accompanied development of a new interest on the part of the station operator. In 1952 George Sterne acquired a birthday present to himself. It was a two-seater British sports car. For a time he contented himself with driving around the province in an MG, model TD.

**TO ROAD CIRCUITS**

In 1954, now thoroughly familiar with the famous sports car, George entered the field of sports car racing. Starting racing at an age when many drivers are relinquishing their interest, he went from success to success. Many of the world's famous racing drivers have abandoned circuits with the close of their thirties. George proved them wrong. With his MG he gained experience and a few awards. In 1956 his family was growing and his two-seater was inadequate. Rather than abandon his sports car to the past and acquire a larger model, George looked around for a car which would serve two purposes, family transportation and racing. His eye settled on the Morgan, with its four seats.

Negotiations for a distributorship went through months, but finally Sterne's Garage became the western centre for Morgans and his recreation became part of his own operation. Although the only driver in the western circuits to use a four-seater car, the Sidney driver never looked back. In his first car, a 1957 model, he took 27 plaques or trophies. This year he replaced the car with a 1960 model and has already clipped off another dozen awards.

**REGULAR PERFORMER**

The Sterne car is seen on Westwood near Port Moody whenever the circuit is open. It is also a regular performer at Seattle, Spokane and in Oregon. For the benefit of technically minded, it is a standard production car, equipped with a Standard TR3 2-litre, 4-cyl. o.h.v. engine, modified by Morgan. Under the terms of the western racing conference, it may race only as manufactured while in the "production" class. This clause prohibits extensive and expensive modifications which might drive out all but the wealthier drivers.

In 1958 George Sterne was international champion in Class D, which is the class in which he habitually races. In 1959 he was placed second, being overhauled by Jack

Murray, of Seattle, also in a Morgan. In 1959 he was also top man in the Sports Car Club of British Columbia in his class and second irrespective of class.

Continuing his successes, George he was adjudged best driver of the year at Pacific Raceways in Seattle this year. Sports car racing is not to be confused with stock car racing, explains the proponent of the former. Sports cars are ordinary road models, tuned for the occasion, but fully equipped. They are driven on circuits far removed from tracks. The circuit is usually a section of paved road resembling an ordinary roadway. The appeal of road racing is far removed from that of track racing, both from the driver's vantage point and as a spectator sport. Road racing is an imported sport and has become among the top sports attractions in many European countries.

### SYNONYMOUS

Among western exponents of the sport, Sterne and Morgan are synonymous. On Saturday the appeal of road racing will be evident when the new garage is opened. Names will be drawn during the day whereby winners will be taken around in a Morgan by a prominent western driver.

The new structure was constructed by Andreas Boas, Sidney contractor, and stands as a sentinel on the new highway, a permanent tribute to the designer and builder. Various prizes will be offered on Saturday from 11AM until 8PM, and coffee and doughnuts will be given away all day. Corsages and candy are also offered.

In mid-1963 GB must have got fed up with all the travels on the ferry to go to the racing, his reason for Morgans, so he sold the station and moved his home and business to Burnaby.

### A Personal Story About This Building

In 1963-64 I was dating a girl who lived in Sidney. I used to come over to visit with her every other weekend and she came to Vancouver on the opposite weekends. One night we were invited to a big party with many of her friends. At the piano entertaining was an absolutely brilliant player. I asked Bev his name. "David Foster, his dad owns the Chevron station on the Highway." "Oh, you mean the one that used to be Sterne's?" "Yep, that's the one. I had never heard of David Foster at that time but soon would. - MC.



GB and Lydia in their brand new showroom with three Morgan Plus 4s for sale (#4399, white; #4402, red; and #4428, a 4-Seater, grey)



#5330 at Sterne's Garage

## Sterne Motors 1963-1980s



GB's next location was on the Grandview Highway near Boudry Road at 3712 Clydesdale in Burnaby, B.C. The exact date of this series of pictures is not confirmed, but I would guess it at 1964 to early 1965.

In the photos above there are as many as six Morgans out front for sale. Bob Sterne notes there is one of each model in the photos: a Plus 4 Plus, a 4/4 2-Seater, a Plus 4 Drophead Coupe, a Plus 4 2-Seater, a Plus 4 4-Seater, and a Plus 4 Super Sport. As far as he knows, this was the only

time they ever managed to have one of each either in stock or in for repairs.

In photos 1, 3 and 4 the now-famous Plus 4 Super Sport #5330 is on the far right sporting GB's racing number "4."

Two of the rare Plus 4 Plus models (only 26 were made) were shipped to Sterne Motors in 1964, A5558 (black) and A5592 (red). A5592 is on the far left in all of the photos.

If you think you recognize your car here we have the resources to confirm it.

# CHAPTER 4 GB's Trophies

With 401 trophies ultimately in his collection,  
GB was a "trophy hound."



**1959**



**1965**

From the Vancouver Province



CANADIAN RACING CHAMP



Bob McLean, left, congratulated fellow BC Sports Car Club member George Sterne, winner of two of the three top cups in annual club presentations, last Friday night. Sterne, a sports car dealer in Burnaby, is one of few men these days able to combine business with pleasure.

Dave Mabell photo



## **Burnaby Racing Driver Scores Double Triumph**

### ***Wins 2 of 3 Cups in BC Club Presentations***

By Gene Diachuk

A 53 year old Burnaby business man, G. B. Sterne, has added six more racing trophies to his collection. Sterne, of 3785 Edinburgh, now has 191 trophies won over the past nine and a half years, in pursuit of his hobby and business.

Last Friday night George Sterne was presented with two large trophies for production and sport racing championship along with four smaller ones, at the annual presentation night of the BC Sports Car Club.

Sterne once worked installing windmills on prairie farms, then spent some 18 years on Vancouver Island operating a service station and now operates Sterne Motors at 3712 Clydesdale (Grandview and Boundary), a business he established a year and a half ago.

But it's when the shop closes that Sterne comes into his own with sports car racing. He started his racing career with an MG he raced for a year and a half. Sterne then bought his first Morgan, a four-seater, which he raced for three years. Now three Morgans later, Sterne and his car both are well known to most drivers and spectators throughout the North West Circuit.

G. B. Sterne has been one of the strongest competitors at Westwood, never missing a race since Westwood opened in July 1959. This year he has been appointed the North-West Novice License Director of 1966, putting an added responsibility on his back.

Young Robert Sterne is also following his father's footsteps by forming the first sports car club at SFU, acting as its president. The club recently held its first meet at the Brentwood Shopping Centre with 81 entries to its credit.

Other Burnaby winners in the annual trophy presentations were Denis Phillips, 3890 Sunset, winning in F class in production, and Larry Curtis, 6910 Boundary, taking second in G class. In the overall production championship, G. B. Sterne placed first followed by Denis Phillips. Placing first in improved production were John Hall, 4622 Hastings, in E class, and Norm Matovich, 4227 Union, in G class.

John Hall also placed third in the overall improved production championship. In sports racing, G. B. Sterne placed first in E class, followed by Mrs. Karen Hall and Wayne Sievers, 550 North Edmonds, in F class.

The complete results of B.C.S.C.C trophy presentations:

#### PRODUCTION

A class: Cliff Lindberg (1st) Henry Porter (2nd)

B class: Stan Holinaty

C class: John Randall

D class: **G.B. Sterne** (1st), John Fawell (2nd), Bill Taylor (3rd)

E class: Chas. McKaigh, Gio. Coleta, Bob Axford

F class: Denis Phillips, Chas. Barrett, Tony Campbell

G class: Horst Katins, Larry Curtis

H class: Bill Damm; Dave Ogilvy, Pat McCormick

I class: Mickey McGuire, Rudy Von Hertzberg, Pat McCormick

#### PRODUCTION CHAMPIONSHIP OVERALL

**G. B. Sterne**, Dennis Phillips, Bill Damm

#### IMPROVED PRODUCTION

A class: Cliff Lindbergh

B class: Stan Holinaty

C class: John Randall

D class: John Fawell, Charles McKaig

E class: John Hall, Tony Campbell, Laurie Cater

F class: Gordon McMillan, Gerry Barrett, Charles Barrett

G class: Norm Matovich, Pat McCormick, Peter Heaster

#### IMPROVED PRODUCTION

#### CHAMPIONSHIP OVERALL

Gordon McMillan, John Randall and Gerry Barrett; John Hall and Charles Barrett

#### SPORTS RACING

C class: Cliff Lindbergh, Jim Rattenbury

D class: Ernie Ledgerwood, Chas. McKaig, Bob Constabaris

E class: **G. B. Sterne**, Karen Hall, Ted Flanders

F class: John Randall, Wayne Sievers, Bob McLean

G class: Geoff Hortin, Ron Moscrop Frank Matovich

#### SPORTS RACING CHAMPIONSHIP

**G. B. Sterne**, Karen Hall, John Randall

#### FORMULA JUNIOR I

Dave Ogilvy, Sid Fowids

#### FORMULA V

Chas. McKaig, Walt Zbinden

#### SEDANS

Class I: Mickey McGuire, Al Kline, Rudy Vin Hertzberg

Class II: Manfred Mertsch, Geo. Wagstaff

Class III: Bob McLean, Joe Robinson, Milt Goodman

#### TOP LADY DRIVER

Karen Hall (B) (won three years in a row)

#### TOP MGA DRIVER

Bill Damm

# 1968

## MOTORSPORT

### Endurance - that's his forte

By Brian Lewis, Province Motorsport Writer

Westwood veteran George Sterne and Morgan sports cars go together like plugs and points<sup>8</sup> in fact, they go together so well that the 56-year-old grandfather has won 153 trophies in 11 years of racing. And Sterne, the oldest competitor driving regularly at the 1.8-mile circuit, has a chance to add another trophy to his collection when he runs in The Daily Province 10 Hours of Endurance race at Westwood on Oct. 19.

The Endurance is the longest in Canada and third longest in North America, with only the 24-hour Daytona and the 12-hour Sebring being longer.

This will be the first time Sterne has run a 10-hour race, but the 40-odd younger drivers expected on the starting grid at 11 a.m. had better not write him off.

George has made his mark on auto racing in the northwest, winning 10 International Conference titles, the last one being the E Production class this year.

He's got an excellent chance to take the E Improved class when he races in the final Conference race next Sunday in Kent, going into the race with a 10-point lead.

In 1964, Sterne won the Endurance when it was a five-hour race, with co-driver Dave Ogilvy of New Westminster. This year Sterne has recruited another Westwood favourite, Bill Evans of Vancouver, to co-drive with him over the 400-mile marathon. Evans was rookie-of-the-year in 1967.

Because of the length of this year's Endurance, Sterne had made a few changes in his preparation. He's got George Hollinger of Vancouver, an excellent mechanic, as his pit captain, and fired his wife, captain in the other endurance.

"Well, she'll be doing a bit of everything," says Sterne. "But she's especially good at keeping track of my position during the race. I remember her scoring in one Endurance and she told me my exact position right through the race, which isn't easy over five hours."

Sterne's strategy in striving for the winner's share of the \$1,230 and The Daily Province Endurance Trophy is simple. "Just run a steady race," he says. "Of course you have to have a good reliable car to start with, but what I plan to do is pick a pace just down from my very best speed. You can't go flat out in a race like this: You'd never finish!"

The race will finish at 9 p.m., but night driving doesn't bother Sterne. "If you've been around that track as much as I have, you know where the street is," he says.

It's true too. Sterne has raced so many laps around Westwood that he could probably find his way round the track in the dark just as easily as he does in daylight.

## G.B. Sterne Gains ICSCC Overall title

By Bill Sendelback

Portland, Ore., Oct. 31, 1968

G.B. Sterne, the gray haired elder statesman of northwest road racing and Vancouver, B.C., Morgan dealer, has won the 1968 points title and taken two 1968 class victories in International Conference of Sports Car Clubs, according to final standings released today.

Sterne won the 1968 overall title by collecting 69 points, nine points ahead of his nearest competitor, Eric Greenwell, and romped home in his Morgan with the season championships in E production and E improved production (ICSCC's version of SCCA production classes). It



was a repeat win for Sterne in E Production, and he finished second in E Production in 1967.

Only one other Conference driver collected championships in two classes. Tommy Hamilton drove his Shelby

GT350 to victory in B Improved Production and A Sports/Racing. But a half dozen ICSCC drivers will take home trophies in two classes during the ICSCC annual meeting, Nov. 16, in Seattle.



**Lydia and G. B. Sterne with the ICSCC Novice of the Year Award named in G. B.'s honour**

# 1969



1969  
 John Randall - 1st overall  
 Charlie Godecke - 2nd overall  
 G. B. Sterne - 3rd overall



**SCCBC Awards Banquet, Coach House Inn - 1969**

Left to right: L. D. "Lynn" Ledgerwood, President, Skip Alexandra, Treasurer, G. B. Sterne, 3rd overall, Bob Randall, President (1969-70), Bob Trickett, 2nd overall, Lance Morley, 1st overall, Gordon McMillian, RDC Chairman

## Chapter 5

# Bob's Memories of GB



Dad and me with our last race car, the 1972 4/4 1600 2-Seater we raced in '73, '74 and '75. I raced it in E Production and F Sports Racing. He raced it in E Improved Production. We ran three races every weekend plus numerous practice sessions for three years with no engine or transmission failures and no serious accidents!

### A Few Recollections About My Dad

Few people know that when he grew up in Edmonton, he was known as "Beatty" Sterne, during the Navy years as "George," and after returning to civilian life as "GB."

He was a perfectionist, and he loved to fix things just to show it could be done. He would line up all the screw head slots on any project he was working on, and berate me if I didn't do the same. His favourite saying was "if a job's worth doing, it's worth doing right."

GB could fix just about anything, and was frustrated that car components were becoming "sealed" units that were designed to be thrown away instead of repaired. The best example I can give of this is starter solenoids. He would grind them open, turn over the contact bar, file the terminals smooth and reassemble with bolts. This doubled their useful life. He seldom threw anything out. In fact, he kept a bucket under the bench full of bent nails, which when he had time he would straighten to reuse.

When Bill or I were working on a project and got stumped, he would tell us to try again. If, in frustration, we told him we couldn't do it, he would bellow "there's no such word as can't, only won't" and send us back to try again. If we finally gave up and admitted defeat, he would only say, "you mean there is no way it can be fixed?" and if we didn't go back to trying, then God help us because in a few minutes the thing was working perfectly and we had to eat our words. I don't ever remember seeing something he couldn't fix if he set his mind to it. I've seen him take

apart many things, just to find out how they worked, and if he needed a special tool to do a particular job, he would usually just make it.

He was a very inventive guy, and often thought "outside the box." He was very creative in his solutions to problems, and like any good engineer, many things he would come up with would do several jobs using just one part, in other words light and efficient. I think he only made it to grade 8 before going out into the working world, but a lack of formal education didn't hold him back. He had more common sense than anyone I've ever known, and his mechanical ability was next to none, something he undoubtedly inherited from his grandfather, George Beatty, after whom he was named.

*[GB's grandfather was George Beatty. George and Matthew Beatty founded Beatty Brothers in Fergus, Ontario, in 1874. The firm was a major manufacturer of farm equipment and appliances and an industry leader in developing an electric agitator washer. By 1925, Beatty Brothers was the largest producer and exporter of barn and stable equipment in the British Empire.]*

One good example of his inventiveness and mechanical ability was the first air compressor we had in Sidney. He took a blown engine from a Model T Ford apart and converted it. Number one cylinder was unusable, so he took out that rod and piston and ran the engine on the centre two cylinders, modifying the intake and exhaust manifolds to prevent leaks. He poured the combustion chamber on #4 cylinder full of Babbitt to raise the compression and installed a poppet valve in the spark plug hole with a line running to the air tank. Then he removed the tappets from the valves on that cylinder and installed a light spring under the intake valve so that it would open under the suction of the intake stroke. Every time the piston moved down, it would suck fresh air in through the intake port and, when the piston moved up, the air was forced into the pressure tank. It was very simple and efficient. He mounted the individual spark coils on the wall and ran them with a transformer from house current. I think that compressor ran from when it was built, probably around 1947, until we moved to the second garage about 1960.

When he was growing up, he became a crack shot with a rifle and shotgun, and I still have his target shooting jacket and .22 rifle. Bill has his old shotgun. He used to go hunting with his motorcycle and sidecar and come back with it loaded with game. I can remember him telling me of getting 23 green-head Mallards (Drakes) in one morning, and his first "business venture" as a boy was shooting rabbits, skinning them, and drying the pelts. He made 5 cents a pelt for his time, because he sold them for 6 cents

and he figured he could get 25 rabbits with a box of 50 shells. At the time a box of .22 shells cost 25 cents.

When we lived in Sidney, he and Bill hunted pheasants regularly. I can remember having a goose dinner when he he downed a goose with a single shot in the head with the .22 while leaning against the office door in Sidney. He paced off the range, and it was just over 100 yards!

When the Morgan business declined because we could no longer bring in cars, dad looked around for something else to sell, and his love of the sea brought him to sailing. He became a dealer for the Matilda trailer-able sailboats, made in Ontario, and had one himself named the "Lydiatoo." He never did as much sailing as he would have liked, but the few times I was out with him he really enjoyed it. It is strange how many people who raced at Westwood went on to take up sailing as a hobby. From the noise and competition to the serenity of wind and sail, quite a contrast! Maybe it's because once you have tasted throwing a Morgan around a racetrack, nothing else can compete, and so a complete change of hobby is necessary.

During all the years my dad raced and sold Morgans, he tried to get a club going for enthusiasts. It never happened until after he retired, when a few local owners got together and formed the Morgan Owner's Group Northwest. This group has grown and grown over the years, and happily, before my father's death in 1990, they were able to see a large group of Morgans gather at their retirement cottage in Qualicum on Vancouver Island. *[See the photo on page 1 of Chapter 2.]*

The warmth and fellowship of that happy occasion, the stories told, and the memories relived, only dent the surface of our deep involvement and love for the Morgan and the special people who own them. The one quote I remember from that day is, "you can ask to borrow my wife, but NEVER ask to borrow my Morgan!" It is this type of camaraderie, this intensity of the love of the Morgan, which is the Morgan factory's enduring legacy.

The last Morgan my father owned was a 1972 Plus 8, white with black wings, of course. It was never raced, and is now lovingly owned by my brother Bill. He attends many of the MOGNW events, as does my long time friend, Dave Collis, who served his apprenticeship as a mechanic under my dad at Sterne Motors. Dave still has the blue and black 4/4 2-Seater which he raced for many years.

Unfortunately, I have been without a Morgan since 1980, when as a young married man, I gave up my beloved Mog to renovate my parent's house which I had purchased to raise my young family. My life took another path, designing and manufacturing radio-controlled racing yachts, at which I have been most successful. My designs have won many national and international events, including a world championship in 1980 and a string of seven U.S. national titles in a nine year period. However, there is hardly a day goes by that I don't fondly remember being

behind the wheel of my 4/4 2-Seater or my dad's Plus 8, blasting around the Westwood racing circuit, which is now a subdivision covered with very expensive homes only a few minutes from where I live today.

## Dad's Navy Days



Photo by Gilbert A. Milne. Department of National Defence / National Archives of Canada, PA-134191.

There are so many stories I can't remember them all ...

Convoy duty in the Gulf of St. Lawrence: Their tiny wooden Fairmile sub-chaser sandwiched between massive freighters. Total blackout, and being able to reach out and strike a match on a rusty hull. Seas so rough he was able to see the ASDIC dome underneath another Fairmile in their flotilla, as the ship leapt off a huge wave. It was a third of the way back from the bow, and four feet below the hull.

Refueling in Cuba by "bucket brigade" in the hot tropic sun: The Fairmiles used aviation gasoline. An order coming down after a tragic explosion and fire on a Fairmile that when refueling, the main breaker was to be pulled. This, of course, would disable the fans that vented the bilges and tank compartments. My dad disregarded the order, and was nearly court-martialed over it. When an officer "with eggs all over his cap" (i.e. high ranking) told him to pull the breaker, he refused because it was too dangerous. The officer told him to have one of his men do it! My dad told the officer that he would not have any man in his command do anything he was not prepared to do himself and told the officer he could pull it himself. After all hell broke loose, eventually the order was rescinded.

While on shore leave in the Southern US: My dad was hassled by the Shore Patrol for being out after curfew although the curfew didn't apply to the Canadian seamen. An argument ensued, resulting in two large SPs on the ground, and my dad limping back to his ship. He lost a prized fountain pen in the scuffle, and was called to the headquarters of the U.S. Shore Patrol the next day to have it returned. The C.O. wanted to see the "man who tangled with his SPs and lived to tell about it."

“Racing Fairmiles on the West Coast” was my favourite Navy story: The War never really touched those on this Coast, at least in terms of action. The Fairmiles would patrol the Straights of Juan de Fuca, and then be relieved by another flotilla. They would then race all the way back to the Victoria breakwater, for bragging rights, and to be the first to refuel and take on provisions - and hence the first to get shore leave. My dad won every race (what a surprise), and it was said that “Sterne’s crew went ashore on the heaving line” (i.e. the first thing to hit the dock).

I’m sure that this success was due in no small part to his savvy with engines. The engines in the Fairmile were converted aircraft V-12s and didn’t take kindly to running at low throttle for extended periods. My dad would simply shut one off, and could thereby run the other engine up higher in the “power-band” while cruising with the convoys or patrolling. It made the boat a bit slower off the mark, and was completely in contravention to regulations, but if you had to go any distance, both engines pulled cleanly, and without fouled spark plugs. The dual plug arrangement had a nasty habit of drilling a hole right through the cylinder head if one plug fouled, causing the engine to ping.

One winter, my dad’s Fairmile flotilla went to patrol the Caribbean. He got off watch after they had anchored and decided to go swimming. He got in his bathing suit and went up on deck and looked over the side at some of the guys. The water was crystal clear and you could see the bottom very clearly with all the rocks and coral. He dove in and swam over to the guys, and they asked him if he thought he could dive to the bottom. My dad used to be on the swim team in Edmonton, and I have seen him swim the length of the Crystal Garden’s pool in Victoria underwater, which is 50 metres, on one breath, and that was when he was in his 50s.

The bottom looked like it was maybe 15 feet down, so he said “no problem.” He took a normal breath, did a duck dive, and down he went. Well, needless to say, the other guys already knew that it was really deep, and the clear water fooled you into thinking it wasn’t, and they figured there was no way that he could make it.

After he was down about 20 feet, he realized that it was a lot deeper than he thought, but he kept going. He swam on down, feeling the pressure building, and grabbed a handful of sand to prove he made it and started back up. By the time he reached the surface, he was nearly unconscious, but held up his hand and let the sand trickle out. He told me “there was no way I was going to come back up without proof I made it.” Now THAT’s determination!



Lydia and GB in 1945, likely taken in Beacon Hill Park in Victoria right after the War ended, as they were coming west on the train on VJ Day.

### Edmonton Police Days

Regarding the motorcycle accident which nearly took dad’s life while he was in the Edmonton Police Force, I heard the story as follows: He was returning from a first aid course and a girl ran into the street. Dad nearly got stopped, but the girl ran into the corner formed by the front wheel and handlebars and twisted them sideways, throwing him over the handlebars. He was quite experienced in tumbling as a kid and had fallen off motorcycles enough times, so he braced himself for a “tuck and roll” landing.

Unfortunately, there was a fire hydrant in the way, his hands straddled it, and it caught him in the forehead. He was taken to hospital and not expected to live. There just happened to be a brilliant neurosurgeon on call that night, and they took him immediately to surgery. After a few days in a coma, he regained consciousness and was eventually released from hospital. The first thing he did when he got home was fire up the motorcycle and ride it around the block to make sure it was OK!

### Three Edmonton newspaper clippings:

#### Motorcycle Hits Auto: Rider Hurt

George Sterne, 10159 118 St., received slight injuries when the motor cycle he was riding down Portage Ave, at 2:30 p.m. on Monday, near 130th St. intersection, crashed into the rear of a car driven by A. N. Brownlee, 11234 127 Street. The rear end of Brownlee's car was somewhat damaged. According to witnesses, the motorcyclist was looking down to examine something on the left side of his machine when he crashed into the rear of the auto.

#### Constable Sterne Fights for His Life

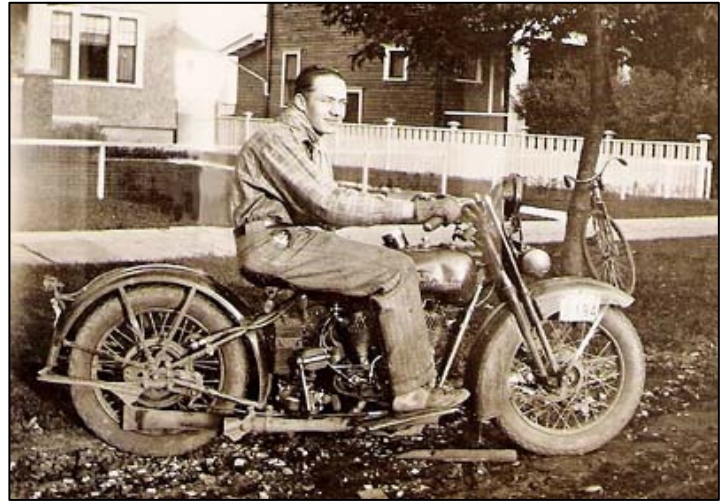
Constable George B. Sterne was injured Friday when he toppled from his motorcycle on 99 Street opposite the old E.C.D. building, was still in serious condition at the Royal Alexandria Hospital. Neither his parents or his wife are allowed to see him. Constable Sterne suffered a fracture of his skull across the forehead and concussion when his head struck the curb. The accident occurred when the motorcycle knocked down a woman and upset.

#### Report No Change on Sterne's Condition

The condition of Constable George B. Sterne, injured Friday night when he toppled from his motorcycle on 99 St., was reported unchanged Tuesday morning at the Royal Alexandria Hospital. He was hurt seriously when his motorcycle struck a woman and fell heavily on a curb.

A few days later, he went to see the doctor for a follow-up. When the doctor asked him how he got there, he said "on my motorcycle." The astonished doctor explained to him that after such a serious head injury he shouldn't be riding, but I can imagine how much my dad would have listened to that advice. His only complaint was the huge scar on his forehead, and the doctor simply said, "Well, when they walk past the coffin to pay their last respects, they don't look very close." He had never expected my dad to recover. They later removed most of the scar, and my dad had what looked like a premature wrinkle on his forehead ever after.

A while later, my dad got a bad cold, and the centre of his forehead began to swell up. Apparently one of his sinuses was damaged and couldn't drain properly. Eventually, the abscess broke and collapsed inward, causing what my dad described as "another belly button" in the middle of his forehead, a feature that he had the rest of his life. Occasionally, during a bad cold, it would discharge slightly, and you would see him wiping it. Other than that, it never caused any problem, and he never, ever, had a headache, from the accident onwards.



This was either my dad's 2nd or 3rd Harley. He had a 1917 (ex-Army, it was a 45 cu. in. flathead) which he called his "runabout" model because it would run about a block. Then he bought a 1929 61 cu. in. flathead, and then a 1931 Police Special (with a large speedometer, which this photo seems to have). It was a 61 cu. in. "L" head (overhead intake, side exhaust). This was the bike he won the 1931 Canadian Hill Climb Championship with. If this photo is from 1931, he would have been 19 at the time.

#### Police Story #1

My dad and I were on a business trip in the Plus 4 Plus, in the mid-1960s. If I recall, the purpose of the trip was to try and establish, or visit, dealerships in the Northwest. We visited Edmonton, Spokane, the Tri-Cities, and the Seattle area, on a circle tour of the Northwest. I can remember dad carving through the Thompson River valley, thoroughly enjoying the winding road.

The only other part of the trip that sticks in my mind shows a lot about what my dad, an ex-policeman, thought about your average traffic cop and their equipment. We were somewhere in Washington state and he noticed a police cruiser in the mirror. From what I remember it was a mid- to late-50s sedan (no doubt with drum brakes all around, and probably smaller than those on the back of the Morgan). We drove for a long time, right at the 70 mph speed limit, and eventually the cruiser pulled up on our left on the freeway.

My dad had a suspicion that they were going to pull us over and warned me that he might make a pretty quick stop. There was a light on the right front fender of the cop car pointing backwards, with the word "Police" on it. My dad had already determined that there were no other cars close behind us, and sure enough the light blinked on. Dad made a perfectly controlled panic stop, pulling over onto the shoulder of the road at the same time, the disc brakes on the Plus 4 Plus hauling us from 70 to zero in probably about 170 feet, tires complaining, on the verge of locking



up, just the way you would brake going into the hairpin at Westwood.

The surprised and astonished cops hit the brakes, locking up and releasing the brakes several times, and finally slid to a stop what looked to me like a quarter of a mile down the road. The two cops got out of the car, and walked all the way back to us. By the time they got there my dad was sitting on the fender of the Plus 4 Plus, his wallet out and waiting, and smoking a cigarette! When the cops got close enough, the first thing out of their mouth was, "What the hell kind of brakes have you got on that car?" It was all I could do to keep a straight face. It turned out that they had stopped us because we were driving in the USA with a BC dealer's plate, and they wanted to know why. To this day, I think it was because they wanted to know what kind of car it was. They, of course, did nothing but bid us a pleasant day, and walked back to the police car to the tune of the Plus 4 Plus accelerating rapidly past them.

### Police Story #2

Dad and I were in the Super Sport, coming back from Spokane. Dad had lost the rear license plate during the race, and took the front plate off and put it on the back (there were no decals in those days), as he figured he was less likely to attract attention that way and we couldn't get a new plate until Monday anyway.

We were in downtown Vancouver on the way to the Tsawwassen ferry to go back home, and a motorcycle cop pulled us over. When he got off the bike, he came up to dad and asked where his front license plate was. Without thinking, my dad says, "It's on the back." The cop, fortunately one with a sense of humour, said, "that's an Irish answer if I ever heard, one. Try again!" So my dad explained what happened. We got a warning ticket for no front plate, and a reminder to get one on Monday.

While this was going on, two beat cops stopped to see what was going on and to look at the car, of course. They insisted on looking at the engine, and my dad, growing anxious because we had a ferry to catch, grudgingly obliged. Then another cop car pulled up alongside, lights flashing, wondering why three cops had gathered. When told (in jest) by the original motorcycle cop that he had caught my dad going 80 on Granville St. and asking what should he do, the new arrival said, "Well, at least give him a warning." Soon, dad was showing off the Weber carbs to all five cops, giving his usual sales pitch! When the cops finally left, we had the wildest ride to the ferry you can imagine. I remember seeing nearly 6000 rpm in top on Hwy 17 a couple of times. Good thing there were no police around then! We barely made the last ferry of the night.



**Plus 4 Super Sport:** 1963 low-body, #5330, the first of dad's white and black Mogs and his first 2-seater, originally a 1991 cc TR3 Lawrence-tune engine. It was raced in "C" Production (which later became "D" when they were renumbered) and also "E" Sports Racing (under 2 Litre class). In 1965, dad bored it out to TR4 specs plus 1mm (2188cc) and raced it in "D" Production and "D" Sports Racing. The sign on the roll bar says, "Look but don't touch - it's ALUMINUM - thanks."

### Police Story #3

Actually, this is more of a court room drama. My dad was once called to court to testify on behalf of a Victoria Motor Sports Club member who was accused of dangerous driving after being stopped on the old West Saanich road for driving his Austin Healey much too fast. The police chased him, no light on, for several miles before finally catching up to him at a stop light and pulling him over.

They were driving a very old tank of a car with nearly bald tires, and it was raining. In those days, the twisty old West Saanich road was posted at 50 mph, and it took a very good car to average that, especially in the rain.

The police testified in court that they had nearly lost control several times trying to apprehend the driver of the Healey, and described the conditions. When my dad took the stand, he testified that he had recently fitted the Healey with Michelin X tyres, renowned for their performance in the rain. When he was shown pictures of the tyres on the police car, he apparently laughed out loud in court, berating the officers for driving such a dangerously equipped vehicle. He said that if anyone was driving dangerously, it wasn't the accused but the cops!

Apparently, when pressed, the officers admitted that they were never really close enough to the Healey to clock him properly. Not only did he get off on the dangerous driving charge, he even beat the speeding ticket!

## **Bob Meets Peter Morgan**

I met Peter Morgan in person twice. The first time was in the summer of 1964, when I was fortunate enough to tour through Europe with a group of 250 Canadian high school graduates. I was only 15 at the time, and I can clearly remember the highlight of my trip being my visit to the Works. I was staying in Bristol at the time, and caught the train to Malvern to be met by Mr. Morgan in a Plus 4 Plus. We drove to the factory and he gave me a personal tour. I remember seeing a couple of Morgans under construction for my father's company. I still have vivid memories of watching the cars being built by hand; the body framing parts being made in the woodworking shop; the kingpins being turned on a lathe while the machine operator dialed in by hand a "bit of correction" for the taper the old machine was producing; a craftsman installing the wire edge in the bonnet by hand; and the elderly gentleman building a grille, bending the bars by hand and laying them in the old jig for hand soldering. I still get a smile when I think about it.

Mr. Morgan retired to his office and assigned a worker to follow me around and answer any questions, and then we went to the Morgan home for a late lunch. I met Charles Morgan and his mother, and remember seeing Charles's large model railroad layout. I had never seen anything like it. It was very impressive! After lunch, we returned to the factory, and I wandered around, surrounded by the wonder and mystique that only the Morgan factory can provide, seen through the excited eyes of a teenager who had been around Morgans and racing as long as he could remember. I knew then that I would someday own and race a Morgan, and eventually that dream came true for me. The Morgan family have made this dream possible for so many over the years.

When it came time to leave, I remember shaking Mr. Morgan's hand, and I remember the kindness and friendship in his voice and eyes, and that wonderful smile. He called in a young draftsman and threw him the keys to the Plus 4 Plus, and said, "Take Mr. Sterne back to his place in Bristol, and, by the way, I have a dinner appointment this evening and need the car back by 5:00 pm." I didn't know it at the time, but it was apparently a 40 mile trip to Bristol, and it was 4:00 pm.

After blasting along at speeds up to about 110 mph over three lane country roads, with passing in both directions in the centre lane, we arrived at my hotel in Bristol in just 28 minutes, an average of over 80 mph. I'm sure the young man had no trouble having the car back at the Works in plenty of time Mr. Morgan's dinner appointment! That ride is forever burned in my memory, along with some of my many race victories driving my own Morgans in later years.

I met Peter Morgan again, many years later, when he came to visit us here in Vancouver. This was after the Morgan could no longer be imported into Canada, and my

father and I discussed with him the possibility of altering the car so that we could continue to import them. Although Peter sympathized with us, the factory was, of course, so busy that he couldn't possibly produce a variant just for us. Canada, at the time, had a special exemption for limited production vehicles, but the car had to have a placard affixed that stated that the vehicle did not comply with such and such safety standards. Peter Morgan felt that this was like saying that the Morgan wasn't safe, and we all knew that this simply wasn't true. He had no intention of affixing such a plaque, and although this meant the death of the Morgan in Canada, both my father and I admitted that we could understand his position and respected and shared his pride in the marque. The final number of Morgans imported by my father stood at about 160 cars during the period from 1955 to 1972.

The three generations of the Morgan family can take extreme pride in the legacy they have left to the world of motorsport, and to Morgan lovers everywhere. Every time a Morgan owner turns a key, and that glorious exhaust note rises to his ears; every time he bends it into a corner and feels the car respond as if it's a very part of him; and every time he smiles as he washes his precious Morgan, rubbing his hands over her sensuous curves; Peter Morgan will feel the warmth, love, and admiration of his extended family.

You don't drive a Morgan - you put it on - it becomes a part of you forever.

## **GB's Trophies**

When my dad's race wins got to 200, we applied to the Guinness Book of World Records for recognition, with all the appropriate documentation and supporting letters from the ICSCC and the SCCBC. We asked for TWO records, one for the most race wins by a driver (since broken by Richard Petty at 201) and the other for the most race wins by a single driver in a single marque (a record which would probably have stood forever). Their answer? Stirling Moss was a professional driver and they weren't interested in my dad because he was an amateur! So much for "World Records." The record did NOT state it was for professional drivers, and you can bet that both Moss and Petty included many victories that were NOT achieved during their professional career.

By the way, were you aware that when Stirling Moss was at Westwood, he REFUSED to wear any helmet except my dad's? Check out the photos of him driving Bob McLean's Lotus 23B against "Flying Phil" Gagliardi who drove my dad's Super Sport.

## **The Windmill Story**

As a teenager, my dad was sent to the Peace River country in Northern Alberta to install the biggest windmill Beatty Brothers made. *[GB's grandfather was George Beatty, a founder of Beatty Brothers in Fergus, Ontario, a*



### Stirling and the Helmet

Stirling Moss sitting in Bob McLean's Lotus 23B and wearing dad's famous Herbert Johnston helmet. Stirling REFUSED to wear anything else, even thought the helmet was too big for him. Pretty funny, when you consider Dave Ogilvy's story about the CASC not allowing dad to race at Mosport with the same helmet!

*major manufacturer of farm equipment.*] I think the tower was 70 feet, and was made in 6' 7" sections and assembled from the ground up. Once the tower was completed, with its tiny wooden platform at the top, the gearbox, fan and tail were hoisted up and assembled. Normally my dad would have another chap help him, but in this case the farmer didn't want to pay for a second man and told my dad he would help him.

The two of them climbed the tower, and spent quite a long time assembling the power head of the windmill. The farmer seemed fine, but when he climbed down off the tower, he knelt down, kissed the ground and told my dad that if "that contraption" ever needed servicing he would have to bring someone to help him because, "I'm



### Phil Gaglardi

As a publicity stunt for the press in connection with the "Player's Pacific" one year, Gaglardi drove dad's Super Sport against Stirling Moss in Bob's McLean's Lotus 23B.

*[MC: Flying Phil Gaglardi, for those not familiar with British Columbia's political history, was the Minister of Highways in the days of the Social Credit Government (1950s - 1970s). Not only did he deserve to be in the Political Hall of Fame but also the High Speed Driving Hall of Fame. This minister of the gospel who ran a gospel radio program based out of CJCD in Kamloops was nabbed more times than any MLA ever for speeding on provincial highways.]*

NEVER going back up there." My dad had a good laugh, and went on to the next installation!

I have found a vintage Beatty Pumper (windmill) just north of Kelowna and I am installing it on our property in Coalmont, just west of Princeton, BC. It will be dedicated to my great-grandfather, George Beatty, my grandfather, W.H.S. Sterne, and my dad. The road to Coalmont is a fabulous, twisting road which, along with many other roads in the Princeton area, is deserving of a future MOGNW tour.

### Early days at Westwood

Before my dad got the number 4, he raced as number 94 (or possibly it was at a CASC race and there was another

car #4). I can remember a story of my mom lap scoring at Westwood in the early days, and he was having a real battle with someone driving a car number 90. Every lap, they passed the finish line with dad in the lead, just feet apart, and the lap scoring girls called out “94-90” in one breath. This got to be a habit, of course, but on the last lap, dad goofed somewhere, and the other car got by. My mom and her partner (they had one girl calling numbers, the other writing) were the only team to get it right! She got a heck of an argument from the other girls, who thought she was an idiot for saying that her husband had lost. She eventually had to get the Chief Scorer to go and ask the drivers, and of course, mom was right, the other guy won. That was the last time she ever lap scored one of my dad’s races for the race officials. She figured, correctly, that if the situation was reversed and dad had passed the other car on the last lap, that nobody would believe her! My mom would lap score his races from our pits, and many times, when the officials got it wrong, or some score sheets showed one result and others a different one, the officials would come to her as a “tie-breaker.” She even used to lap score the seven hour endurance races, and ALWAYS knew exactly where he was running throughout the race.

### **Racing in the Glory Days at Westwood**

There was a prank my dad and Jack Murray (with my mom’s help) pulled at Westwood in the early 1960s. Jack was from Seattle, and raced against my dad with a TR3, and later with a black Plus 4 2-Seater, beating dad in nearly every race after he bought the Morgan. Then he bought the first Super Sport we brought in, a high-bodied 1962, flame with black wings. I have a photo of Jack and dad in the hairpin at Westwood in about 1961.

Anyway, Jack got dressed up as a woman, complete with dress and wig, donned my dad’s helmet, and entered dad’s 1960 4-Seater in a novice race at Westwood. So that nobody would know what was going on, he waited until the cars went from pre-grid out onto the grid, then came flying down the hill, through the pits, and right out onto the track just in time for the starter (who was in on the gag) to drop the green flag. The announcer wasn’t in on the gag and started talking about this woman in dad’s car that suddenly joined the race. He went by the name of Mary Williams.

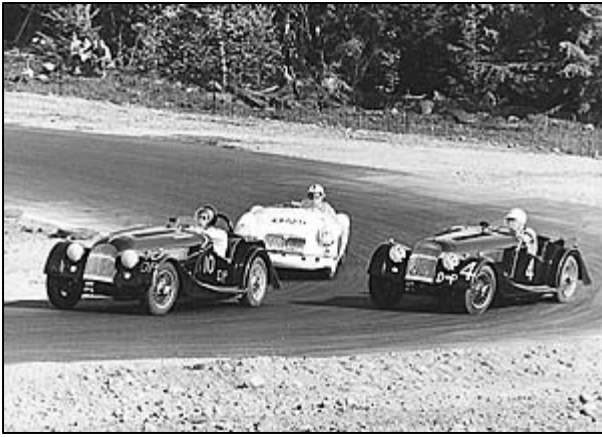
Being a fabulous driver, Jack, skirt billowing and curls flying, overtook the field and was soon in second place. When he got close to the leader, the guy started to drive harder and harder, so much so that Jack got worried about the guy crashing. Jack decided that if he passed him, he might calm down, so going into the hairpin, he dove down the inside and flipped his curls at the guy on the way by. The guy went nuts, and Jack became so concerned about his safety, he backed off and let the guy by and things calmed down. In the meantime, the announcer was going

nuts, and everybody was coming to talk to mom to try and find out who the gal was. Mom mumbled something about “some friend of GB’s” and stomped off. Dad just grinned and kept quiet.

Now Jack didn’t belong in the Novice race, and didn’t want to take anything away from the new drivers, so on the last lap he came out of the hairpin and started turning the key on and off to pretend the car was cutting out. Coming out of the esses, he coasted to a stop on the infield side, got out and started pushing the car to the finish line. All those in the pits could now see Jack’s long hairy legs and started to laugh, but the announcer (on the infield) was going crazy, talking about this poor woman trying to get her car to the finish. A very gallant Roy Curtis, who handled the communications system, came dashing over from the infield to help push, and Jack, trying not to laugh, looked away from him and continued to push. After they crossed the finish line, Jack took off his helmet, flipped his curls at the gallant gentleman, and said, “Thanks, Roy.” All a very flustered Roy Curtis could managed was, “For Christ’s Sake! ... Jack Murray!”

Surely this, better than any other story, tells of the fun it was to race sports cars in the glory days. I have a photo of Jack, wearing dad’s helmet, complete with flowing curls and a dress, standing beside dad’s 1960 4-Seater. It was taken after the race.





### Jack and GB in 1959

Jack Murray, #10, leads dad around the hairpin at Westwood. The car on the inside must be an MGA Twin Cam, because the standard model raced two or three classes lower than "D." Jack, from Seattle, drove a TR3 before buying the Morgan. He later bought a 1962 high-body Super Sports, flame with black wings.



### Three Mogs

This is not a photo of dad, but of myself, Stu Rulka and Dave Collis in the hairpin at Westwood. Stu's #2 was silver with black wings. Dave is driving the same blue and black car he has today. It started out as a 1500 Series V and after racing it that way for a year or two, Dave updated it to 1600 Competition Model specs with the 1600 GT Cortina engine, close-ratio gearbox and 4.1:1 rear end (it originally had a 4.56:1). This moved him from "F" Production to "E," of course. After he quit racing, Dave modified the engine for the street with twin Webers, higher compression, and a hot camshaft. This photo dates to 1973-74.

# Chapter 6

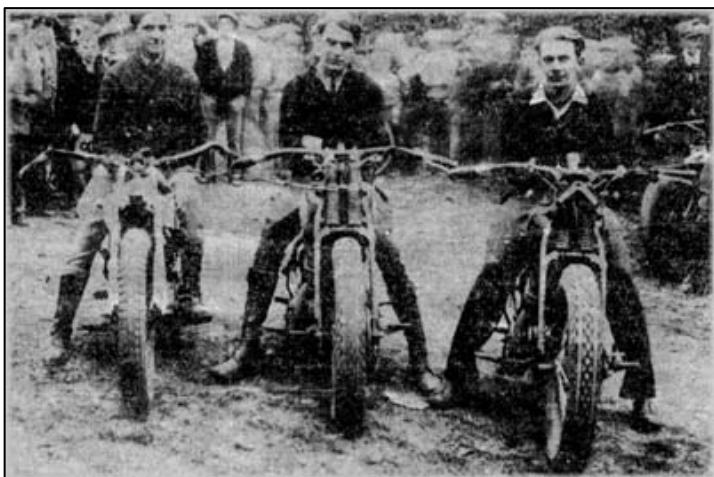
## GB's Morgans

### GB's racing started before Morgans



#### HILLS MEAN NOTHING TO THESE LADS

Edmonton Newspaper late 1930s or early 40s.



Nearly four thousand people saw a thrilling hill climb contest Sunday by the Edmonton Motorcycle Club. Winners of the tests shown above, left to right, are: F. Robertson, 45-61 class, who negotiated a difficult climb in 8.5 seconds; W. Marskell, 74 class whose time was 4.35 seconds; and George Sterne, who took the Alberta Championship, climbing 150 feet in 3.45 seconds.

### AUTOCYCLISTS PUT ON THRILL

#### Members of Edmonton Motorcycle Club Hold Contests

All the thrills and spills that speedy sport can supply were on the program Sunday when about 25 cyclists, the majority of the members of the Edmonton Motorcycle Club, staged a hill climbing contest for the benefit of several thousand citizens who visited the ski jump hill to witness the trials. For two hours the young speedsters vied with one another for the Alberta championship honours, these being finally carried off by George Sterne who speeded up the 150<sup>8</sup> foot hill in the short time of 3.45 seconds. To him goes the trophy which is competed for annually, and also the honour of being Alberta champion in the hill climbing events.

#### Pits Are Dug

To provide more sport for both spectators and riders the hill was ploughed up and miniature pits dug. When the cyclists struck these depressions the machines spring into the air as if shot from a catapult. Several spills were re-

ceived by the riders, but even this was a small thrill when compared to that of succeeding in making the top. Following are the results for the Alberta championship by class:

#### Open competition:

1. Geo. Sterne, 150 feet in 3.45 seconds
2. W. Marskell, 150 feet in 4 seconds
3. E. Shaver, 148 feet

#### "74" class:

1. George Sterne, 4.15 seconds
2. W. Marskell 4.35 seconds
3. E. Shaver, 5.35 seconds

#### "48-61" class:

1. F. Robertson, 8.5 seconds
2. J. Renaud, 147.5 feet
3. H. Ferrier 147 feet

The championship trophy was donated by the Northern Utilities, the other prizes were donated by the following firms: Smith's Cycle Store, Jackson Bros., Kline, Henry Birks and Sons, S. R. Ash Jewellers, Dominion Tire Co., Goodyear Tire Co., Beatty Bros., Great West Garment Co., Acme Clothiers and Boys' Shop.

Tile executive, G. Sterne and E. B. Earl Shaver, announce that the prize awards will be made to the winners at Smith's Cycle Store at 8 p.m. Monday.



GB's first sports car, an MG TD. This is one of the few photos Bob Sterne has of his dad in his MG TD. Bob thinks the "700 series" number indicated a novice in those days, so this may be from one of his first races, if not the very first, and was probably at the Abbotsford Airport. GB later raced under number 114 if Bob remembers correctly.

**The Morgans and the Racing**  
GB raced Morgans from 1956 until 1976.  
He had several famous racers.  
*Then Came the Love for Morgans*

*The next two articles, "It's a Power-Packed Panther" and "In Step With Style," are from 1956 Victoria newspapers in which Morgans were introduced to the Victoria market.*

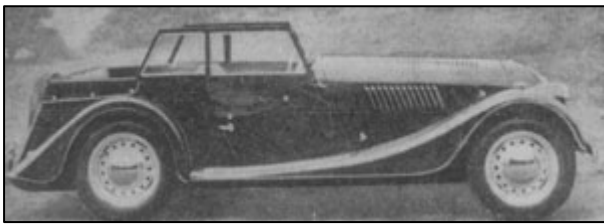
The Car Corner

**Its a Power Packed Panther**

By J. T. Jones

Daily Colonist, Victoria, BC

Sunday, September 9, 1956, page12



**MORGAN TR 3**

The Morgan TR 3 may not be quite the rig for taking rich Aunt Tessie to the opera, but for covering the miles with a maximum of scoot in a minimum of time, it's practically impossible to beat. Morgan's formula is about as simple as it can get: into a vehicle weighing about the same as a Morris Minor, pack 100 horsepower. Add a dash of glue for road holding, and that's about it.

These English cars, just recently imported by George B. Sterne of Sidney, are in the classic sports car tradition, four wheels firmly on the road and no mistake.

It isn't fair to call the Morgan's ride harsh (although I was clear of the seat at least twice on severe bumps). Firm, solid or secure are better words.

On hard corners the Morgan is uncanny. I tried a few times to push it hard enough to make the back wheels slide. Hah!

For the family man who wants more room, Morgan offers a four-seater model which is neither a sedan sporting the same name nor a two-seater with a parody of a seat behind. It has two ample seats and behaves like the true sports car it is.

At \$2,395 and \$2,495, either the two-seater or the four-seater offers more performance per dollar than any other car available. It would take some very costly machinery to approach them for acceleration (standing start to 60 miles an hour in about nine seconds) or handling (see above).

Morgans have some features that are unique and some that are merely rare. The front suspension under a Morgan will be found no where else on earth. It consists of vertical posts anchored firmly top and bottom, with the front

wheels mounted on tubes that slide up and down. Coil springs provide what resiliency there is. Rear suspension is more conventional leaf springs. The engine in the hot Morgans is a Triumph TR 3 unit. The transmission is very fast and positive between third and fourth gears, with a little finesse needed for second. Other engines offered in the Morgan are the Ford Prefect unit with matching gearbox, and the Standard Vanguard version of the TR 3 power plant which is much milder.

The TR 3 engine is set up to deliver its punch at high revs, and comes in with a boom at about 2800 rpm. Judging by its behaviour on full throttle, it's over carbureted below 3,500 rpm. Small wonder, with two 1 3/4 inch SU carburetors.

Except for the small problem of where to park the left foot, an issue best settled by the individual driver, the seating comfort is extraordinary. The seat back comes up almost to the nape of the neck, and the seats themselves are air inflated to individual preferences.

The seats, in fact, are leather covered air cushions resting on wood platforms which a little semiskilled labour could soon modify for perfect height, length, angle and so forth. It sounds slightly peculiar, but looks like a logical and workable system. Steering is heavy at creeping speeds and just quick when the car gets moving. Although it takes only two turns of the steering wheel from lock to lock, there's no over sensitivity on the highway.

I found the brakes call for rather a heavy foot, but they were admirably balanced, with not the slightest tendency to pull or grab. I am willing to take the experts word for their resistance to fade.

The two-seater has a sizable luggage space behind the seats, and both models have snug convertible tops.

If any more icing is needed on the cake for sports car enthusiasts, this snarling beast gives about 35 miles to the gallon, even under fairly hard driving: i.e., anything but racing.

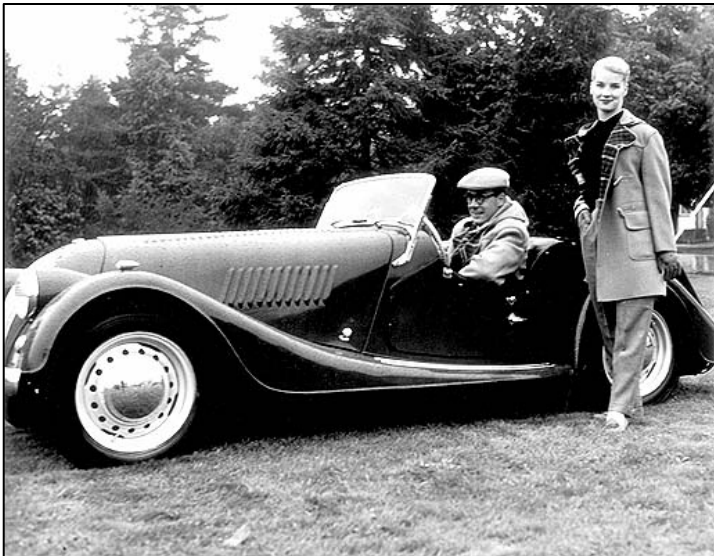
Finish throughout is fine hand craftsmanship, with the interior almost completely finished in real leather, including the transmission hump and drive shaft tunnel which in most sports cars have to settle for sturdy matting. Parts that don't much wear in normal use are finished in artificial leather that's almost impossible tell from the real thing.

For the man who loves the snort of a hot engine, running with the glad cries of a back seat full of children, I sincerely believe Morgan supplied the answer.

*[MC's Note: The photo of the Morgan used in this article was a promo shot. GB's first Morgan was a Plus 4 2-Seater. This is obviously a 4-Seater.]*

**IN STEP WITH STYLE** - By Nona Damaske  
**Jaunty Car Coats, Tail Pipe Pants**  
**First Choice of Sports Car Set**  
 Victoria Times, October, 1956

*A handsome couple . . . Mr. and Mrs. T. L. Moilliet, an outstanding sportscar . . . the Morgan TR3 and perfect clothing for a Thanksgiving Day jaunt to the country.*



He may be concerned with the horses under the hood and the manoeuvrability on the open road but she disregards all things mechanical and concentrates on colour. British racing car green for the automobile and natural camel tone for the matching car coats are her choices. The Swedish coats are lined with blanket plaid and one of the lining colours is a perfect match for the dark green of the car



This does not seem a matter of world-shaking importance to him, but if it keeps her happy he is willing to go along.

Car coats and tailpipe pants are worn by the sports car set for a very good reason. Have you ever attempted to drive a low slung MG, an Austin Healey or a Morgan in a full-length coat under which you are wearing a full skirted dress? The brake nestles mysteriously under voluminous folds of material, a gust of wind sends fabric clapping in front of your face. Believe me, the correct attire makes for longer life. I also have a sneaky hunch the reason they put wooden toggle buttons and strong loops on some car coats is to keep them from blowing off. Sports cars all have neat snug tops which, an unwritten law says, must remain neatly folded down.

On windy days you don an English Christy cap and perhaps a wool muffler that measures four or five feet in length and is allowed to blow behind as you whiz along country roads. If by chance it should rain, you must not be so gauche as to raise the top of the car ... just pull up the hood of your car coat and strap it firmly under your chin.

Fleece or fur lined antello gloves keep your hands warm enough to handle all controls, and tailpipe pants, which as the name implies, are narrow, keep drafts away from your legs. The accoutrements of sports car travel are very important to those concerned, and I would like to elaborate on the car coat as it is by far the most important item.

John Wertz, an American designer, calls his coats "Runabouts" and recommends them for campus as well as car. He fashions one in red wool with a quilted print lining and large antiqued, silver buttons.

"The Rambler," by White Stag of Toronto, is in black water repellent cotton with white knitted collar, white plastic buttons with pushbutton fastenings. Another style by this firm has gate hinge fastenings attached to pockets by metal chains. A third has ebony closures on tiny chains and a fourth has white plastic football buttons. Jacob Crowley of Winnipeg shows a pale green tweed lined in quilted yellow satin. A brown tweed has zip out lining of leather and checked wool. Plush lining is used in a navy gabardine double-breasted model.

This trend of fashion, started because of the great popularity of the sleek sports car, is really quite useful for campus and outdoor life in general. A well cut 36 inch car coat looks well with a slim tweed skirt even if you do not own a car which will attain a speed of over a hundred miles an hour. I know of no roads where the law allows such carrying on but maybe there is some satisfaction in knowing that the power is there.

*[MC's note: When I contacted Elinor Moilliet to ask her permission to use this article, she was astounded at the call. She said she was just looking at the photo the previous week. She told me the Morgan was a beautiful British Racing Green and said, "I wonder where it is today?"*

*The first and only Morgan shipped to GB in 1956 was the British racing green Plus 4 2-Seater, #3504, used in these two photos.]*





GB's first race car was a black 1957 Plus 4 4-Seater, #3605, race-tuned from the factory. His trophy for the 1958 Sports Car Racing Championship for British Columbia, Washington and Oregon International Racing is on the bonnet.

(Bill Halkett, Victoria Times, photo)

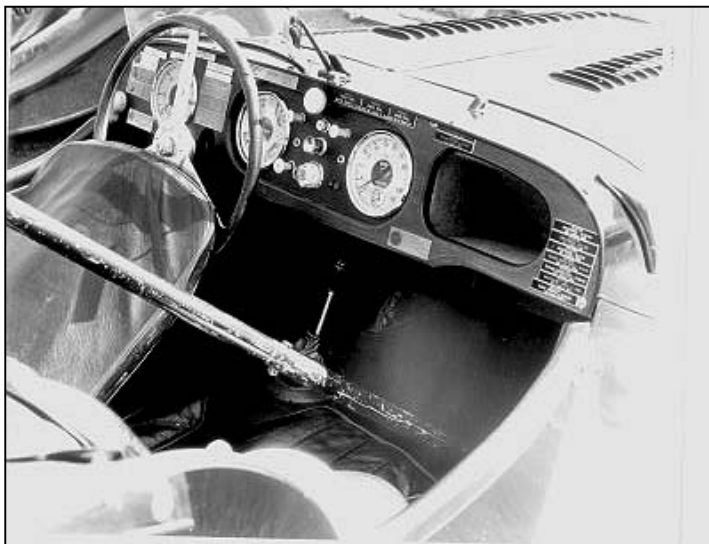


GB's First Morgan Racer in early 1960  
Early morning just outside the track, the gates not even open yet. Lydia taping up the lights on the back of the second 4-Seater. The other Morgan in the photo is believed to have belonged to Pete Browning of Victoria.

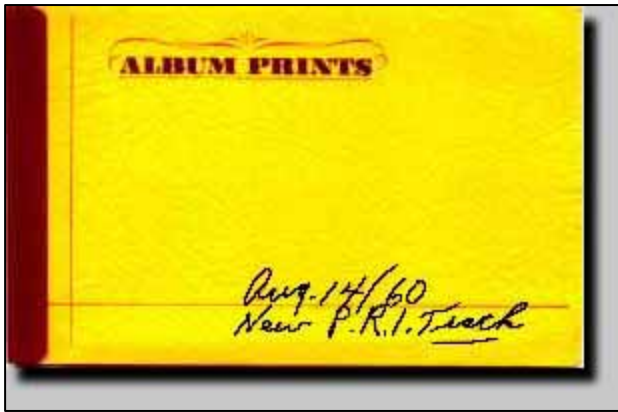




**GB and Lydia Sterne at Westwood Track, November, 1959**



Most likely the interior of #5330. The only modification to the dash is the big cigar lighter replacing the fog light switch, a priority for GB's pipe.



From a 1968 SCCBC Westwood Race Track Program

**STERNE AND HIS MORGAN . . . head two classes  
STERNE, HAMILTON, PACE LOCALS  
Conference Titles At Stake Today**

A pair of lead footed Westwood veterans head the list of B.C. drivers hoping to nail down International Conference driving championships today.

George Sterne, still winning at an age when most drivers have retired, and Tom Hamilton each lead two classes entering the season's second to last Conference event.

The 56 year old Sterne leads both "E" and "E" Improved Production in his trusty Morgan while Hamilton has his quick Brown Brothers Shelby Mustang in front of the "A" Modified and "B" Improved Production sections.

Sterne, the Burnaby grandfather who, as the operator of Sterne Motors, just happens to be a Morgan distributor, has won eight Northwest titles and placed second five times in the last 11 years.

Westwood's senior driver has his ninth title wrapped up in "E" Production and has a seven point lead over Paul Woodroffe (Salem, Porsche) who, at 61, is the Northwest's oldest active driver in "E" Improved Production.

If the performance of Sterne and Woodroffe is any indication, Hamilton is just getting started. The 40 year old Campbell River papermaker has "A" Modified wrap-up and needs only to place in the top three of today's "B" Improved Production race to take the title in this class. And with 21 victories this season, there's little doubt Hamilton will make it.

Bruce Berry of Vancouver in a Lotus Elan leads "C" Improved Production by five points but would have to win both remaining "D" Modified races to deprive Vancouver's John Randall (Brabham) of a fourth straight title.

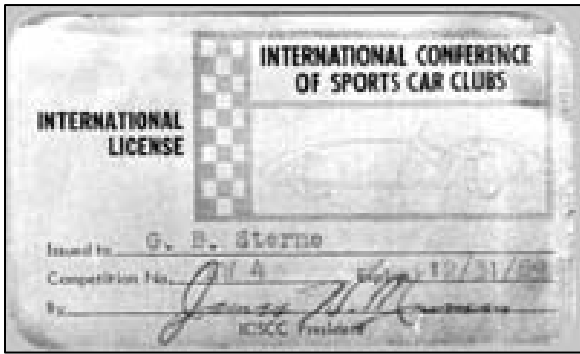
Other B.C. leaders are Randall, Dick Shead (Cloverdale-Mini) and Terry Fry (Vancouver-Lotus), tied for the "E" Modified lead; Dave Ogilvy (New Westminster Lotus 35) in Formula B; Lew Neilson (Vernon-Cooper S) in "C" Production Sedan; Ray Jourdain (Burnaby-Javelin) in "A" Improved Sedan; Karen Hall (North Vancouver-Cortina) in "B" Improved Sedan and Jo Steinicke (Sidney-NSU) in "D" Improved Sedan.



GB in the famous Plus 4 Super Sport #5330 pulls away from a TR4 at International Raceways in Washington State. Circa 1964/65.



GB's Super Sport leads a Maserati through the hairpin at Westwood. He was racing #5330 in the Under 2 Litre Sports Racing Class. The 2 litre Maserati (twin OHC, dual ignition, 8 plugs, Weber carbs, a full race car) was driven by Steve Skidmore. Steve and GB had many great races. It looks like Steve has a frown on his face as GB cuts across his bow.



GBs International Conference of Sports Car Clubs racing license from the 1969 season



GB mixes it up with some Porches in E Production with the Cortina-engined Morgan 4/4



CANADIAN AUTOMOBILE SPORT CLUBS  
NATIONAL RACING COMPETITION LICENSE FOR DRIVER  
1972  
NO. B.C. #4

Mr. George B. Sterne  
3785 Edinburgh Street  
Burnaby 2, B.C.

ISSUED UNDER THE AUTHORITY OF  
C.A.S.C. REGIONAL LICENSING OFFICIAL  
Margaret Gilbey  
VALID FROM DATE OF ISSUE  
Feb. 29, 1972 TO MAR. 31, 1973

CANADIAN AUTOMOBILE SPORT CLUBS  
APPLICATION, RENEWAL NATIONAL LICENSE

I hereby apply for registration on the Competition Register of the Canadian Automobile Sport Clubs. I undertake to submit to be bound by the International Sporting Code of the F.I.A. as provided for and amended by the C.A.S.C. I am in possession of a current, valid, non-provisional Driving License.

NAME \_\_\_\_\_  
ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_  
BIRTH DATE \_\_\_\_\_  
SIGNATURE *G. B. Sterne* (Over) \_\_\_\_\_

1972

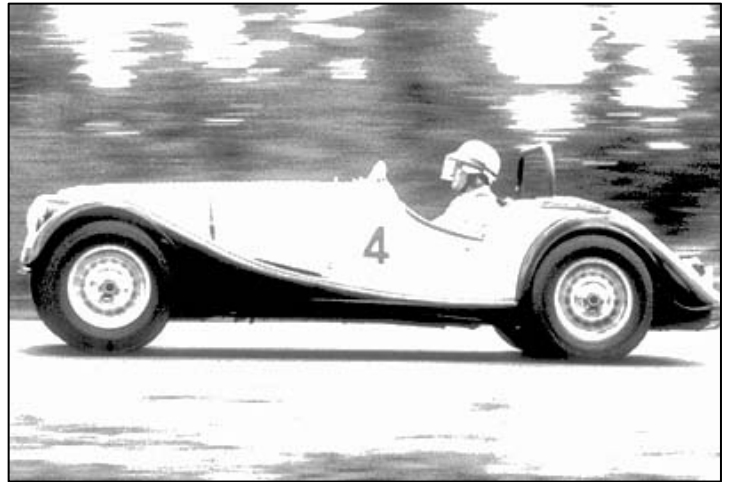
NAME: G.B. STERNE  
PLEASE PRINT: 3785 EDINBURGH ST. BURNABY 2, B.C.  
SIGNATURE: *G. B. Sterne*

MORGAN BUS 4/4  
REG. NUMBER: BC-4  
DATE OF OBSERVATION: \_\_\_\_\_  
STEWARDS SIGNATURES: \_\_\_\_\_

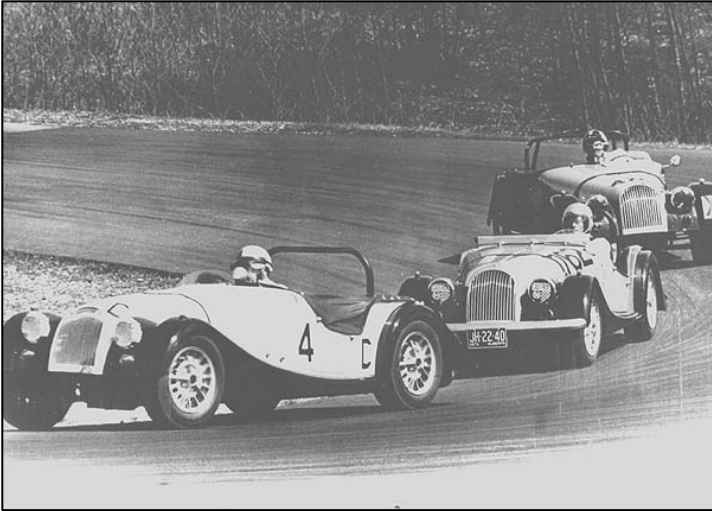
| DATE       | CIRCUIT    | ORGANIZING CLUB | CAR MAKE AND MODEL | FINISHING POSITION | STEWARDS SIGNATURE      |
|------------|------------|-----------------|--------------------|--------------------|-------------------------|
| Mar 2/72   | Westwood   | SCC-BC          | Morgan Bus 4/4     | 1st - C.P. 100     | <i>George B. Sterne</i> |
| Apr 4/72   | Delta Park | C.S.C.          | Morgan Bus 4/4     | 1st - C.P. 100     | <i>George B. Sterne</i> |
| Apr 30/72  | Westwood   | SCC-BC          | Morgan Bus 4/4     | 1st - C.P. 100     | <i>George B. Sterne</i> |
| Apr 30/72  | Westwood   | SCC-BC          | Morgan Bus 4/4     | 1st - A 5/2        | <i>George B. Sterne</i> |
| May 14/72  | Westwood   | SCC-BC          | Morgan Bus 4/4     | 1st - C.P. 100     | <i>George B. Sterne</i> |
| May 29/72  | Westwood   | VASC            | Morgan Bus 4/4     | 1st - C.P. 100     | <i>George B. Sterne</i> |
| June 3/72  | Westwood   | SCC-BC          | Morgan Bus 4/4     | 1st - C.P. 100     | <i>George B. Sterne</i> |
| June 18/72 | SIR        | IRDC            | Morgan Bus 4/4     | 1st - C.P. 100     | <i>George B. Sterne</i> |
| July 2/72  | Westwood   | VASC            | Morgan Bus 4/4     | 1st - C.P. 100     | <i>George B. Sterne</i> |
| July 23/72 | Westwood   | SCC-BC          | Morgan Bus 4/4     | 1st - C.P. 100     | <i>George B. Sterne</i> |
| Aug 6/72   | Westwood   | SCC-BC          | Morgan Bus 4/4     | 1st - C.P. 100     | <i>George B. Sterne</i> |
| Aug 20/72  | SIR        | IRDC            | Morgan Bus 4/4     | 1st - C.P. 100     | <i>George B. Sterne</i> |
| Sept 3/72  | SpoKane    | ICSCC           | Morgan Bus 4/4     | 1st - C.P. 100     | <i>George B. Sterne</i> |
| 9/17/72    | National   | CAC             | "                  | 20/32 3/10         | <i>George B. Sterne</i> |



Morgan Plus 8 - G.B. Sterne racing at Westwood Track,  
British Columbia, Canada, June 4th, 1972



## Two Famous Morgan Racing Photos



**Three Plus 8s:** This is one of the most famous Mog photos ever. Dad in his white and black Plus 8 is leading Dr. Grant Hill from Calgary in his silver and black Plus 8, followed closely by Al Allinson with his orange and black Plus 8, all in the hairpin at Westwood. The “700-series” number on Grant’s Plus 8 indicates that he was a visiting CASC driver at an ICSCC event. The “X” on Al’s front fender indicates that he still didn’t have his “Senior” license. Dr. Hill later became involved in Federal Politics.

Bob Sterne



**Three 4/4s:** This is a great shot of dad, Stu Rulka, and Dave Collis, all in 4/4 1600 GTs, going through the “Circus” at Portland International Raceway. This would have been taken in 1973 or 1974, and they would have been racing in “E” Improved Production at the time because I ran the car in Production and Sports Racing. This series of corners is at the end of the sweeping “back straight” (which is actually a big right-hand bend) and they lead into a tight right-hand corner which exits onto the main straight. Dad always said he wished there was another 100 yards between these “esses” and the sharp corner because you could put the Morgan through there so fast there was no way you could get stopped for the last right hander! I can remember gaining HUGE amounts on other cars there because the one thing a Morgan does better than ANYTHING else is go through corners that are like a slalom. Just think of how easy it is to change lanes with a flick of the wheel!

Bob Sterne

# Chapter 7 Motorsport Pioneer

## Greater Vancouver Motorsport Pioneers Society

On October 23rd, 2004, George Beatty Sterne was inducted into the Greater Vancouver Motorsport Pioneers Society. Below is the invitation sent to his sons, Bill and Bob Sterne.

**THE GREATER VANCOUVER MOTORSPORT PIONEERS SOCIETY**  
c/o 4740 Deerfield Crescent, Richmond, B.C., Canada, V6X 2Y6

September 23, 2004

The Greater Vancouver Motorsport Pioneers Society is a chartered, non-profit group of volunteers who select and honor individuals and organizations who have made significant contributions to the advancement of motorsport activities in this area.

**George Sterne** has been selected as one of 17 individuals to be honored this year at the annual awards ceremony to be held October 23, 2004.

**2004 PIONEER INDUCTEES**

| PIONEERS:          | ACTIVITY:                 | PIONEERS:          | ACTIVITY:             |
|--------------------|---------------------------|--------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. Mike Balfe      | - Sports car racer        | 10. Ralph Monhay   | - Oval racer/builder  |
| 2. Ted Baxter      | - Custom car builder      | 11. Bob Nottingham | - Drag racer          |
| 3. Les Diack       | - Oval racer/Stock car    | 12. Fred Pazaski   | - Motorcycle racer    |
| 4. Jim Hutchison   | - Powerboat racer         | 13. George Sterne  | - Sports car racer    |
| 5. Dave Johnstone  | - Hotrods/custom cars     | 14. Claire Wilson  | - Sports car racer    |
| 6. Don Lamont      | - Sports car/Rally driver | 15. Bob Work       | - Motorcycle racer    |
| 7. Jim Marchant    | - Oval racer/builder      | <b>SUPPORTERS:</b> |                       |
| 8. Mickey McDowell | - Oval racer/midgets      | 16. Doug Morgan    | - Car builder/sponsor |
| 9. Don McLachlan   | - Hotrods/custom cars     | 17. Bernie Smith   | - Car club supporter  |

Since the first awards in 2001, a total of 67 people have been honored. This award ceremony will bring our total to 84.

**TRIBUTE CEREMONY**

SATURDAY AFTERNOON, OCTOBER 23, 2004, 1:00 PM TO 5:00 PM  
ROYAL CITY CURLING CLUB, 75-6<sup>TH</sup> AVENUE, NEW WESTMINSTER, B.C.  
(N/W corner 6<sup>th</sup> Ave. & Cumberland St.; 1 block E. of McBride Blvd. Free parking)

*Come and meet past inductees and enjoy memorabilia, pictures and videos*

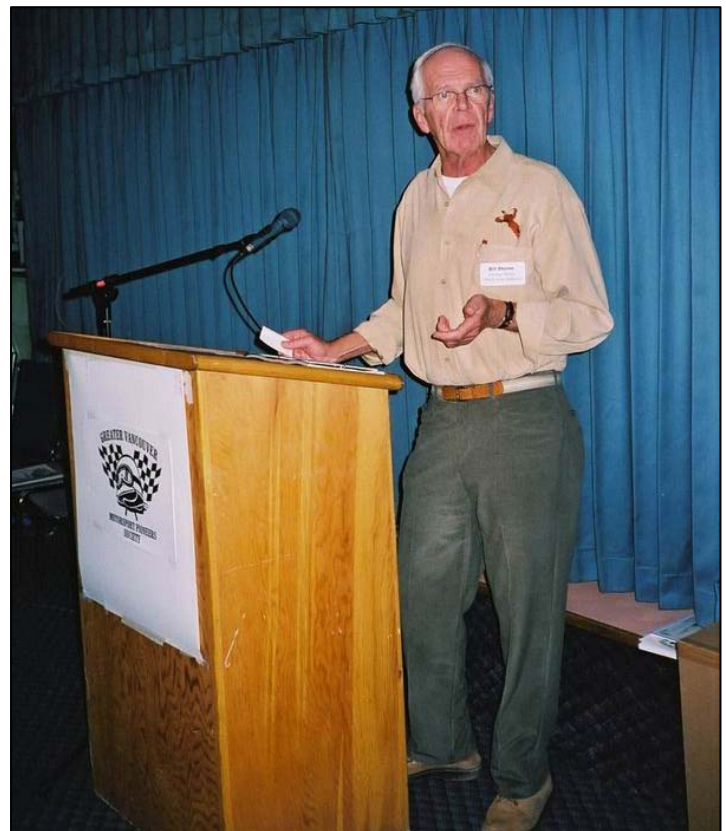
**Please attend.** Admission is free for you and up to 3 family members.  
Space is limited so we need to know in advance. **RSVP** by October 12, 2004.

CONTACT INFORMATION: In writing: as per address above.  
Phone: 604-882-0187 Fax: 604-278-1475  
604-943-9635  
Email: [lmbraine@shaw.ca](mailto:lmbraine@shaw.ca), or [bpratt@paralynx.com](mailto:bpratt@paralynx.com)

Yours truly, on behalf of the GVMP Society,  
Doug Harder, Secretary



Bill Sterne accepts his father's Induction Certificate into the Greater Vancouver Motorsport Pioneers Society as a 2004 Motor Sport Pioneer in the Sports Car Racer category. The event was held at the Royal City Curling Club in New Westminster, Saturday, October 23rd, 2004.





After receiving his dad's award, Bill Sterne told some of the stories of his dad's antics on the track and gave a summary of the many awards GB received during his sports car racing career.

*In Appreciation*


**G. B. Sterne**

For Your Time and Devotion To The Motorsport Community

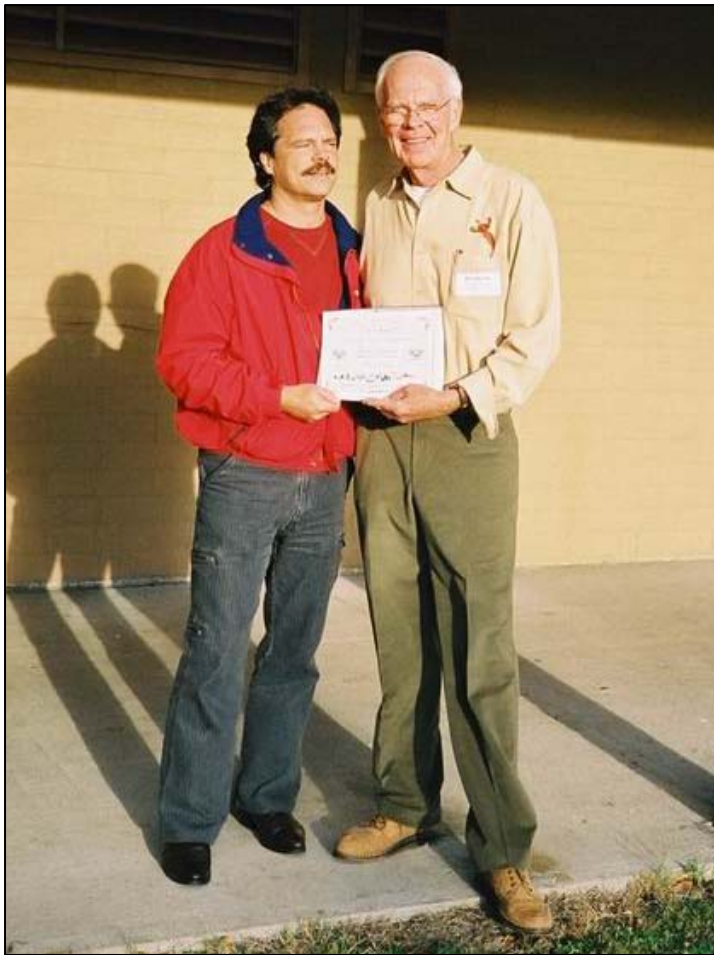



**“Greater Vancouver Motorsport Pioneers”**

TRIBUTE CEREMONY  
Saturday, October 23, 2004



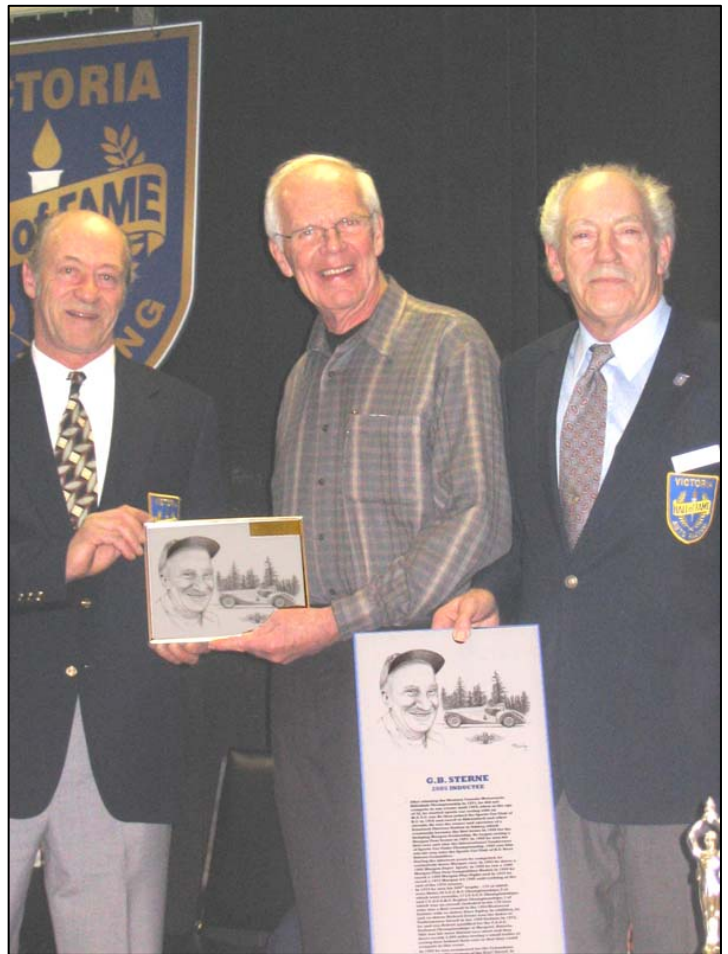
The Greater Vancouver Motorsport Pioneers Society (GVMP) is a group of motorsport enthusiasts from various motorsport activities whose goal it is to recognize and record the contributions of those who were pioneers in motorsport in this region.



G. B. Sterne's proud family, grandson Greg Sterne and son Bill Sterne, with the award standing in the sun outside the Curling Club on Saturday, October 23rd, 2004. Thanks to Mike Powley for the information and pictures.

next race which GB had entered the second grandson got to carry the flag. When he returned Bill asked his dad, "Now what about the youngest?" The youngest was six months at the time. "Well we shall have to work on that one," he said. Bill then asked his dad, "Now that you have grandkids, dad, when are you going to think of retiring from the racing?" GB did not say a thing but gave Bill, his oldest son, the most wicked evil eye. Nothing was ever mentioned again on this subject.

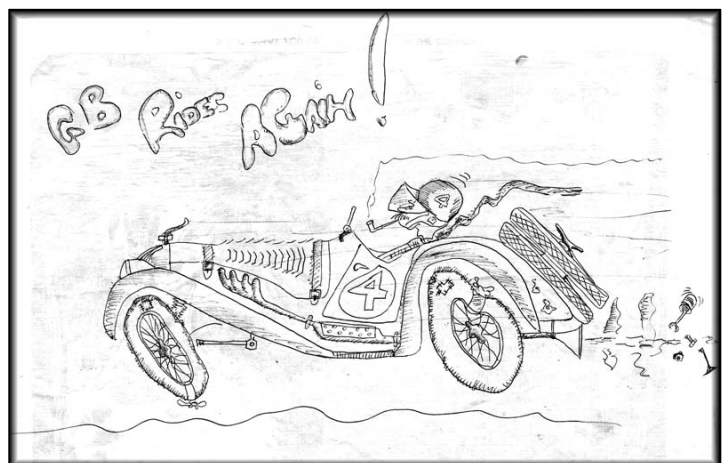
For more on the Victoria Auto Racing Hall of Fame, visit their website: [www.victoriaautoracinghalloffame.com](http://www.victoriaautoracinghalloffame.com)



### G.B. Sterne Inducted into the Victoria Auto Racing Hall of Fame

Saturday, February 19th, 2005, 3:00 PM, at the Langford Legion, G. B. Sterne was one of three inductees into the Victoria Auto Racing Hall of Fame. There were approximately 250 people in attendance from all forms of auto racing in the local area. Three Morgans were in attendance in the parking lot and more members of MOGNW were present. Bill Sterne took the duties of receiving the award. He told the crowd a story of his dad.

One summer in the mid-70s he and his wife had come out to the coast on holiday with his kids who were quite young at the time. On Sunday he arrived at Westwood to see the races. GB promised his oldest grandson (age 6) that if he won the race he would get a ride in the Morgan for the victory lap. True to form, the oldest got a ride and carried the checker flag for the victory. This upset the second grandson (age 3) who wanted to do the same. So in the







## **G. B. Sterne: Victoria Auto Racing Hall of Fame 2005 Inductee**

After winning the Western Canada Motorcycle Hill-climb Championship in 1931, he did not compete in any events until 1954, when at the age of 42, he started sports car racing with an MG TC car. *[Note: should be TD.]* He then joined the Sports Car Club of BC in 1955 and raced at Abbotsford and other circuits. He was the owner and operator of a Standard Chevron Station in Sidney, which eventually became the first home in 1956 for the fledgling Morgan dealership. He began racing a Morgan Four-Seater in 1957. In 1958 he won his first race and also the International Conference of Sports Car Clubs Championship. 1959 saw him win his way onto the Sports Car Club of BC Race Drivers Committee.

During the nineteen years he competed, he exclusively drove Morgan cars. In 1963 he drove a 1963 Morgan Super Sport; in 1966 he ran a 1966 Morgan Plus Four Competition Model; in 1969 he raced a 1969 Morgan Plus Eight; and in 1972 he raced a 1972 Morgan 4/4 1600 until retiring at the end of the 1975 season.

In 1974 he won his 389th trophy – 170 of which were firsts; twenty-six SCCBC Championships, eight of which

were overalls; seventeen ICSCC Championships; and two CASCBC Region Championships, one of which was an overall. Included in his 170 race wins was a first overall in the 1964 Westwood Enduro with co-driver Dave Ogilvy. In addition, he and co-driver Richard Evans won the Index of Performance Award in the 1968 Enduro. In 1972, he and son Robert qualified for the CASC National Championships at Mosport, Ontario. This was his most distant race meet and they drove nearly 3,000 miles towing a small trailer of racing tires behind their cars so that they could compete in this event.

In 1969 he was nominated for the Columbian Newspaper “Sportsman of the Year” Award. In addition to his driving efforts, he was a Charter Member of the Victoria Motor Sports Club, being President on two occasions; was a Charter Member of the International Conference of Sports Car Clubs where he was Vice-President for five years and the Novice License Director for three years; was an Executive Officer for CASC as well as being club representative for VMSC and SCCBC for many years.

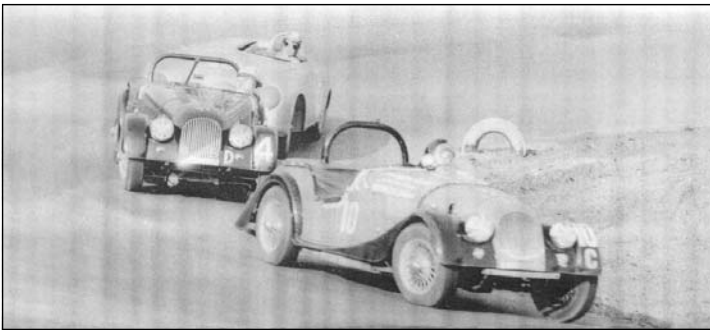
George’s wife Lydia was an active partner during his racing career. She did lap scoring, timing, some corner work duties as well as being a pit person. She also did some driving on occasion during George’s racing career. Although “G.B.” passed away on Oct. 15th, 1990, his memory lives on as a 2005 Inductee into the Victoria Auto Racing Hall of Fame.



George and Lydia were first in line at a 1962 autocross



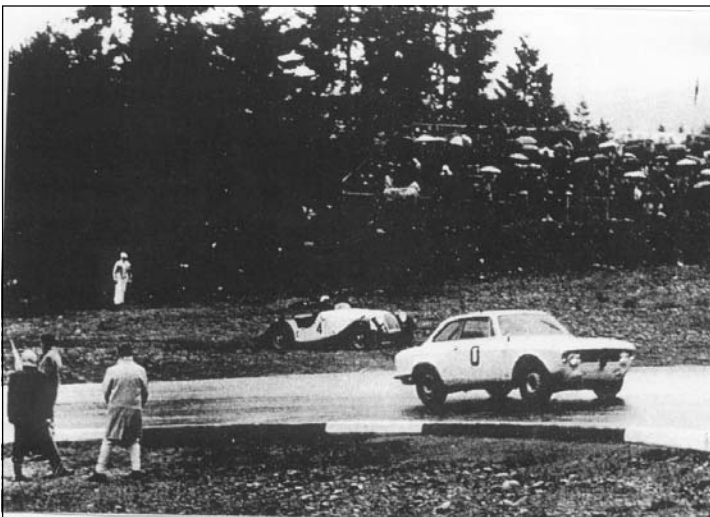
Receiving the green flag at Westwood



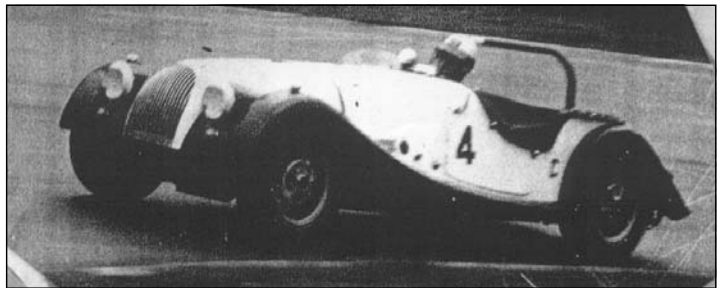
Running in 2nd spot at Westwood in 1962



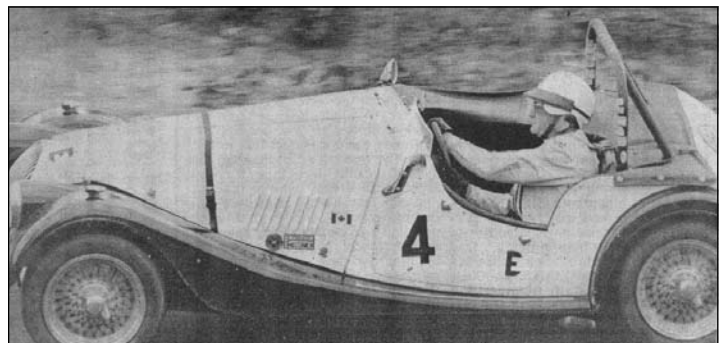
G. B. racing at Victoria's Western Speedway in 1971



G. B. "dirt trackin" at Westwood in 1970



Racing his Morgan in 1973 at Westwood



In action at Seattle International Raceway in 1975

*[Editor's Note: The cover photo and content on pages 47 and 48 are from the Victoria Auto Racing Hall of Fame website: [www.victoriaautoracinghalloffame.com/gbsterne/gbsterne.html](http://www.victoriaautoracinghalloffame.com/gbsterne/gbsterne.html)*

## CHAPTER 8 Final Tributes

*“... and We Thought it Could Never End”*

*A Tribute to G. B. and Lydia Sterne,  
The Morgans, The Track, The Life*

Mike Powley

Sporting Classics Magazine

May/June 1991

“... and we thought it could never end.”

This was the only kind of comment fellow Morganeer Larry Emrik and I could come up with, Monday evening, October 15th, 1990, when I got the call that George Beatty Sterne had died suddenly that afternoon, at home in Deep Bay, Vancouver Island.

Many of us never thought that those irksome little British sports cars mysteriously brought to life most of the time by the gods of Lucas would ever stop being produced, or that Westwood track would not always be there to test such cars prowess at dicing around a great track. Well, the start of the 1990s brought the last ever Historic Westwood Races as the track was scheduled to go to subdivision, and now in October a person symbolizing many of the great names in British Columbia motorsport had just passed away.

### **In the Beginning**

What of before all this? After service in the Second World War, GB owned and operated a recycled Standard Chevron Station in Sidney on Vancouver Island as a service garage. Eventually this became the first home for the fledgling Morgan dealership that George had to work so hard to get. In convincing Peter Morgan that it would be viable, it came down to an appeal to Peter's loyalty to serving the outposts of the British Empire with Mogs that finally closed the deal!

Life before Morgans included early eventing with a black MG TD in 1954 that GB and his wonderful wife and partner at the track Lydia would drive over to the Abbotsford track. Later this was replaced with their first Morgan, a 1957 Plus 4 4-Seater, and at age 45 George's driving career began in earnest.

### **From the Late `50s to the Early `70s**

These were the great years of GB, Morgan and Westwood events. GB was the man and the myth in the `60s at Westwood. The fans in the pits all knew of this guy who drove the funny Mog over from Vancouver Island.

Son Bob Sterne considers one of his most precious memories of his dad was when they raced together in 1972, with George in his Plus 8. The Canadian Championships were held at Mosport, and they both DROVE the Mogs to the Ontario races and home again.

G.B. expressed his philosophy many times and in 1974 he told Sun columnist Alan Daniels, “Every other driver put their car on a trailer to get to Mosport (Ontario). I hitched a trailer full of spare parts to my car and I drove it there. When we got to Mosport, we unhooked the trailer, drove the race, hooked the trailer back up again and drove home via California!”

Bob Sterne, also an outstanding driver in his own racing career with ICSCC championships to his credit, has his favourite “cagy-wily” story, too. “The cutest story about dad was during a race he had with Dave Collis,

Mog driver and mechanic at the Burnaby shop, in 1973. They had a race-long dice, and on the last lap Dave was slipstreaming him into the hairpin at Westwood and pulled out to pass just as dad approached a slower car. ‘I've got him!,’ thought Dave, and at that moment dad put on his turn signal. Dave lifted his foot, thought `what



the '????,' and then realized, too late, what had happened as dad pulled in front of him to win the race! When they got back to the pits, Dave asked him why he used the turn signal. GB just grinned and said, 'Why did you lift your foot?' A few comments were heard about the crafty old fox, etc. and everybody had a good laugh."

Bob Wilkinson from Black Butte Ranch, Oregon, who first met GB and Lydia at Westwood in the late '60s when he was racing a TR3 remembers, "The Sternes home was always open for U.S. people and they always had a great post race time at the house."

For Roland Gilbert and many other of the younger drivers, the Sternes' social events were warmly remembered. "G.B. and Lydia have been like a second set of parents to myself, and attendance at Lydia's Boxing Day Brunch was always a special occasion for wife Pat and I."

For others it was the little shop in Burnaby that became the beacon for dreams relating to Morgan ownership. Long time Morgan Owners Group Northwest member Bob Nelson, a Washington, USA, resident, found it hard to take when, on one of his visits to the Great White North for parts (the first time he actually had one of his Mogs running well enough to come up to Canada with the car) the shop was closed.

### **The Best Thing Ever for the Sternes**

I think from my recent conversation with Lydia in preparing this article, that both the Sternes would feel that

the development and implementation of the Novice Driver Award system for the ICSCC, first launched in 1983, would be the best ever event for both of them.

What other husband and wife team could set up and make this award fair and functional - George's driving career of 19 years, coupled with Lydia's experience at the track and in pit support work, with Lydia doing just about every event job short of the race starter.

The 1990 International Conference of Sports Car Club's Banquet took place Nov. 17th and it is fitting that special mention of this achievement was respectfully noted in the program as follows: "The Novice Driver of the year award is named the G.B. Sterne. G.B. and Lydia were active supporters of the Conference, G.B. being our first Vice-President. Always helping new drivers, George and Lydia ran the Novice Licensing program in the late sixties, and gave many of G.B.'s trophies to the Novices."

It was always fun to note in some of the articles by local columnists the speculation on how many trophies G. B. would finally wind up with. So to Tom Rosseter, Alan Daniels, and Nicole Parton (nee Strickland in 1975), whose great write-ups in the mid-70s helped all cope with the loss of Morgans being imported into Canada at the time, the final count is four-hundred and one.

Special thanks must go to Lydia for spending a half day with me in February, 1991, and providing for me, along with some great pictures, contacts and material, the real inspiration to write this tribute.

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## **Obituary** **George Beatty Sterne** **Apr 9, 1912 - Oct 15, 1990** **Ken Hill**

It is with sadness I have to report the death of George Beatty Sterne, who died suddenly on Monday, 15th October as a result of a heart attack, at the age of 78. Although not well known in the U.K., 'G.B.' as he was popularly known, enjoyed justifiable fame on the North American Continent.

G. B. started racing Morgans in 1954, at the age of 42, and it was not until 1956 that he had his first win. During the next 19 years 'G. B.' won no less than 400 trophies before he retired from racing in 1976, every one of them in a Morgan.

The Morgans he used in his career were:- 1954-56 Plus 4, 1957-59 Plus 4 four seater; 1960-62 Plus 4 four seater; 1963-65 Plus 4 Super Sports; 1966-68 Plus 4 Competition model; 1969-72 Plus 8; 1973-75 4/4 Competition model.

In 1956 'G.B.' wrote to the Morgan Motor Company asking to become the Canadian West Coast agent. At first the Company refused, but after repeated attempts 'G.B.' got the agency which he held until he retired from active

business at the end of 1976. His son Bob took over the business, and continued as Morgan agent until the mid 1980's.

Throughout his racing career his wife Lydia played a big part in the racing team; she attended nearly every race, helped in the pits, and of course did nearly every other job over the years, including lap scoring, timing, and flag marshalling, as well as having several races herself.

There can be no doubt that 'G.B.' helped the Morgan cause in North America more than maybe any other of his contemporaries. His enthusiasm, technical knowledge, and his willingness to help Morgan owners in both Canada and America, will long be remembered. The Morgan Sports Car Club extends its sincere sympathy to Lydia and his son Bob.

*[MC's note: Bob Sterne had two corrections for the obituary Ken Hill wrote:*

- 1) When GB started racing in 1954 it was in an MG TD;*
- 2) Between 1954 and 1956, GB raced an MG TD. The first Morgan he owned (and raced) was a 1957 Plus 4 4-Seater which he raced from 1957 to 1959.]*

## CHAPTER 2

### Friends Share Stories



#### MOGNW friends visit the Sternes, September 1988

Several Morgan Owners Group Northwest members gather at the Sterne residence in Deep Bay, near Qualicum Beach, B.C., in late September 1988. The event was a lunch stop on a club tour of Vancouver Island. GB and Lydia are in front of the three rows of Morgans with their white over black Plus 8. Left to right:

**Front Row** - Bill Hayter, Woody Thomson, Roland & Pat Gilbert, Stu Rulka, and Bert McCabe

**Centre Row** - Mike & Rosemarie Powley, Jean Tinnea, Glen & Louise Jewett, Bob & Janis Hauge, and Dick & Nancy Dice

**Back Row** - Ted Carew-Gibson, Dennis Morrison, Dave & Thea Wellington and Thor Frohn-Neilsen

**Now for some  
personal stories about GB  
from the memories  
of friends and colleagues**

**Al Allinson**

I was never able to beat GB until one Sunday at Westwood. I came out of the hairpin hot on GB's tail up through the esses. He began to pull over in front of me as

usual, expecting me to back off. I didn't this time and we hooked. I hooked his rear fender with the front bumper, and literally removed it from his car. He backed off and let me pass and we both finished the race with me in first place and GB a very close second. When GB came to me later in the pits, I expected the worst but he shook my hand and said, "Al, now you're learning how to race!"

Then there's the story of a Plus 8 in 1969. The factory changed a car that GB sold to a California resident from right to left hand drive. The Californian flew up to Van-

cover with plates under his arm and drove the yellow Plus 8 home. He drove it around LA for some time until *Road and Track* spotted it. They asked if they could do a road test. Unfortunately, a US customs person read the road test and the vehicle was impounded. The last I heard of it the Plus 8 was in a US warehouse impound.

### **Dave Collis**

Dave worked at Sterne Motors in Burnaby for many year and relates the story of an argument between GB and his wife Lydia, who looked after the books and correspondence for the business. The air was blue in the shop for some time and Dave, Bob and everyone else went outside to the lot and/or the parts shed until the air was clear.

Dave also tells me of the time, mentioned in another article, when GB pulled the turn signal trick on him. He says GB used this one and the stab the brake lights with the left foot trick many times on the track.

### **Mike Currie**

One of my favourite stories about these two (GB and Lydia) is how Denny Howlett and I were marshalling on the outside of Turn 3 during the 7-hour Enduro at Westwood. It was a cold, miserable day and early evening. In fact, it was down-right ugly, if I recall correctly.

During a lull in the proceedings (all the cars were on the other side of the circuit, I suppose) we heard a crashing and swearing in the bushes. We could see a flashlight shining on the foliage and we learned some interesting phraseology as Lydia Sterne came stomping through the underbrush carrying a flashlight and a couple of thermos. One thermos contained hot soup, the other coffee very liberally laced with RUM (or is it the other way around?). Anyway, she'd decided that us folks on the outside of three, who had no way of getting through the infield and up to the paddock, really needed some sustenance. So, she'd loaded up and walked in the dark around the perimeter of the track (through the underbrush and stumps) all the way from the pits to Turn 3 to bring us a hot drink. What a woman!

When Stirling Moss visited Vancouver he was introduced to George and Lydia. They compared trophy rooms. In those days, Lydia used to keep only the current trophies in the living room cabinet. George had won so many that they were stored elsewhere. After some calculation, it was determined that George had more trophies than Stirling.

I recall we ran into GB and Lydia on the way to Monterey for the first Can-Am in '66. We caught up to them just before the Redwood Forests in Northern California. George was driving his current Morgan with their little trailer attached to the back. Driving along sedately at highway speeds they came to the windy roads through the Red-

woods and George promptly sped up and drove through there like a bat out of hell. When the highway resumed beyond the Forest, George slowed down to a more normal speed. Fun to watch someone drift a Morgan with a trailer on the back.

### **Vern Dale-Johnson**

I used to work corner 3 at Westwood. One club race I watched GB come into the corner three abreast - can't remember who was on the outside and inside, seems to me an Alfa Guiletta Sprint and a Mini might be appropriate. GB got about half way through the corner, still three abreast and obviously he was not pleased... A quick flick of the wrists right and left knocked both into spins - one to the outside and one right at us! GB powered through and disappeared up the hill.

### **Phil Dauphinee**

Although I did not know GB personally, I did see him race many times at Westwood, visit his Morgan dealership numerous times to dream and was in the Simon Fraser Sports Car Club at the same time his son Bob was member. The president of the SFU club arranged through GB to purchase one of the first Plus 8's when he started his first job upon his graduation. This had been kept a secret except on a need to know basis.

Most of us thought he would buy a Datsun 240Z as his university car was a Datsun Fairlady and his favourite item of apparel was a Datsun logoed jacket. We were all blown away when he showed up at a gymkhana in a SFU parking lot with a new yellow body black-fendered Plus 8. I am pretty sure that was the first time I saw Bob Sterne's green 4/4 and there is a good chance GB and Lydia Sterne were there too.

That was just about the peak of my Morgan experiences which started when I had two grade twelve teachers who had Morgans at Argyle Secondary in North Vancouver. Mr. Haffenden, an English teacher, had a new black Plus 4 four-seater. He actually named one of his sons Morgan and went on to own almost a dozen Morgans. Mr. Ludgate was perhaps the second owner of a green 4/4 with Brookland's screens and Union Jacks on the side cowl.

### **Dave Ogilvy**

The car that GB and I drove in the 1964 Semperit Five Hour Endurance Race was the Super Sport Model. GB drove the car to Westwood, removed the muffler, windshield and other extraneous items and qualified the car.

We ran the event mostly in the rain, added two quarts of oil and of course gasoline on a total of, I believe, four pit stops. I do remember GB started and finished the race and

we were penalized for two of his off road excursions. Even with the penalty laps we came out victorious. Following the race GB re-installed the muffler, windscreen etc. and drove the car home. He was living in Burnaby at the time but none the less quite an advertisement for the car. Because money was paid for that event there were no trophies. GB and I won the event and first prize was \$60.00. Big Deal! GB said since he supplied the car the money split would be as follows; \$30 to me, \$30 to him and \$30 for the car. I said no problem. GB took his \$60 and had a trophy made for first place. He was a trophy nut you know.

I looked very hard at buying a Morgan for the 1965 season and I was torn between returning to production car racing or buying a true race car. I talked to Bob McLean about the dilemma and he influenced my decision a great deal. The result was my purchase of the Cooper. GB never had much use for me after that.

I have another somewhat amusing story about GB which occurred at the CASC year end runoff races at Mosport. Again GB and Lydia had driven the Super Sport from Vancouver to Toronto towing a trailer for their gear and spare bits. GB used a very old crash helmet which looked like something Sterling Moss would have used in his earlier days. The BC region of CASC allowed this excuse for safety to go by, but when GB showed up at Tech Inspection at Mosport they shut him down saying he would have to up-grade his helmet if he wished to race. The poop hit the fan big time and it was GB against the entire CASC army. I was the BC rep. for CASC and I was asked to see if I could solve the problem. GB agreed reluctantly to use a new but borrowed helmet and so I went with him to one of the safety equipment suppliers to get an approved helmet. Here comes the humourous part. The sales person on seeing GB's old helmet laughed out loud and said, "I can see the problem here" and he promptly threw GB's old helmet into a 45 gallon garbage can. GB went ballistic and I thought CASC would wind up with a law suit, however, he calmed down, retrieved his old helmet, ran the event with a borrowed helmet and again drove the car home to Vancouver. GB had a conference production prepared car and was competing against the equivalent of SCCA prepared cars so he did not finish well but he did go back racing at Westwood with the old helmet. GB was to say the least a stubborn man with well thought out ideas that always benefitted Morgan Cars where possible, and who can blame him for that. I liked the man but he drove me nuts sometimes.

### **Ted Laturnus**

One of the reasons I've owned Morgans over the years is because Sterne's shop in Burnaby was on Beresford Street. I used to pass it twice a day to and from high school. The first time I saw one of the cars, it was a green

Plus 4, I just about wet my pants. I vowed to get one then and there and after a few years, I did. I also saw Sterne kicking ass out at Westwood multi times in the sixties and early seventies.

### **Dr. and Mrs. Ernie Ledgerwood**

We bought George's Plus Four Super Sport at the end of the 1965 season and ran it for two years in under 2litre configuration under ICSCC #99. We spent a lot of time with George and Lydia as Morgan owner and driver, as well as in our various official capacities they were both tireless in their work for Westwood, the Club and Conference and in their support for Morgan owners and drivers.

George remained a patient of Ernie's for some time after we quit racing and we have stayed in touch since.

We have many happy memories of both the Sternes but a couple really stand out. Ernie was on the front row of the grid of a production race one race day, with GB driving the middle car. GB had come out from the false grid smoking a cigarette, which he was finishing in a leisurely way. Jim McRae was backing through the grid, checking each car and driver in turn, pointing his furred flag at each driver and getting a high sign in return. As he got to the front, GB leaned overboard to butt his cigarette out on the track beside the car. Quick as a wink, Jim flagged the field away, leaving GB sitting like a rock in a stream with cars streaming past on either side.

We both have very happy memories of Lydia approaching in the pits as the flag fell at the end of the day with her famous detergent bottle and handful of tiny containers, dispensing gimlets left and right.

Together with Bob and Hilda Randall, GB and Lydia were the centre of away race social life and many a novice was rescued when Lydia produced just the thing he needed from a corner of the Morgan they had driven to the track.

As you can see, it is impossible to remember GB without Lydia or Lydia without GB. They have been an example of teamwork for us all.

*[Ernie Ledgerwood was a member of SCCBC 1964-1970, Vice-President and in charge of the Westwood medical facility; a member of RDC; an ICSCC Medical Officer and Race Steward. Lynn Ledgerwood was a member SCCBC Ladies' Division and President 1968-1970.]*

### **Gerry Wilburn**

Gerry tells his version of the same story about the first Plus 8 in the United States: Most of Al's story matches the history of R7081 (engine 41400045A and gearbox 4607), owned for many years by Jim Belardi. It was brought into the U.S.A. through Canada by Scott McMillian. It was

from Sterne (19 June 1969) and Scott, I believe, carried up the plates. He told the SMOG nazis that it had a Rover engine and they looked that up on the lists and said that Rovers were approved.

Number 7081 was (and is) yellow with black wings, and was reputedly the first Plus 8 in the USA. It was the subject of the R&T Road Test in 1969. Scott sold the car to Jim Belardi about 1970 and Jim has had it ever since.

Many years later, Jim was visited by a sympathetic Customs Inspector (he owned an Austin Healy). After looking

at the car he said that he would get back to Jim. He called a few days later and said that he had good news and bad news. The bad news was that the car was illegal as hell. The good news was that he did not have to do anything about it. It seems that around 1972 someone else on the West Coast smuggled in several Morgans and one of them was involved in a fatal accident. Customs was looking for the rest of those cars.

I think that this was the story that Al Allinson heard.



# Chapter 3

## The Sterne Garages

From 1946 to 1976 GB owned and operated three garages. Earlier the business was called Sterne's Garage and later it became Sterne Motors.

### Sterne's Garage 1946-1960



Sterne's Garage opened for business in 1946 on the old Pat Bay Highway on the Saanich Peninsula near Sidney, British Columbia. The address on the business licence is East Saanich Road, R.M.D. Next door to the garage was a cottage that belonged to GB's parents. When the highway bypassed the location about 1960, the address was changed to 10612 McDonald Park Road, the current address.

Note the manual gas (petrol) pumps in these photos. A 10 gallon glass reservoir was up top and marked off in gallons. Gasoline was pumped manually from underground

tanks with a long lever on the side of the pump. Gravity was used to dispensed into the vehicle by a hose and nozzle with a pistol grip similar to the ones used to this day.

The oil rack can be seen in the second photo. Oil was served from glass bottles with a screw-on metal spout. They were refilled locally at the station from bulk 45 gallon oil drums.

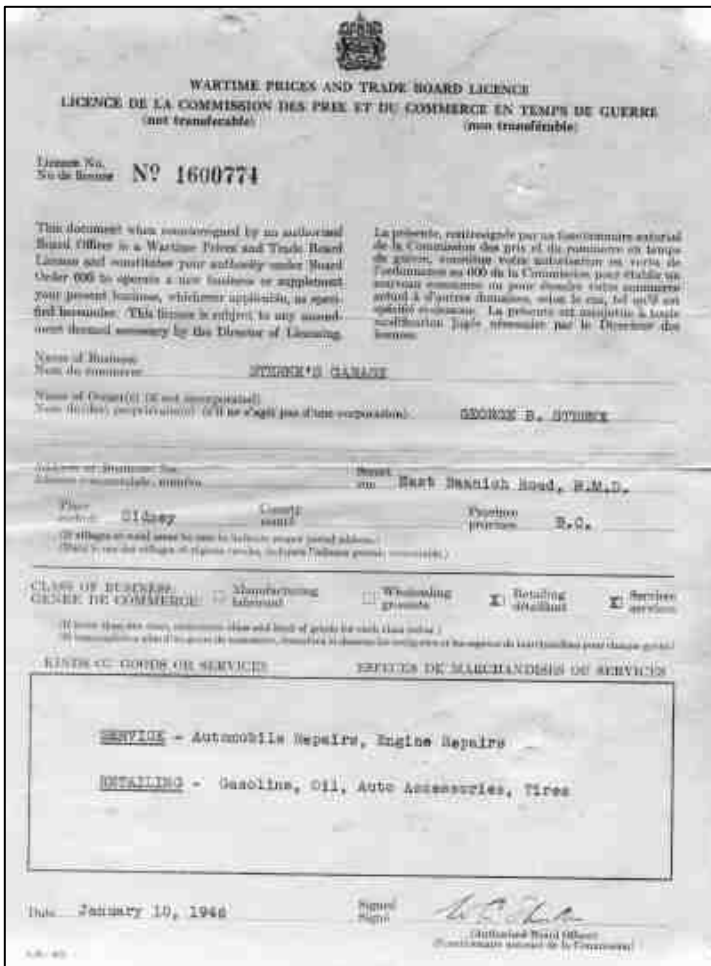
In the colour photo below, taken on June 19th, 2004, a group of MOGNW members visited this historic location and parked their cars in the parking lot. The building is still there and still in use, currently by the Coyote Canvas Company. Some of the Morgans were sold and first serviced from this building. This was probably the most Morgans the building had ever seen.



Sterne's Garage Proprietor 1950

Bill Sterne recalls a memory of his dad in the early days of the shop on the Pat Bay Highway in Sidney. "Dad would be under a Morgan of some sort, often his own, getting it prepared for the next weekend's races at Westwood. The hose across the pumps would give the ever familiar 'ding

'ding' and on the first one he would usually ignore it. When it happened the second time he would grudgingly mumble a few words to himself and slide out from under the car to attend to the pumps. What he really disliked were the damn Chevron giveaways of those days, the plates or drinking glasses, because they had nothing to do with cars, let alone Morgans."



Sterne's original business licence



Sterne's first Morgan - 1956

This photo was taken in front of the first Sterne's Garage early in 1957 and is the first car GB brought in, a 1936 Plus 4 2-Seater, #3504. It was sold to and raced by Alex James. There is another Morgan visible in the garage. The building was originally built as a blacksmith shop and had huge fir beams, hand-hewn with an adze, that were supported underneath with steel rods and turnbuckles. It had no posts, quite a feat for a wooden building that

large. The building is still there, although the part that used to be the office is now incorporated in the house, attached, at the left.



Sterne's Garage Coaster

## Sterne's Garage 1960-1963

I recently heard a story about GB's second location on Highway 17, the new Pat Bay Highway, but do not know of its authenticity. The story says that when the Provincial Government built the new Pat Bay Highway in 1958-59 to service the new BC Ferries terminals in Swartz Bay, GB kicked up such a fuss with the Department of Highways about the loss of business that he was sold the new property at a pretty good price. He and the bank built the new building at 10305 Patricia Bay Highway which became a popular fueling station as it was the last one before the ferries.



The official opening was on Dec. 7th, 1960. The facility included new modern electric fuel pumps and a showroom for his Morgans. As you can see in the photo, it was a gala event with the radio station CJVI in attendance. The Ga-

rage was later painted white with blue trim to match the Chevron colours. It was a familiar sight to locals and tourists alike for many years.

**Proprietor Of New Garage Is Exponent of Road Racing in the West: Top Driver Of Year Is Newest Award For Sidney Race Driver**

*Saanich Peninsula and Gulf Island Review*  
Wednesday, December 7th, 1960

Saturday will mark an important event in the life of Sterne's Garage, North Saanich. On Saturday morning the public new premises on the Patricia Bay Highway will be formally opened.

After trading on the old highway for 14 years, George B. Sterne will be established in the last service station this side of Tsawwassen Beach. Move follows rerouting of the old highway, which left the old unit in a dead traffic artery. The new station is on the new highway, north of Sandown race track, where the new road forks away from the old. The building is approached from either highway.

The new station is not only a new landmark on the highway, it is also among the most distinctive stations on Vancouver Island and has no counterpart anywhere on the North American continent. Built of western lumber, it is finished in natural wood and represents a marked departure from the formalized architecture of the majority of stations. In addition to its service facilities, the new structure also boasts accommodation upstairs for the proprietors, George and Lydia Sterne, and a pleasing showroom for Morgan cars, of which the garage is the distributor for Western Canada and Washington.

**ERECTED BY GARDNER**

Sterne's Garage has been a familiar point on the old highway out to Swartz Bay for many years. It was erected by G. A. Gardner on the property of his father, the late J. S. Gardner, prior to the Second World War. Materials used in its construction were in part brought from Piers Island, where a Doukhobor prison farm was maintained some three decades ago.

Mr. Gardner operated the station until the outbreak of war. For a time it remained open until the proprietor was engaged in the welding of the steel water line linking Patricia Bay Airport with the Elk Lake water system. Mr. Gardner was engaged on a full-time basis on that project, employing his own portable equipment. The task took up most of the hours in the day and the garage was closed when there was neither staff available to tend it nor sales for gasoline or service to justify it.

**NAVAL SERVICE**

In the meantime, George Sterne, native of Ontario and a resident of Edmonton since the age of four, had been serv-

ing in the naval reserve. For nearly six years he had been chief engineer in submarine chasers serving in the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans. Came 1945 and his farewell to war, when the prairie man decided to transfer his affection to the coast. Having seen Vancouver Island, he was determined to reside here.

On January 2, 1946, the old service station became Sterne's Garage. GB Sterne and his wife and family moved into Sidney, later bringing his parents, Mr. and Mrs. W. H. Sterne to reside near them. They have never looked beyond the peninsula community.

Development of his business accompanied development of a new interest on the part of the station operator. In 1952 George Sterne acquired a birthday present to himself. It was a two-seater British sports car. For a time he contented himself with driving around the province in an MG, model TD.

**TO ROAD CIRCUITS**

In 1954, now thoroughly familiar with the famous sports car, George entered the field of sports car racing. Starting racing at an age when many drivers are relinquishing their interest, he went from success to success. Many of the world's famous racing drivers have abandoned circuits with the close of their thirties. George proved them wrong. With his MG he gained experience and a few awards. In 1956 his family was growing and his two-seater was inadequate. Rather than abandon his sports car to the past and acquire a larger model, George looked around for a car which would serve two purposes, family transportation and racing. His eye settled on the Morgan, with its four seats.

Negotiations for a distributorship went through months, but finally Sterne's Garage became the western centre for Morgans and his recreation became part of his own operation. Although the only driver in the western circuits to use a four-seater car, the Sidney driver never looked back. In his first car, a 1957 model, he took 27 plaques or trophies. This year he replaced the car with a 1960 model and has already clipped off another dozen awards.

**REGULAR PERFORMER**

The Sterne car is seen on Westwood near Port Moody whenever the circuit is open. It is also a regular performer at Seattle, Spokane and in Oregon. For the benefit of technically minded, it is a standard production car, equipped with a Standard TR3 2-litre, 4-cyl. o.h.v. engine, modified by Morgan. Under the terms of the western racing conference, it may race only as manufactured while in the "production" class. This clause prohibits extensive and expensive modifications which might drive out all but the wealthier drivers.

In 1958 George Sterne was international champion in Class D, which is the class in which he habitually races. In 1959 he was placed second, being overhauled by Jack

Murray, of Seattle, also in a Morgan. In 1959 he was also top man in the Sports Car Club of British Columbia in his class and second irrespective of class.

Continuing his successes, George he was adjudged best driver of the year at Pacific Raceways in Seattle this year. Sports car racing is not to be confused with stock car racing, explains the proponent of the former. Sports cars are ordinary road models, tuned for the occasion, but fully equipped. They are driven on circuits far removed from tracks. The circuit is usually a section of paved road resembling an ordinary roadway. The appeal of road racing is far removed from that of track racing, both from the driver's vantage point and as a spectator sport. Road racing is an imported sport and has become among the top sports attractions in many European countries.

### SYNONYMOUS

Among western exponents of the sport, Sterne and Morgan are synonymous. On Saturday the appeal of road racing will be evident when the new garage is opened. Names will be drawn during the day whereby winners will be taken around in a Morgan by a prominent western driver.

The new structure was constructed by Andreas Boas, Sidney contractor, and stands as a sentinel on the new highway, a permanent tribute to the designer and builder. Various prizes will be offered on Saturday from 11AM until 8PM, and coffee and doughnuts will be given away all day. Corsages and candy are also offered.

In mid-1963 GB must have got fed up with all the travels on the ferry to go to the racing, his reason for Morgans, so he sold the station and moved his home and business to Burnaby.

### A Personal Story About This Building

In 1963-64 I was dating a girl who lived in Sidney. I used to come over to visit with her every other weekend and she came to Vancouver on the opposite weekends. One night we were invited to a big party with many of her friends. At the piano entertaining was an absolutely brilliant player. I asked Bev his name. "David Foster, his dad owns the Chevron station on the Highway." "Oh, you mean the one that used to be Sterne's?" "Yep, that's the one. I had never heard of David Foster at that time but soon would. - MC.



GB and Lydia in their brand new showroom with three Morgan Plus 4s for sale (#4399, white; #4402, red; and #4428, a 4-Seater, grey)



## Sterne Motors 1963-1980s



GB's next location was on the Grandview Highway near Boundry Road at 3712 Clydesdale in Burnaby, B.C. The exact date of this series of pictures is not confirmed, but I would guess it at 1964 to early 1965.

In the photos above there are as many as six Morgans out front for sale. Bob Sterne notes there is one of each model in the photos: a Plus 4 Plus, a 4/4 2-Seater, a Plus 4 Drophead Coupe, a Plus 4 2-Seater, a Plus 4 4-Seater, and a Plus 4 Super Sport. As far as he knows, this was the only

time they ever managed to have one of each either in stock or in for repairs.

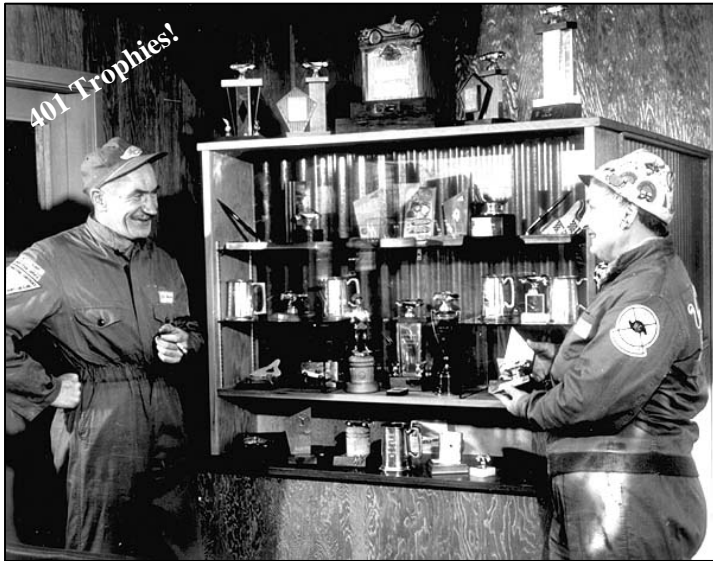
In photos 1, 3 and 4 the now-famous Plus 4 Super Sport #5330 is on the far right sporting GB's racing number "4."

Two of the rare Plus 4 Plus models (only 26 were made) were shipped to Sterne Motors in 1964, A5558 (black) and A5592 (red). A5592 is on the far left in all of the photos.

If you think you recognize your car here we have the resources to confirm it.

# CHAPTER 4 GB's Trophies

With 401 trophies ultimately in his collection,  
GB was a "trophy hound."



**1959**



**1965**

From the Vancouver Province



CANADIAN RACING CHAMP



Bob McLean, left, congratulated fellow BC Sports Car Club member George Sterne, winner of two of the three top cups in annual club presentations, last Friday night. Sterne, a sports car dealer in Burnaby, is one of few men these days able to combine business with pleasure.

Dave Mabell photo

## **Burnaby Racing Driver Scores Double Triumph**

### ***Wins 2 of 3 Cups in BC Club Presentations***

By Gene Diachuk

A 53 year old Burnaby business man, G. B. Sterne, has added six more racing trophies to his collection. Sterne, of 3785 Edinburgh, now has 191 trophies won over the past nine and a half years, in pursuit of his hobby and business.

Last Friday night George Sterne was presented with two large trophies for production and sport racing championship along with four smaller ones, at the annual presentation night of the BC Sports Car Club.

Sterne once worked installing windmills on prairie farms, then spent some 18 years on Vancouver Island operating a service station and now operates Sterne Motors at 3712 Clydesdale (Grandview and Boundary), a business he established a year and a half ago.

But it's when the shop closes that Sterne comes into his own with sports car racing. He started his racing career with an MG he raced for a year and a half. Sterne then bought his first Morgan, a four-seater, which he raced for three years. Now three Morgans later, Sterne and his car both are well known to most drivers and spectators throughout the North West Circuit.

G. B. Sterne has been one of the strongest competitors at Westwood, never missing a race since Westwood opened in July 1959. This year he has been appointed the North-West Novice License Director of 1966, putting an added responsibility on his back.

Young Robert Sterne is also following his father's footsteps by forming the first sports car club at SFU, acting as its president. The club recently held its first meet at the Brentwood Shopping Centre with 81 entries to its credit.

Other Burnaby winners in the annual trophy presentations were Denis Phillips, 3890 Sunset, winning in F class in production, and Larry Curtis, 6910 Boundary, taking second in G class. In the overall production championship, G. B. Sterne placed first followed by Denis Phillips. Placing first in improved production were John Hall, 4622 Hastings, in E class, and Norm Matovich, 4227 Union, in G class.

John Hall also placed third in the overall improved production championship. In sports racing, G. B. Sterne placed first in E class, followed by Mrs. Karen Hall and Wayne Sievers, 550 North Edmonds, in F class.

The complete results of B.C.S.C.C trophy presentations:

#### PRODUCTION

A class: Cliff Lindberg (1st) Henry Porter (2nd)

B class: Stan Holinaty

C class: John Randall

D class: **G.B. Sterne** (1st), John Fawell (2nd), Bill Taylor (3rd)

E class: Chas. McKaigh, Gio. Coleta, Bob Axford

F class: Denis Phillips, Chas. Barrett, Tony Campbell

G class: Horst Katins, Larry Curtis

H class: Bill Damm; Dave Ogilvy, Pat McCormick

I class: Mickey McGuire, Rudy Von Hertzberg, Pat McCormick

#### PRODUCTION CHAMPIONSHIP OVERALL

**G. B. Sterne**, Dennis Phillips, Bill Damm

#### IMPROVED PRODUCTION

A class: Cliff Lindbergh

B class: Stan Holinaty

C class: John Randall

D class: John Fawell, Charles McKaig

E class: John Hall, Tony Campbell, Laurie Cater

F class: Gordon McMillan, Gerry Barrett, Charles Barrett

G class: Norm Matovich, Pat McCormick, Peter Heaster

#### IMPROVED PRODUCTION

#### CHAMPIONSHIP OVERALL

Gordon McMillan, John Randall and Gerry Barrett; John Hall and Charles Barrett

#### SPORTS RACING

C class: Cliff Lindbergh, Jim Rattenbury

D class: Ernie Ledgerwood, Chas. McKaig, Bob Constabaris

E class: **G. B. Sterne**, Karen Hall, Ted Flanders

F class: John Randall, Wayne Sievers, Bob McLean

G class: Geoff Hortin, Ron Moscrop Frank Matovich

#### SPORTS RACING CHAMPIONSHIP

**G. B. Sterne**, Karen Hall, John Randall

#### FORMULA JUNIOR I

Dave Ogilvy, Sid Fowids

#### FORMULA V

Chas. McKaig, Walt Zbinden

#### SEDANS

Class I: Mickey McGuire, Al Kline, Rudy Vin Hertzberg

Class II: Manfred Mertsch, Geo. Wagstaff

Class III: Bob McLean, Joe Robinson, Milt Goodman

#### TOP LADY DRIVER

Karen Hall (B) (won three years in a row)

#### TOP MGA DRIVER

Bill Damm

# 1968

## MOTORSPORT

### Endurance - that's his forte

By Brian Lewis, Province Motorsport Writer

Westwood veteran George Sterne and Morgan sports cars go together like plugs and points<sup>8</sup> in fact, they go together so well that the 56-year-old grandfather has won 153 trophies in 11 years of racing. And Sterne, the oldest competitor driving regularly at the 1.8-mile circuit, has a chance to add another trophy to his collection when he runs in The Daily Province 10 Hours of Endurance race at Westwood on Oct. 19.

The Endurance is the longest in Canada and third longest in North America, with only the 24-hour Daytona and the 12-hour Sebring being longer.

This will be the first time Sterne has run a 10-hour race, but the 40-odd younger drivers expected on the starting grid at 11 a.m. had better not write him off.

George has made his mark on auto racing in the northwest, winning 10 International Conference titles, the last one being the E Production class this year.

He's got an excellent chance to take the E Improved class when he races in the final Conference race next Sunday in Kent, going into the race with a 10-point lead.

In 1964, Sterne won the Endurance when it was a five-hour race, with co-driver Dave Ogilvy of New Westminster. This year Sterne has recruited another Westwood favourite, Bill Evans of Vancouver, to co-drive with him over the 400-mile marathon. Evans was rookie-of-the-year in 1967.

Because of the length of this year's Endurance, Sterne had made a few changes in his preparation. He's got George Hollinger of Vancouver, an excellent mechanic, as his pit captain, and fired his wife, captain in the other endurance.

"Well, she'll be doing a bit of everything," says Sterne. "But she's especially good at keeping track of my position during the race. I remember her scoring in one Endurance and she told me my exact position right through the race, which isn't easy over five hours."

Sterne's strategy in striving for the winner's share of the \$1,230 and The Daily Province Endurance Trophy is simple. "Just run a steady race," he says. "Of course you have to have a good reliable car to start with, but what I plan to do is pick a pace just down from my very best speed. You can't go flat out in a race like this: You'd never finish!"

The race will finish at 9 p.m., but night driving doesn't bother Sterne. "If you've been around that track as much as I have, you know where the street is," he says.

It's true too. Sterne has raced so many laps around Westwood that he could probably find his way round the track in the dark just as easily as he does in daylight.

## G.B. Sterne Gains ICSCC Overall title

By Bill Sendelback

Portland, Ore., Oct. 31, 1968

G.B. Sterne, the gray haired elder statesman of northwest road racing and Vancouver, B.C., Morgan dealer, has won the 1968 points title and taken two 1968 class victories in International Conference of Sports Car Clubs, according to final standings released today.

Sterne won the 1968 overall title by collecting 69 points, nine points ahead of his nearest competitor, Eric Greenwell, and romped home in his Morgan with the season championships in E production and E improved production (ICSCC's version of SCCA production classes). It





was a repeat win for Sterne in E Production, and he finished second in E Production in 1967.

Only one other Conference driver collected championships in two classes. Tommy Hamilton drove his Shelby

GT350 to victory in B Improved Production and A Sports/Racing. But a half dozen ICSCC drivers will take home trophies in two classes during the ICSCC annual meeting, Nov. 16, in Seattle.



**Lydia and G. B. Sterne with the ICSCC Novice of the Year Award named in G. B.'s honour**

# 1969



1969  
 John Randall - 1st overall  
 Charlie Godecke - 2nd overall  
 G. B. Sterne - 3rd overall



**SCCBC Awards Banquet, Coach House Inn - 1969**

Left to right: L. D. "Lynn" Ledgerwood, President, Skip Alexandra, Treasurer, G. B. Sterne, 3rd overall, Bob Randall, President (1969-70), Bob Trickett, 2nd overall, Lance Morley, 1st overall, Gordon McMillian, RDC Chairman

## Chapter 5

# Bob's Memories of GB



Dad and me with our last race car, the 1972 4/4 1600 2-Seater we raced in '73, '74 and '75. I raced it in E Production and F Sports Racing. He raced it in E Improved Production. We ran three races every weekend plus numerous practice sessions for three years with no engine or transmission failures and no serious accidents!

### A Few Recollections About My Dad

Few people know that when he grew up in Edmonton, he was known as "Beatty" Sterne, during the Navy years as "George," and after returning to civilian life as "GB."

He was a perfectionist, and he loved to fix things just to show it could be done. He would line up all the screw head slots on any project he was working on, and berate me if I didn't do the same. His favourite saying was "if a job's worth doing, it's worth doing right."

GB could fix just about anything, and was frustrated that car components were becoming "sealed" units that were designed to be thrown away instead of repaired. The best example I can give of this is starter solenoids. He would grind them open, turn over the contact bar, file the terminals smooth and reassemble with bolts. This doubled their useful life. He seldom threw anything out. In fact, he kept a bucket under the bench full of bent nails, which when he had time he would straighten to reuse.

When Bill or I were working on a project and got stumped, he would tell us to try again. If, in frustration, we told him we couldn't do it, he would bellow "there's no such word as can't, only won't" and send us back to try again. If we finally gave up and admitted defeat, he would only say, "you mean there is no way it can be fixed?" and if we didn't go back to trying, then God help us because in a few minutes the thing was working perfectly and we had to eat our words. I don't ever remember seeing something he couldn't fix if he set his mind to it. I've seen him take

apart many things, just to find out how they worked, and if he needed a special tool to do a particular job, he would usually just make it.

He was a very inventive guy, and often thought "outside the box." He was very creative in his solutions to problems, and like any good engineer, many things he would come up with would do several jobs using just one part, in other words light and efficient. I think he only made it to grade 8 before going out into the working world, but a lack of formal education didn't hold him back. He had more common sense than anyone I've ever known, and his mechanical ability was next to none, something he undoubtedly inherited from his grandfather, George Beatty, after whom he was named.

*[GB's grandfather was George Beatty. George and Matthew Beatty founded Beatty Brothers in Fergus, Ontario, in 1874. The firm was a major manufacturer of farm equipment and appliances and an industry leader in developing an electric agitator washer. By 1925, Beatty Brothers was the largest producer and exporter of barn and stable equipment in the British Empire.]*

One good example of his inventiveness and mechanical ability was the first air compressor we had in Sidney. He took a blown engine from a Model T Ford apart and converted it. Number one cylinder was unusable, so he took out that rod and piston and ran the engine on the centre two cylinders, modifying the intake and exhaust manifolds to prevent leaks. He poured the combustion chamber on #4 cylinder full of Babbitt to raise the compression and installed a poppet valve in the spark plug hole with a line running to the air tank. Then he removed the tappets from the valves on that cylinder and installed a light spring under the intake valve so that it would open under the suction of the intake stroke. Every time the piston moved down, it would suck fresh air in through the intake port and, when the piston moved up, the air was forced into the pressure tank. It was very simple and efficient. He mounted the individual spark coils on the wall and ran them with a transformer from house current. I think that compressor ran from when it was built, probably around 1947, until we moved to the second garage about 1960.

When he was growing up, he became a crack shot with a rifle and shotgun, and I still have his target shooting jacket and .22 rifle. Bill has his old shotgun. He used to go hunting with his motorcycle and sidecar and come back with it loaded with game. I can remember him telling me of getting 23 green-head Mallards (Drakes) in one morning, and his first "business venture" as a boy was shooting rabbits, skinning them, and drying the pelts. He made 5 cents a pelt for his time, because he sold them for 6 cents

and he figured he could get 25 rabbits with a box of 50 shells. At the time a box of .22 shells cost 25 cents.

When we lived in Sidney, he and Bill hunted pheasants regularly. I can remember having a goose dinner when he he downed a goose with a single shot in the head with the .22 while leaning against the office door in Sidney. He paced off the range, and it was just over 100 yards!

When the Morgan business declined because we could no longer bring in cars, dad looked around for something else to sell, and his love of the sea brought him to sailing. He became a dealer for the Matilda trailer-able sailboats, made in Ontario, and had one himself named the "Lydiatoo." He never did as much sailing as he would have liked, but the few times I was out with him he really enjoyed it. It is strange how many people who raced at Westwood went on to take up sailing as a hobby. From the noise and competition to the serenity of wind and sail, quite a contrast! Maybe it's because once you have tasted throwing a Morgan around a racetrack, nothing else can compete, and so a complete change of hobby is necessary.

During all the years my dad raced and sold Morgans, he tried to get a club going for enthusiasts. It never happened until after he retired, when a few local owners got together and formed the Morgan Owner's Group Northwest. This group has grown and grown over the years, and happily, before my father's death in 1990, they were able to see a large group of Morgans gather at their retirement cottage in Qualicum on Vancouver Island. *[See the photo on page 1 of Chapter 2.]*

The warmth and fellowship of that happy occasion, the stories told, and the memories relived, only dent the surface of our deep involvement and love for the Morgan and the special people who own them. The one quote I remember from that day is, "you can ask to borrow my wife, but NEVER ask to borrow my Morgan!" It is this type of camaraderie, this intensity of the love of the Morgan, which is the Morgan factory's enduring legacy.

The last Morgan my father owned was a 1972 Plus 8, white with black wings, of course. It was never raced, and is now lovingly owned by my brother Bill. He attends many of the MOGNW events, as does my long time friend, Dave Collis, who served his apprenticeship as a mechanic under my dad at Sterne Motors. Dave still has the blue and black 4/4 2-Seater which he raced for many years.

Unfortunately, I have been without a Morgan since 1980, when as a young married man, I gave up my beloved Mog to renovate my parent's house which I had purchased to raise my young family. My life took another path, designing and manufacturing radio-controlled racing yachts, at which I have been most successful. My designs have won many national and international events, including a world championship in 1980 and a string of seven U.S. national titles in a nine year period. However, there is hardly a day goes by that I don't fondly remember being

behind the wheel of my 4/4 2-Seater or my dad's Plus 8, blasting around the Westwood racing circuit, which is now a subdivision covered with very expensive homes only a few minutes from where I live today.

## Dad's Navy Days



Photo by Gilbert A. Milne. Department of National Defence / National Archives of Canada, PA-134191.

There are so many stories I can't remember them all ...

Convoy duty in the Gulf of St. Lawrence: Their tiny wooden Fairmile sub-chaser sandwiched between massive freighters. Total blackout, and being able to reach out and strike a match on a rusty hull. Seas so rough he was able to see the ASDIC dome underneath another Fairmile in their flotilla, as the ship leapt off a huge wave. It was a third of the way back from the bow, and four feet below the hull.

Refueling in Cuba by "bucket brigade" in the hot tropic sun: The Fairmiles used aviation gasoline. An order coming down after a tragic explosion and fire on a Fairmile that when refueling, the main breaker was to be pulled. This, of course, would disable the fans that vented the bilges and tank compartments. My dad disregarded the order, and was nearly court-martialed over it. When an officer "with eggs all over his cap" (i.e. high ranking) told him to pull the breaker, he refused because it was too dangerous. The officer told him to have one of his men do it! My dad told the officer that he would not have any man in his command do anything he was not prepared to do himself and told the officer he could pull it himself. After all hell broke loose, eventually the order was rescinded.

While on shore leave in the Southern US: My dad was hassled by the Shore Patrol for being out after curfew although the curfew didn't apply to the Canadian seamen. An argument ensued, resulting in two large SPs on the ground, and my dad limping back to his ship. He lost a prized fountain pen in the scuffle, and was called to the headquarters of the U.S. Shore Patrol the next day to have it returned. The C.O. wanted to see the "man who tangled with his SPs and lived to tell about it."

“Racing Fairmiles on the West Coast” was my favourite Navy story: The War never really touched those on this Coast, at least in terms of action. The Fairmiles would patrol the Straights of Juan de Fuca, and then be relieved by another flotilla. They would then race all the way back to the Victoria breakwater, for bragging rights, and to be the first to refuel and take on provisions - and hence the first to get shore leave. My dad won every race (what a surprise), and it was said that “Sterne’s crew went ashore on the heaving line” (i.e. the first thing to hit the dock).

I’m sure that this success was due in no small part to his savvy with engines. The engines in the Fairmile were converted aircraft V-12s and didn’t take kindly to running at low throttle for extended periods. My dad would simply shut one off, and could thereby run the other engine up higher in the “power-band” while cruising with the convoys or patrolling. It made the boat a bit slower off the mark, and was completely in contravention to regulations, but if you had to go any distance, both engines pulled cleanly, and without fouled spark plugs. The dual plug arrangement had a nasty habit of drilling a hole right through the cylinder head if one plug fouled, causing the engine to ping.

One winter, my dad’s Fairmile flotilla went to patrol the Caribbean. He got off watch after they had anchored and decided to go swimming. He got in his bathing suit and went up on deck and looked over the side at some of the guys. The water was crystal clear and you could see the bottom very clearly with all the rocks and coral. He dove in and swam over to the guys, and they asked him if he thought he could dive to the bottom. My dad used to be on the swim team in Edmonton, and I have seen him swim the length of the Crystal Garden’s pool in Victoria underwater, which is 50 metres, on one breath, and that was when he was in his 50s.

The bottom looked like it was maybe 15 feet down, so he said “no problem.” He took a normal breath, did a duck dive, and down he went. Well, needless to say, the other guys already knew that it was really deep, and the clear water fooled you into thinking it wasn’t, and they figured there was no way that he could make it.

After he was down about 20 feet, he realized that it was a lot deeper than he thought, but he kept going. He swam on down, feeling the pressure building, and grabbed a handful of sand to prove he made it and started back up. By the time he reached the surface, he was nearly unconscious, but held up his hand and let the sand trickle out. He told me “there was no way I was going to come back up without proof I made it.” Now THAT’s determination!



Lydia and GB in 1945, likely taken in Beacon Hill Park in Victoria right after the War ended, as they were coming west on the train on VJ Day.

### Edmonton Police Days

Regarding the motorcycle accident which nearly took dad’s life while he was in the Edmonton Police Force, I heard the story as follows: He was returning from a first aid course and a girl ran into the street. Dad nearly got stopped, but the girl ran into the corner formed by the front wheel and handlebars and twisted them sideways, throwing him over the handlebars. He was quite experienced in tumbling as a kid and had fallen off motorcycles enough times, so he braced himself for a “tuck and roll” landing.

Unfortunately, there was a fire hydrant in the way, his hands straddled it, and it caught him in the forehead. He was taken to hospital and not expected to live. There just happened to be a brilliant neurosurgeon on call that night, and they took him immediately to surgery. After a few days in a coma, he regained consciousness and was eventually released from hospital. The first thing he did when he got home was fire up the motorcycle and ride it around the block to make sure it was OK!

### Three Edmonton newspaper clippings:

#### Motorcycle Hits Auto: Rider Hurt

George Sterne, 10159 118 St., received slight injuries when the motor cycle he was riding down Portage Ave, at 2:30 p.m. on Monday, near 130th St. intersection, crashed into the rear of a car driven by A. N. Brownlee, 11234 127 Street. The rear end of Brownlee's car was somewhat damaged. According to witnesses, the motorcyclist was looking down to examine something on the left side of his machine when he crashed into the rear of the auto.

#### Constable Sterne Fights for His Life

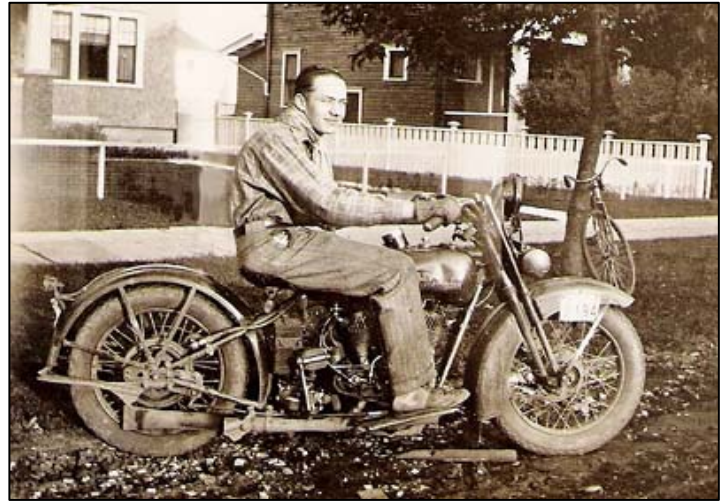
Constable George B. Sterne was injured Friday when he toppled from his motorcycle on 99 Street opposite the old E.C.D. building, was still in serious condition at the Royal Alexandria Hospital. Neither his parents or his wife are allowed to see him. Constable Sterne suffered a fracture of his skull across the forehead and concussion when his head struck the curb. The accident occurred when the motorcycle knocked down a woman and upset.

#### Report No Change on Sterne's Condition

The condition of Constable George B. Sterne, injured Friday night when he toppled from his motorcycle on 99 St., was reported unchanged Tuesday morning at the Royal Alexandria Hospital. He was hurt seriously when his motorcycle struck a woman and fell heavily on a curb.

A few days later, he went to see the doctor for a follow-up. When the doctor asked him how he got there, he said "on my motorcycle." The astonished doctor explained to him that after such a serious head injury he shouldn't be riding, but I can imagine how much my dad would have listened to that advice. His only complaint was the huge scar on his forehead, and the doctor simply said, "Well, when they walk past the coffin to pay their last respects, they don't look very close." He had never expected my dad to recover. They later removed most of the scar, and my dad had what looked like a premature wrinkle on his forehead ever after.

A while later, my dad got a bad cold, and the centre of his forehead began to swell up. Apparently one of his sinuses was damaged and couldn't drain properly. Eventually, the abscess broke and collapsed inward, causing what my dad described as "another belly button" in the middle of his forehead, a feature that he had the rest of his life. Occasionally, during a bad cold, it would discharge slightly, and you would see him wiping it. Other than that, it never caused any problem, and he never, ever, had a headache, from the accident onwards.



This was either my dad's 2nd or 3rd Harley. He had a 1917 (ex-Army, it was a 45 cu. in. flathead) which he called his "runabout" model because it would run about a block. Then he bought a 1929 61 cu. in. flathead, and then a 1931 Police Special (with a large speedometer, which this photo seems to have). It was a 61 cu. in. "L" head (overhead intake, side exhaust). This was the bike he won the 1931 Canadian Hill Climb Championship with. If this photo is from 1931, he would have been 19 at the time.

#### Police Story #1

My dad and I were on a business trip in the Plus 4 Plus, in the mid-1960s. If I recall, the purpose of the trip was to try and establish, or visit, dealerships in the Northwest. We visited Edmonton, Spokane, the Tri-Cities, and the Seattle area, on a circle tour of the Northwest. I can remember dad carving through the Thompson River valley, thoroughly enjoying the winding road.

The only other part of the trip that sticks in my mind shows a lot about what my dad, an ex-policeman, thought about your average traffic cop and their equipment. We were somewhere in Washington state and he noticed a police cruiser in the mirror. From what I remember it was a mid- to late-50s sedan (no doubt with drum brakes all around, and probably smaller than those on the back of the Morgan). We drove for a long time, right at the 70 mph speed limit, and eventually the cruiser pulled up on our left on the freeway.

My dad had a suspicion that they were going to pull us over and warned me that he might make a pretty quick stop. There was a light on the right front fender of the cop car pointing backwards, with the word "Police" on it. My dad had already determined that there were no other cars close behind us, and sure enough the light blinked on. Dad made a perfectly controlled panic stop, pulling over onto the shoulder of the road at the same time, the disc brakes on the Plus 4 Plus hauling us from 70 to zero in probably about 170 feet, tires complaining, on the verge of locking

up, just the way you would brake going into the hairpin at Westwood.

The surprised and astonished cops hit the brakes, locking up and releasing the brakes several times, and finally slid to a stop what looked to me like a quarter of a mile down the road. The two cops got out of the car, and walked all the way back to us. By the time they got there my dad was sitting on the fender of the Plus 4 Plus, his wallet out and waiting, and smoking a cigarette! When the cops got close enough, the first thing out of their mouth was, "What the hell kind of brakes have you got on that car?" It was all I could do to keep a straight face. It turned out that they had stopped us because we were driving in the USA with a BC dealer's plate, and they wanted to know why. To this day, I think it was because they wanted to know what kind of car it was. They, of course, did nothing but bid us a pleasant day, and walked back to the police car to the tune of the Plus 4 Plus accelerating rapidly past them.

### Police Story #2

Dad and I were in the Super Sport, coming back from Spokane. Dad had lost the rear license plate during the race, and took the front plate off and put it on the back (there were no decals in those days), as he figured he was less likely to attract attention that way and we couldn't get a new plate until Monday anyway.

We were in downtown Vancouver on the way to the Tsawwassen ferry to go back home, and a motorcycle cop pulled us over. When he got off the bike, he came up to dad and asked where his front license plate was. Without thinking, my dad says, "It's on the back." The cop, fortunately one with a sense of humour, said, "that's an Irish answer if I ever heard, one. Try again!" So my dad explained what happened. We got a warning ticket for no front plate, and a reminder to get one on Monday.

While this was going on, two beat cops stopped to see what was going on and to look at the car, of course. They insisted on looking at the engine, and my dad, growing anxious because we had a ferry to catch, grudgingly obliged. Then another cop car pulled up alongside, lights flashing, wondering why three cops had gathered. When told (in jest) by the original motorcycle cop that he had caught my dad going 80 on Granville St. and asking what should he do, the new arrival said, "Well, at least give him a warning." Soon, dad was showing off the Weber carbs to all five cops, giving his usual sales pitch! When the cops finally left, we had the wildest ride to the ferry you can imagine. I remember seeing nearly 6000 rpm in top on Hwy 17 a couple of times. Good thing there were no police around then! We barely made the last ferry of the night.



**Plus 4 Super Sport:** 1963 low-body, #5330, the first of dad's white and black Mogs and his first 2-seater, originally a 1991 cc TR3 Lawrence-tune engine. It was raced in "C" Production (which later became "D" when they were renumbered) and also "E" Sports Racing (under 2 Litre class). In 1965, dad bored it out to TR4 specs plus 1mm (2188cc) and raced it in "D" Production and "D" Sports Racing. The sign on the roll bar says, "Look but don't touch - it's ALUMINUM - thanks."

### Police Story #3

Actually, this is more of a court room drama. My dad was once called to court to testify on behalf of a Victoria Motor Sports Club member who was accused of dangerous driving after being stopped on the old West Saanich road for driving his Austin Healey much too fast. The police chased him, no light on, for several miles before finally catching up to him at a stop light and pulling him over.

They were driving a very old tank of a car with nearly bald tires, and it was raining. In those days, the twisty old West Saanich road was posted at 50 mph, and it took a very good car to average that, especially in the rain.

The police testified in court that they had nearly lost control several times trying to apprehend the driver of the Healey, and described the conditions. When my dad took the stand, he testified that he had recently fitted the Healey with Michelin X tyres, renowned for their performance in the rain. When he was shown pictures of the tyres on the police car, he apparently laughed out loud in court, berating the officers for driving such a dangerously equipped vehicle. He said that if anyone was driving dangerously, it wasn't the accused but the cops!

Apparently, when pressed, the officers admitted that they were never really close enough to the Healey to clock him properly. Not only did he get off on the dangerous driving charge, he even beat the speeding ticket!

## **Bob Meets Peter Morgan**

I met Peter Morgan in person twice. The first time was in the summer of 1964, when I was fortunate enough to tour through Europe with a group of 250 Canadian high school graduates. I was only 15 at the time, and I can clearly remember the highlight of my trip being my visit to the Works. I was staying in Bristol at the time, and caught the train to Malvern to be met by Mr. Morgan in a Plus 4 Plus. We drove to the factory and he gave me a personal tour. I remember seeing a couple of Morgans under construction for my father's company. I still have vivid memories of watching the cars being built by hand; the body framing parts being made in the woodworking shop; the kingpins being turned on a lathe while the machine operator dialed in by hand a "bit of correction" for the taper the old machine was producing; a craftsman installing the wire edge in the bonnet by hand; and the elderly gentleman building a grille, bending the bars by hand and laying them in the old jig for hand soldering. I still get a smile when I think about it.

Mr. Morgan retired to his office and assigned a worker to follow me around and answer any questions, and then we went to the Morgan home for a late lunch. I met Charles Morgan and his mother, and remember seeing Charles's large model railroad layout. I had never seen anything like it. It was very impressive! After lunch, we returned to the factory, and I wandered around, surrounded by the wonder and mystique that only the Morgan factory can provide, seen through the excited eyes of a teenager who had been around Morgans and racing as long as he could remember. I knew then that I would someday own and race a Morgan, and eventually that dream came true for me. The Morgan family have made this dream possible for so many over the years.

When it came time to leave, I remember shaking Mr. Morgan's hand, and I remember the kindness and friendship in his voice and eyes, and that wonderful smile. He called in a young draftsman and threw him the keys to the Plus 4 Plus, and said, "Take Mr. Sterne back to his place in Bristol, and, by the way, I have a dinner appointment this evening and need the car back by 5:00 pm." I didn't know it at the time, but it was apparently a 40 mile trip to Bristol, and it was 4:00 pm.

After blasting along at speeds up to about 110 mph over three lane country roads, with passing in both directions in the centre lane, we arrived at my hotel in Bristol in just 28 minutes, an average of over 80 mph. I'm sure the young man had no trouble having the car back at the Works in plenty of time Mr. Morgan's dinner appointment! That ride is forever burned in my memory, along with some of my many race victories driving my own Morgans in later years.

I met Peter Morgan again, many years later, when he came to visit us here in Vancouver. This was after the Morgan could no longer be imported into Canada, and my

father and I discussed with him the possibility of altering the car so that we could continue to import them. Although Peter sympathized with us, the factory was, of course, so busy that he couldn't possibly produce a variant just for us. Canada, at the time, had a special exemption for limited production vehicles, but the car had to have a placard affixed that stated that the vehicle did not comply with such and such safety standards. Peter Morgan felt that this was like saying that the Morgan wasn't safe, and we all knew that this simply wasn't true. He had no intention of affixing such a plaque, and although this meant the death of the Morgan in Canada, both my father and I admitted that we could understand his position and respected and shared his pride in the marque. The final number of Morgans imported by my father stood at about 160 cars during the period from 1955 to 1972.

The three generations of the Morgan family can take extreme pride in the legacy they have left to the world of motorsport, and to Morgan lovers everywhere. Every time a Morgan owner turns a key, and that glorious exhaust note rises to his ears; every time he bends it into a corner and feels the car respond as if it's a very part of him; and every time he smiles as he washes his precious Morgan, rubbing his hands over her sensuous curves; Peter Morgan will feel the warmth, love, and admiration of his extended family.

You don't drive a Morgan - you put it on - it becomes a part of you forever.

## **GB's Trophies**

When my dad's race wins got to 200, we applied to the Guinness Book of World Records for recognition, with all the appropriate documentation and supporting letters from the ICSCC and the SCCBC. We asked for TWO records, one for the most race wins by a driver (since broken by Richard Petty at 201) and the other for the most race wins by a single driver in a single marque (a record which would probably have stood forever). Their answer? Stirling Moss was a professional driver and they weren't interested in my dad because he was an amateur! So much for "World Records." The record did NOT state it was for professional drivers, and you can bet that both Moss and Petty included many victories that were NOT achieved during their professional career.

By the way, were you aware that when Stirling Moss was at Westwood, he REFUSED to wear any helmet except my dad's? Check out the photos of him driving Bob McLean's Lotus 23B against "Flying Phil" Gagliardi who drove my dad's Super Sport.

## **The Windmill Story**

As a teenager, my dad was sent to the Peace River country in Northern Alberta to install the biggest windmill Beatty Brothers made. *[GB's grandfather was George Beatty, a founder of Beatty Brothers in Fergus, Ontario, a*





### Stirling and the Helmet

Stirling Moss sitting in Bob McLean's Lotus 23B and wearing dad's famous Herbert Johnston helmet. Stirling REFUSED to wear anything else, even thought the helmet was too big for him. Pretty funny, when you consider Dave Ogilvy's story about the CASC not allowing dad to race at Mosport with the same helmet!



### Phil Gaglardi

As a publicity stunt for the press in connection with the "Player's Pacific" one year, Gaglardi drove dad's Super Sport against Stirling Moss in Bob's McLean's Lotus 23B.

*[MC: Flying Phil Gaglardi, for those not familiar with British Columbia's political history, was the Minister of Highways in the days of the Social Credit Government (1950s - 1970s). Not only did he deserve to be in the Political Hall of Fame but also the High Speed Driving Hall of Fame. This minister of the gospel who ran a gospel radio program based out of CJCD in Kamloops was nabbed more times than any MLA ever for speeding on provincial highways.]*

*major manufacturer of farm equipment.]* I think the tower was 70 feet, and was made in 6' 7" sections and assembled from the ground up. Once the tower was completed, with its tiny wooden platform at the top, the gearbox, fan and tail were hoisted up and assembled. Normally my dad would have another chap help him, but in this case the farmer didn't want to pay for a second man and told my dad he would help him.

The two of them climbed the tower, and spent quite a long time assembling the power head of the windmill. The farmer seemed fine, but when he climbed down off the tower, he knelt down, kissed the ground and told my dad that if "that contraption" ever needed servicing he would have to bring someone to help him because, "I'm

NEVER going back up there." My dad had a good laugh, and went on to the next installation!

I have found a vintage Beatty Pumper (windmill) just north of Kelowna and I am installing it on our property in Coalmont, just west of Princeton, BC. It will be dedicated to my great-grandfather, George Beatty, my grandfather, W.H.S. Sterne, and my dad. The road to Coalmont is a fabulous, twisting road which, along with many other roads in the Princeton area, is deserving of a future MOGNW tour.

### Early days at Westwood

Before my dad got the number 4, he raced as number 94 (or possibly it was at a CASC race and there was another

car #4). I can remember a story of my mom lap scoring at Westwood in the early days, and he was having a real battle with someone driving a car number 90. Every lap, they passed the finish line with dad in the lead, just feet apart, and the lap scoring girls called out “94-90” in one breath. This got to be a habit, of course, but on the last lap, dad goofed somewhere, and the other car got by. My mom and her partner (they had one girl calling numbers, the other writing) were the only team to get it right! She got a heck of an argument from the other girls, who thought she was an idiot for saying that her husband had lost. She eventually had to get the Chief Scorer to go and ask the drivers, and of course, mom was right, the other guy won. That was the last time she ever lap scored one of my dad’s races for the race officials. She figured, correctly, that if the situation was reversed and dad had passed the other car on the last lap, that nobody would believe her! My mom would lap score his races from our pits, and many times, when the officials got it wrong, or some score sheets showed one result and others a different one, the officials would come to her as a “tie-breaker.” She even used to lap score the seven hour endurance races, and ALWAYS knew exactly where he was running throughout the race.

### **Racing in the Glory Days at Westwood**

There was a prank my dad and Jack Murray (with my mom’s help) pulled at Westwood in the early 1960s. Jack was from Seattle, and raced against my dad with a TR3, and later with a black Plus 4 2-Seater, beating dad in nearly every race after he bought the Morgan. Then he bought the first Super Sport we brought in, a high-bodied 1962, flame with black wings. I have a photo of Jack and dad in the hairpin at Westwood in about 1961.

Anyway, Jack got dressed up as a woman, complete with dress and wig, donned my dad’s helmet, and entered dad’s 1960 4-Seater in a novice race at Westwood. So that nobody would know what was going on, he waited until the cars went from pre-grid out onto the grid, then came flying down the hill, through the pits, and right out onto the track just in time for the starter (who was in on the gag) to drop the green flag. The announcer wasn’t in on the gag and started talking about this woman in dad’s car that suddenly joined the race. He went by the name of Mary Williams.

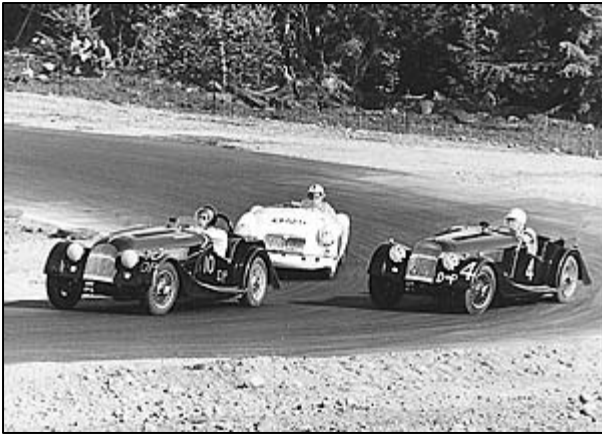
Being a fabulous driver, Jack, skirt billowing and curls flying, overtook the field and was soon in second place. When he got close to the leader, the guy started to drive harder and harder, so much so that Jack got worried about the guy crashing. Jack decided that if he passed him, he might calm down, so going into the hairpin, he dove down the inside and flipped his curls at the guy on the way by. The guy went nuts, and Jack became so concerned about his safety, he backed off and let the guy by and things calmed down. In the meantime, the announcer was going

nuts, and everybody was coming to talk to mom to try and find out who the gal was. Mom mumbled something about “some friend of GB’s” and stomped off. Dad just grinned and kept quiet.

Now Jack didn’t belong in the Novice race, and didn’t want to take anything away from the new drivers, so on the last lap he came out of the hairpin and started turning the key on and off to pretend the car was cutting out. Coming out of the esses, he coasted to a stop on the infield side, got out and started pushing the car to the finish line. All those in the pits could now see Jack’s long hairy legs and started to laugh, but the announcer (on the infield) was going crazy, talking about this poor woman trying to get her car to the finish. A very gallant Roy Curtis, who handled the communications system, came dashing over from the infield to help push, and Jack, trying not to laugh, looked away from him and continued to push. After they crossed the finish line, Jack took off his helmet, flipped his curls at the gallant gentleman, and said, “Thanks, Roy.” All a very flustered Roy Curtis could managed was, “For Christ’s Sake! ... Jack Murray!”

Surely this, better than any other story, tells of the fun it was to race sports cars in the glory days. I have a photo of Jack, wearing dad’s helmet, complete with flowing curls and a dress, standing beside dad’s 1960 4-Seater. It was taken after the race.





### Jack and GB in 1959

Jack Murray, #10, leads dad around the hairpin at Westwood. The car on the inside must be an MGA Twin Cam, because the standard model raced two or three classes lower than "D." Jack, from Seattle, drove a TR3 before buying the Morgan. He later bought a 1962 high-body Super Sports, flame with black wings.



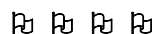
### Three Mogs

This is not a photo of dad, but of myself, Stu Rulka and Dave Collis in the hairpin at Westwood. Stu's #2 was silver with black wings. Dave is driving the same blue and black car he has today. It started out as a 1500 Series V and after racing it that way for a year or two, Dave updated it to 1600 Competition Model specs with the 1600 GT Cortina engine, close-ratio gearbox and 4.1:1 rear end (it originally had a 4.56:1). This moved him from "F" Production to "E," of course. After he quit racing, Dave modified the engine for the street with twin Webers, higher compression, and a hot camshaft. This photo dates to 1973-74.

# Chapter 6

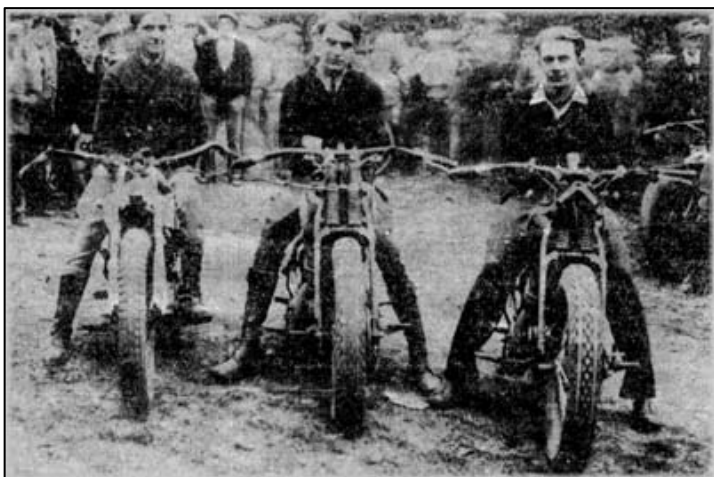
## GB's Morgans

### GB's racing started before Morgans



#### HILLS MEAN NOTHING TO THESE LADS

Edmonton Newspaper late 1930s or early 40s.



Nearly four thousand people saw a thrilling hill climb contest Sunday by the Edmonton Motorcycle Club. Winners of the tests shown above, left to right, are: F. Robertson, 45-61 class, who negotiated a difficult climb in 8.5 seconds; W. Marskell, 74 class whose time was 4.35 seconds; and George Sterne, who took the Alberta Championship, climbing 150 feet in 3.45 seconds.

### AUTOCYCLISTS PUT ON THRILL

#### Members of Edmonton Motorcycle Club Hold Contests

All the thrills and spills that speedy sport can supply were on the program Sunday when about 25 cyclists, the majority of the members of the Edmonton Motorcycle Club, staged a hill climbing contest for the benefit of several thousand citizens who visited the ski jump hill to witness the trials. For two hours the young speedsters vied with one another for the Alberta championship honours, these being finally carried off by George Sterne who speeded up the 150<sup>8</sup> foot hill in the short time of 3.45 seconds. To him goes the trophy which is competed for annually, and also the honour of being Alberta champion in the hill climbing events.

#### Pits Are Dug

To provide more sport for both spectators and riders the hill was ploughed up and miniature pits dug. When the cyclists struck these depressions the machines spring into the air as if shot from a catapult. Several spills were re-

ceived by the riders, but even this was a small thrill when compared to that of succeeding in making the top. Following are the results for the Alberta championship by class:

#### Open competition:

1. Geo. Sterne, 150 feet in 3.45 seconds
2. W. Marskell, 150 feet in 4 seconds
3. E. Shaver, 148 feet

#### "74" class:

1. George Sterne, 4.15 seconds
2. W. Marskell 4.35 seconds
3. E. Shaver, 5.35 seconds

#### "48-61" class:

1. F. Robertson, 8.5 seconds
2. J. Renaud, 147.5 feet
3. H. Ferrier 147 feet

The championship trophy was donated by the Northern Utilities, the other prizes were donated by the following firms: Smith's Cycle Store, Jackson Bros., Kline, Henry Birks and Sons, S. R. Ash Jewellers, Dominion Tire Co., Goodyear Tire Co., Beatty Bros., Great West Garment Co., Acme Clothiers and Boys' Shop.

Tile executive, G. Sterne and E. B. Earl Shaver, announce that the prize awards will be made to the winners at Smith's Cycle Store at 8 p.m. Monday.



GB's first sports car, an MG TD. This is one of the few photos Bob Sterne has of his dad in his MG TD. Bob thinks the "700 series" number indicated a novice in those days, so this may be from one of his first races, if not the very first, and was probably at the Abbotsford Airport. GB later raced under number 114 if Bob remembers correctly.

**The Morgans and the Racing**  
GB raced Morgans from 1956 until 1976.  
He had several famous racers.  
*Then Came the Love for Morgans*

*The next two articles, "It's a Power-Packed Panther" and "In Step With Style," are from 1956 Victoria newspapers in which Morgans were introduced to the Victoria market.*

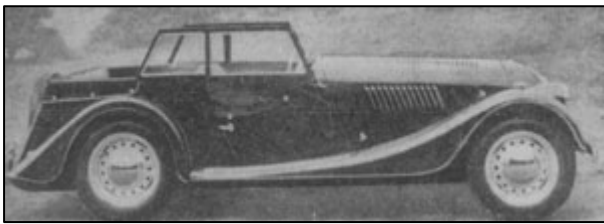
The Car Corner

**Its a Power Packed Panther**

By J. T. Jones

Daily Colonist, Victoria, BC

Sunday, September 9, 1956, page12



**MORGAN TR 3**

The Morgan TR 3 may not be quite the rig for taking rich Aunt Tessie to the opera, but for covering the miles with a maximum of scoot in a minimum of time, it's practically impossible to beat. Morgan's formula is about as simple as it can get: into a vehicle weighing about the same as a Morris Minor, pack 100 horsepower. Add a dash of glue for road holding, and that's about it.

These English cars, just recently imported by George B. Sterne of Sidney, are in the classic sports car tradition, four wheels firmly on the road and no mistake.

It isn't fair to call the Morgan's ride harsh (although I was clear of the seat at least twice on severe bumps). Firm, solid or secure are better words.

On hard corners the Morgan is uncanny. I tried a few times to push it hard enough to make the back wheels slide. Hah!

For the family man who wants more room, Morgan offers a four-seater model which is neither a sedan sporting the same name nor a two-seater with a parody of a seat behind. It has two ample seats and behaves like the true sports car it is.

At \$2,395 and \$2,495, either the two-seater or the four-seater offers more performance per dollar than any other car available. It would take some very costly machinery to approach them for acceleration (standing start to 60 miles an hour in about nine seconds) or handling (see above).

Morgans have some features that are unique and some that are merely rare. The front suspension under a Morgan will be found no where else on earth. It consists of vertical posts anchored firmly top and bottom, with the front

wheels mounted on tubes that slide up and down. Coil springs provide what resiliency there is. Rear suspension is more conventional leaf springs. The engine in the hot Morgans is a Triumph TR 3 unit. The transmission is very fast and positive between third and fourth gears, with a little finesse needed for second. Other engines offered in the Morgan are the Ford Prefect unit with matching gearbox, and the Standard Vanguard version of the TR 3 power plant which is much milder.

The TR 3 engine is set up to deliver its punch at high revs, and comes in with a boom at about 2800 rpm. Judging by its behaviour on full throttle, it's over carbureted below 3,500 rpm. Small wonder, with two 1 3/4 inch SU carburetors.

Except for the small problem of where to park the left foot, an issue best settled by the individual driver, the seating comfort is extraordinary. The seat back comes up almost to the nape of the neck, and the seats themselves are air inflated to individual preferences.

The seats, in fact, are leather covered air cushions resting on wood platforms which a little semiskilled labour could soon modify for perfect height, length, angle and so forth. It sounds slightly peculiar, but looks like a logical and workable system. Steering is heavy at creeping speeds and just quick when the car gets moving. Although it takes only two turns of the steering wheel from lock to lock, there's no over sensitivity on the highway.

I found the brakes call for rather a heavy foot, but they were admirably balanced, with not the slightest tendency to pull or grab. I am willing to take the experts word for their resistance to fade.

The two-seater has a sizable luggage space behind the seats, and both models have snug convertible tops.

If any more icing is needed on the cake for sports car enthusiasts, this snarling beast gives about 35 miles to the gallon, even under fairly hard driving: i.e., anything but racing.

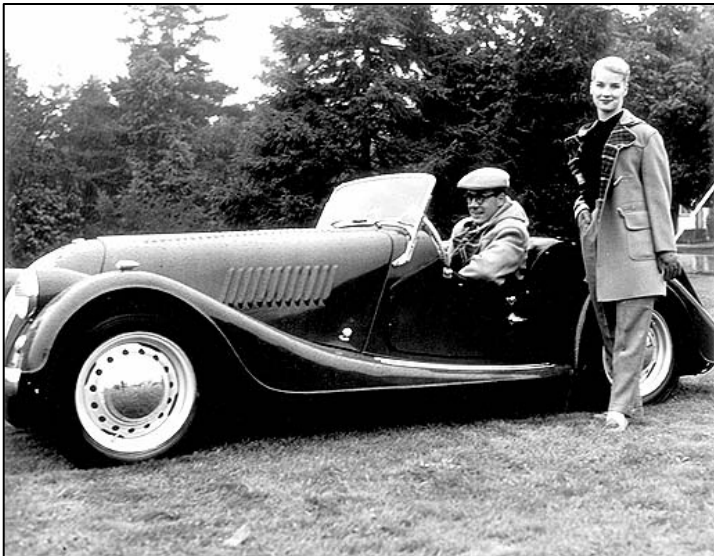
Finish throughout is fine hand craftsmanship, with the interior almost completely finished in real leather, including the transmission hump and drive shaft tunnel which in most sports cars have to settle for sturdy matting. Parts that don't much wear in normal use are finished in artificial leather that's almost impossible tell from the real thing.

For the man who loves the snort of a hot engine, running with the glad cries of a back seat full of children, I sincerely believe Morgan supplied the answer.

*[MC's Note: The photo of the Morgan used in this article was a promo shot. GB's first Morgan was a Plus 4 2-Seater. This is obviously a 4-Seater.]*

**IN STEP WITH STYLE** - By Nona Damaske  
**Jaunty Car Coats, Tail Pipe Pants**  
**First Choice of Sports Car Set**  
Victoria Times, October, 1956

*A handsome couple . . . Mr. and Mrs. T. L. Moilliet, an outstanding sportscar . . . the Morgan TR3 and perfect clothing for a Thanksgiving Day jaunt to the country.*



He may be concerned with the horses under the hood and the manoeuvrability on the open road but she disregards all things mechanical and concentrates on colour. British racing car green for the automobile and natural camel tone for the matching car coats are her choices. The Swedish coats are lined with blanket plaid and one of the lining colours is a perfect match for the dark green of the car



This does not seem a matter of world-shaking importance to him, but if it keeps her happy he is willing to go along.

Car coats and tailpipe pants are worn by the sports car set for a very good reason. Have you ever attempted to drive a low slung MG, an Austin Healey or a Morgan in a full-length coat under which you are wearing a full skirted dress? The brake nestles mysteriously under voluminous folds of material, a gust of wind sends fabric clapping in front of your face. Believe me, the correct attire makes for longer life. I also have a sneaky hunch the reason they put wooden toggle buttons and strong loops on some car coats is to keep them from blowing off. Sports cars all have neat snug tops which, an unwritten law says, must remain neatly folded down.

On windy days you don an English Christy cap and perhaps a wool muffler that measures four or five feet in length and is allowed to blow behind as you whiz along country roads. If by chance it should rain, you must not be so gauche as to raise the top of the car ... just pull up the hood of your car coat and strap it firmly under your chin.

Fleece or fur lined antello gloves keep your hands warm enough to handle all controls, and tailpipe pants, which as the name implies, are narrow, keep drafts away from your legs. The accoutrements of sports car travel are very important to those concerned, and I would like to elaborate on the car coat as it is by far the most important item.

John Wertz, an American designer, calls his coats "Runabouts" and recommends them for campus as well as car. He fashions one in red wool with a quilted print lining and large antiqued, silver buttons.

"The Rambler," by White Stag of Toronto, is in black water repellent cotton with white knitted collar, white plastic buttons with pushbutton fastenings. Another style by this firm has gate hinge fastenings attached to pockets by metal chains. A third has ebony closures on tiny chains and a fourth has white plastic football buttons. Jacob Crowley of Winnipeg shows a pale green tweed lined in quilted yellow satin. A brown tweed has zip out lining of leather and checked wool. Plush lining is used in a navy gabardine double-breasted model.

This trend of fashion, started because of the great popularity of the sleek sports car, is really quite useful for campus and outdoor life in general. A well cut 36 inch car coat looks well with a slim tweed skirt even if you do not own a car which will attain a speed of over a hundred miles an hour. I know of no roads where the law allows such carrying on but maybe there is some satisfaction in knowing that the power is there.

*[MC's note: When I contacted Elinor Moilliet to ask her permission to use this article, she was astounded at the call. She said she was just looking at the photo the previous week. She told me the Morgan was a beautiful British Racing Green and said, "I wonder where it is today?"*

*The first and only Morgan shipped to GB in 1956 was the British racing green Plus 4 2-Seater, #3504, used in these two photos.]*



GB's first race car was a black 1957 Plus 4 4-Seater, #3605, race-tuned from the factory. His trophy for the 1958 Sports Car Racing Championship for British Columbia, Washington and Oregon International Racing is on the bonnet.

(Bill Halkett, Victoria Times, photo)

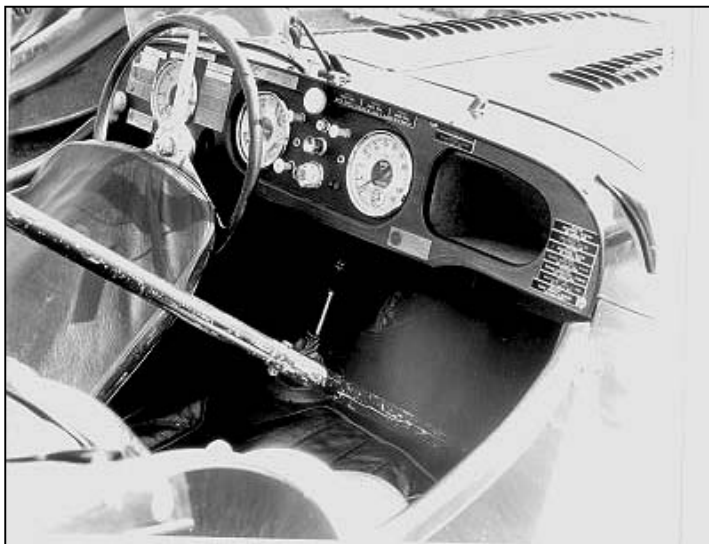


GB's First Morgan Racer in early 1960  
Early morning just outside the track, the gates not even open yet. Lydia taping up the lights on the back of the second 4-Seater. The other Morgan in the photo is believed to have belonged to Pete Browning of Victoria.



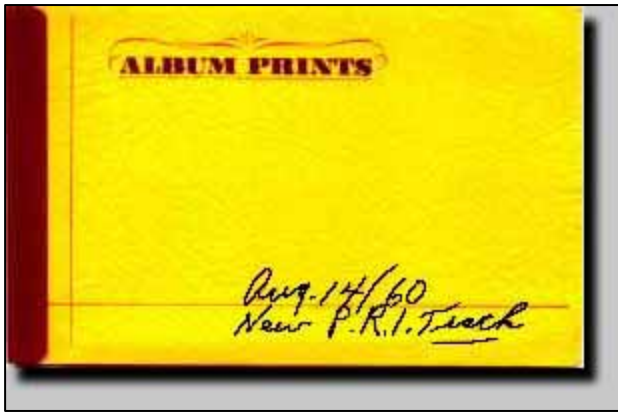


**GB and Lydia Sterne at Westwood Track, November, 1959**



Most likely the interior of #5330. The only modification to the dash is the big cigar lighter replacing the fog light switch, a priority for GB's pipe.





From a 1968 SCCBC Westwood Race Track Program

**STERNE AND HIS MORGAN . . . head two classes  
STERNE, HAMILTON, PACE LOCALS  
Conference Titles At Stake Today**

A pair of lead footed Westwood veterans head the list of B.C. drivers hoping to nail down International Conference driving championships today.

George Sterne, still winning at an age when most drivers have retired, and Tom Hamilton each lead two classes entering the season's second to last Conference event.

The 56 year old Sterne leads both "E" and "E" Improved Production in his trusty Morgan while Hamilton has his quick Brown Brothers Shelby Mustang in front of the "A" Modified and "B" Improved Production sections.

Sterne, the Burnaby grandfather who, as the operator of Sterne Motors, just happens to be a Morgan distributor, has won eight Northwest titles and placed second five times in the last 11 years.

Westwood's senior driver has his ninth title wrapped up in "E" Production and has a seven point lead over Paul Woodroffe (Salem, Porsche) who, at 61, is the Northwest's oldest active driver in "E" Improved Production.

If the performance of Sterne and Woodroffe is any indication, Hamilton is just getting started. The 40 year old Campbell River papermaker has "A" Modified wrap-up and needs only to place in the top three of today's "B" Improved Production race to take the title in this class. And with 21 victories this season, there's little doubt Hamilton will make it.

Bruce Berry of Vancouver in a Lotus Elan leads "C" Improved Production by five points but would have to win both remaining "D" Modified races to deprive Vancouver's John Randall (Brabham) of a fourth straight title.

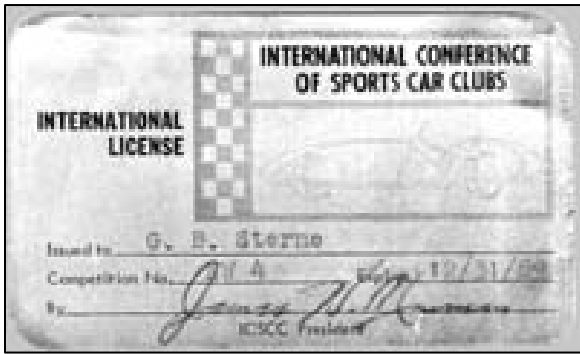
Other B.C. leaders are Randall, Dick Shead (Cloverdale-Mini) and Terry Fry (Vancouver-Lotus), tied for the "E" Modified lead; Dave Ogilvy (New Westminster Lotus 35) in Formula B; Lew Neilson (Vernon-Cooper S) in "C" Production Sedan; Ray Jourdain (Burnaby-Javelin) in "A" Improved Sedan; Karen Hall (North Vancouver-Cortina) in "B" Improved Sedan and Jo Steinicke (Sidney-NSU) in "D" Improved Sedan.



GB in the famous Plus 4 Super Sport #5330 pulls away from a TR4 at International Raceways in Washington State. Circa 1964/65.



GB's Super Sport leads a Maserati through the hairpin at Westwood. He was racing #5330 in the Under 2 Litre Sports Racing Class. The 2 litre Maserati (twin OHC, dual ignition, 8 plugs, Weber carbs, a full race car) was driven by Steve Skidmore. Steve and GB had many great races. It looks like Steve has a frown on his face as GB cuts across his bow.



GBs International Conference of Sports Car Clubs racing license from the 1969 season



GB mixes it up with some Porches in E Production with the Cortina-engined Morgan 4/4



CANADIAN AUTOMOBILE SPORT CLUBS  
NATIONAL RACING COMPETITION LICENSE FOR DRIVER  
1972  
NO. B.C. #4

Mr. George B. Sterne  
3785 Edinburgh Street  
Burnaby 2, B.C.

ISSUED UNDER THE AUTHORITY OF  
C.A.S.C. REGIONAL LICENSING OFFICIAL  
Margaret Gilbey  
VALID FROM DATE OF ISSUE  
Feb. 29, 1972 TO MAR. 31, 1973

CANADIAN AUTOMOBILE SPORT CLUBS  
APPLICATION, RENEWAL NATIONAL LICENSE

I hereby apply for registration on the Competition Register of the Canadian Automobile Sport Clubs. I undertake to submit to be bound by the International Sporting Code of the F.I.A. as provided for and amended by the C.A.S.C. I am in possession of a current, valid, non-provisional Driving License.

NAME \_\_\_\_\_  
ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_  
BIRTH DATE \_\_\_\_\_  
SIGNATURE *G. B. Sterne* (Over) \_\_\_\_\_

1972

NAME: G.B. STERNE  
PLEASE PRINT: 3785 EDINBURGH ST. BURNABY 2, B.C.  
SIGNATURE: *G. B. Sterne*

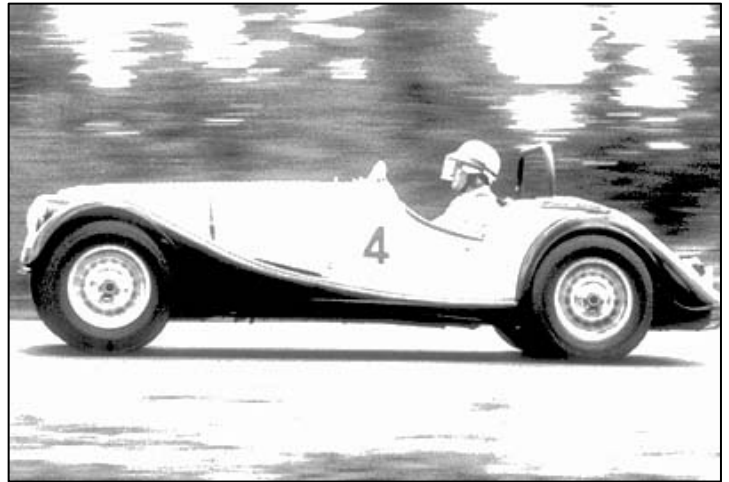
MORGAN BUS 4/4  
MAKE & TYPE OF CAR: \_\_\_\_\_  
REG. NUMBER: \_\_\_\_\_  
DATE OF OBSERVATION: \_\_\_\_\_

STEWARDS SIGNATURES: \_\_\_\_\_

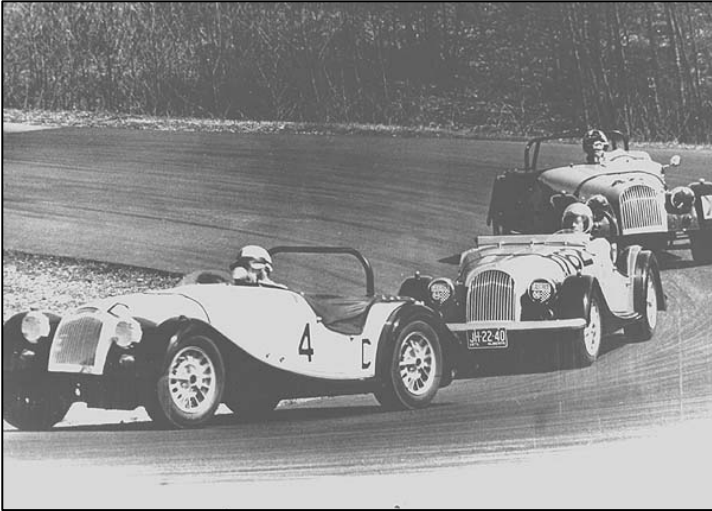
| DATE       | CIRCUIT    | ORGANIZING CLUB | CAR MAKE AND MODEL | FINISHING POSITION | STEWARDS SIGNATURE |
|------------|------------|-----------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| Mar 2/72   | Westwood   | SCC BC          | Morgan Bus         | 1st - C.P. 100     | <i>[Signature]</i> |
| Apr 4/72   | Delta Park | C.S.C.          | Morgan Bus         | 1st - B 3rd 1      | <i>[Signature]</i> |
| Apr 30/72  | Westwood   | SCC BC          | Morgan Bus         | 1st - C.P. 100     | <i>[Signature]</i> |
| Apr 30/72  | Westwood   | SCC BC          | Morgan Bus         | 1st - A 5th        | <i>[Signature]</i> |
| May 14/72  | Westwood   | SCC BC          | Morgan Bus         | 1st - A 5th        | <i>[Signature]</i> |
| May 29/72  | Westwood   | VASC            | Morgan Bus         | 1st - C.P.         | <i>[Signature]</i> |
| June 3/72  | Westwood   | SCC BC          | Morgan Bus         | 1st - C.P. 100     | <i>[Signature]</i> |
| June 18/72 | SIR        | IRDC            | Morgan Bus         | 1st - C.P. 100     | <i>[Signature]</i> |
| July 2/72  | Westwood   | VASC            | Morgan Bus         | 1st - C.P. 100     | <i>[Signature]</i> |
| July 23/72 | Westwood   | SCC BC          | Morgan Bus         | 1st - C.P. 100     | <i>[Signature]</i> |
| Aug 6/72   | Westwood   | SCC BC          | Morgan Bus         | 1st - C.P. 100     | <i>[Signature]</i> |
| Aug 20/72  | SIR        | IRDC            | Morgan Bus         | 1st - C.P. 100     | <i>[Signature]</i> |
| Sept 3/72  | Sokane     | ICSCC           | Morgan Bus         | 1st - C.P. 100     | <i>[Signature]</i> |
| 9/17/72    | National   | CAC             | "                  | 20/30 3/10         | <i>[Signature]</i> |



Morgan Plus 8 - G.B. Sterne racing at Westwood Track,  
British Columbia, Canada, June 4th, 1972



## Two Famous Morgan Racing Photos



**Three Plus 8s:** This is one of the most famous Mog photos ever. Dad in his white and black Plus 8 is leading Dr. Grant Hill from Calgary in his silver and black Plus 8, followed closely by Al Allinson with his orange and black Plus 8, all in the hairpin at Westwood. The “700-series” number on Grant’s Plus 8 indicates that he was a visiting CASC driver at an ICSCC event. The “X” on Al’s front fender indicates that he still didn’t have his “Senior” license. Dr. Hill later became involved in Federal Politics.

Bob Sterne



**Three 4/4s:** This is a great shot of dad, Stu Rulka, and Dave Collis, all in 4/4 1600 GTs, going through the “Circus” at Portland International Raceway. This would have been taken in 1973 or 1974, and they would have been racing in “E” Improved Production at the time because I ran the car in Production and Sports Racing. This series of corners is at the end of the sweeping “back straight” (which is actually a big right-hand bend) and they lead into a tight right-hand corner which exits onto the main straight. Dad always said he wished there was another 100 yards between these “esses” and the sharp corner because you could put the Morgan through there so fast there was no way you could get stopped for the last right hander! I can remember gaining HUGE amounts on other cars there because the one thing a Morgan does better than ANYTHING else is go through corners that are like a slalom. Just think of how easy it is to change lanes with a flick of the wheel!

Bob Sterne

# Chapter 7 Motorsport Pioneer

## Greater Vancouver Motorsport Pioneers Society

On October 23rd, 2004, George Beatty Sterne was inducted into the Greater Vancouver Motorsport Pioneers Society. Below is the invitation sent to his sons, Bill and Bob Sterne.

**THE GREATER VANCOUVER MOTORSPORT PIONEERS SOCIETY**  
c/o 4740 Deerfield Crescent, Richmond, B.C., Canada, V6X 2Y6

September 23, 2004

The Greater Vancouver Motorsport Pioneers Society is a chartered, non-profit group of volunteers who select and honor individuals and organizations who have made significant contributions to the advancement of motorsport activities in this area.

**George Sterne** has been selected as one of 17 individuals to be honored this year at the annual awards ceremony to be held October 23, 2004.

**2004 PIONEER INDUCTEES**

| PIONEERS:          | ACTIVITY:                 | PIONEERS:          | ACTIVITY:             |
|--------------------|---------------------------|--------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. Mike Balfe      | - Sports car racer        | 10. Ralph Monhay   | - Oval racer/builder  |
| 2. Ted Baxter      | - Custom car builder      | 11. Bob Nottingham | - Drag racer          |
| 3. Les Diack       | - Oval racer/Stock car    | 12. Fred Pazaski   | - Motorcycle racer    |
| 4. Jim Hutchison   | - Powerboat racer         | 13. George Sterne  | - Sports car racer    |
| 5. Dave Johnstone  | - Hotrods/custom cars     | 14. Claire Wilson  | - Sports car racer    |
| 6. Don Lamont      | - Sports car/Rally driver | 15. Bob Work       | - Motorcycle racer    |
| 7. Jim Marchant    | - Oval racer/builder      | <b>SUPPORTERS:</b> |                       |
| 8. Mickey McDowell | - Oval racer/midgets      | 16. Doug Morgan    | - Car builder/sponsor |
| 9. Don McLachlan   | - Hotrods/custom cars     | 17. Bernie Smith   | - Car club supporter  |

Since the first awards in 2001, a total of 67 people have been honored. This award ceremony will bring our total to 84.

**TRIBUTE CEREMONY**

SATURDAY AFTERNOON, OCTOBER 23, 2004, 1:00 PM TO 5:00 PM  
ROYAL CITY CURLING CLUB, 75-6<sup>TH</sup> AVENUE, NEW WESTMINSTER, B.C.  
(N/W corner 6<sup>th</sup> Ave. & Cumberland St.; 1 block E. of McBride Blvd. Free parking)

*Come and meet past inductees and enjoy memorabilia, pictures and videos*

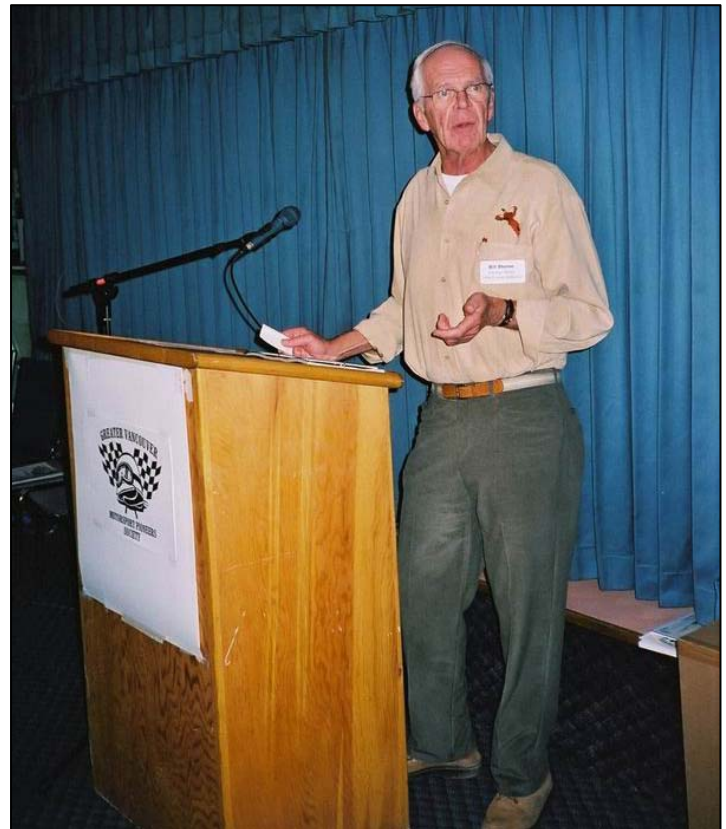
**Please attend.** Admission is free for you and up to 3 family members.  
Space is limited so we need to know in advance. **RSVP** by October 12, 2004.

CONTACT INFORMATION: In writing: as per address above.  
Phone: 604-882-0187 Fax: 604-278-1475  
604-943-9635  
Email: [lmbraine@shaw.ca](mailto:lmbraine@shaw.ca), or [bpratt@paralynx.com](mailto:bpratt@paralynx.com)

Yours truly, on behalf of the GVMP Society,  
Doug Harder, Secretary



Bill Sterne accepts his father's Induction Certificate into the Greater Vancouver Motorsport Pioneers Society as a 2004 Motor Sport Pioneer in the Sports Car Racer category. The event was held at the Royal City Curling Club in New Westminster, Saturday, October 23rd, 2004.





After receiving his dad's award, Bill Sterne told some of the stories of his dad's antics on the track and gave a summary of the many awards GB received during his sports car racing career.

*In Appreciation*


**G. B. Sterne**

For Your Time and Devotion To The Motorsport Community

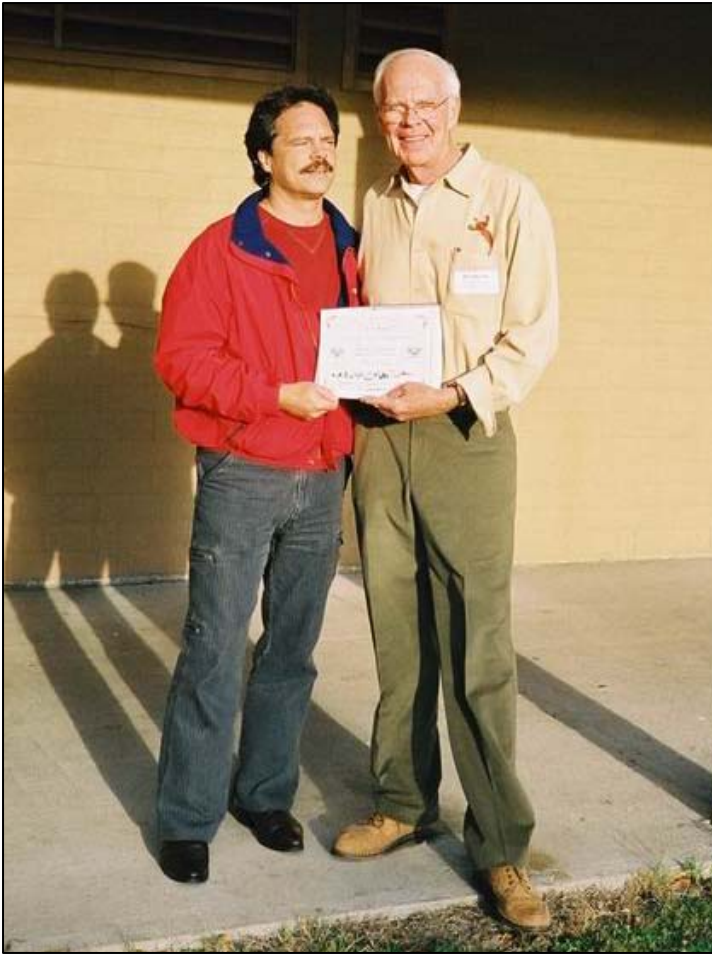



**“Greater Vancouver Motorsport Pioneers”**

TRIBUTE CEREMONY  
Saturday, October 23, 2004



The Greater Vancouver Motorsport Pioneers Society (GVMP) is a group of motorsport enthusiasts from various motorsport activities whose goal it is to recognize and record the contributions of those who were pioneers in motorsport in this region.



G. B. Sterne's proud family, grandson Greg Sterne and son Bill Sterne, with the award standing in the sun outside the Curling Club on Saturday, October 23rd, 2004. Thanks to Mike Powley for the information and pictures.

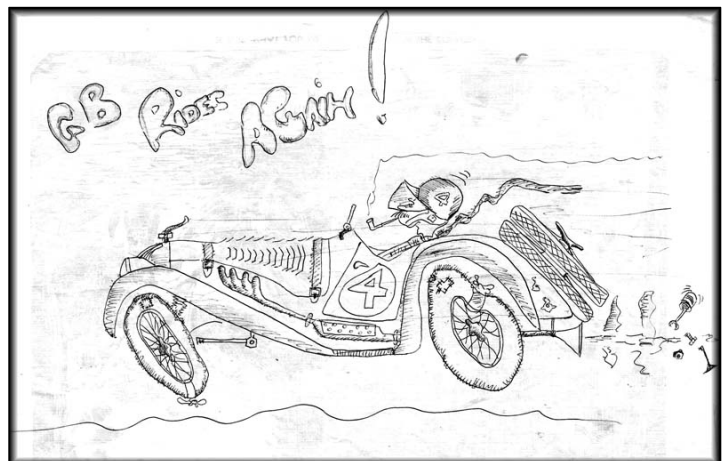
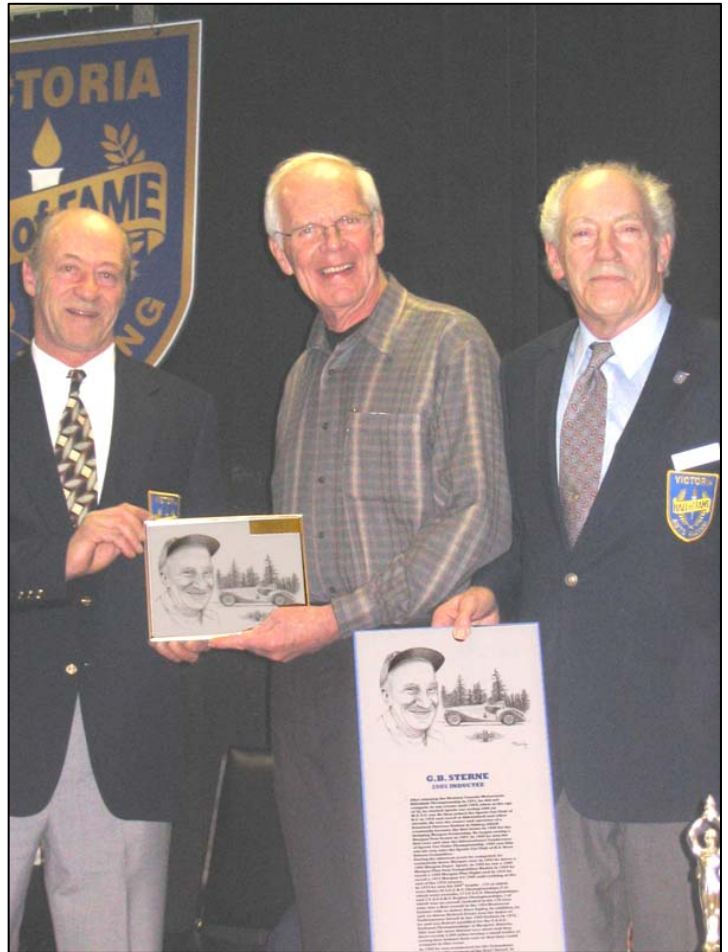
**G.B. Sterne Inducted into the Victoria Auto Racing Hall of Fame**

Saturday, February 19th, 2005, 3:00 PM, at the Langford Legion, G. B. Sterne was one of three inductees into the Victoria Auto Racing Hall of Fame. There were approximately 250 people in attendance from all forms of auto racing in the local area. Three Morgans were in attendance in the parking lot and more members of MOGNW were present. Bill Sterne took the duties of receiving the award. He told the crowd a story of his dad.

One summer in the mid-70s he and his wife had come out to the coast on holiday with his kids who were quite young at the time. On Sunday he arrived at Westwood to see the races. GB promised his oldest grandson (age 6) that if he won the race he would get a ride in the Morgan for the victory lap. True to form, the oldest got a ride and carried the checker flag for the victory. This upset the second grandson (age 3) who wanted to do the same. So in the

next race which GB had entered the second grandson got to carry the flag. When he returned Bill asked his dad, "Now what about the youngest?" The youngest was six months at the time. "Well we shall have to work on that one," he said. Bill then asked his dad, "Now that you have grandkids, dad, when are you going to think of retiring from the racing?" GB did not say a thing but gave Bill, his oldest son, the most wicked evil eye. Nothing was ever mentioned again on this subject.

For more on the Victoria Auto Racing Hall of Fame, visit their website: [www.victoriaautoracinghalloffame.com](http://www.victoriaautoracinghalloffame.com)





## **G. B. Sterne: Victoria Auto Racing Hall of Fame 2005 Inductee**

After winning the Western Canada Motorcycle Hill-climb Championship in 1931, he did not compete in any events until 1954, when at the age of 42, he started sports car racing with an MG TC car. *[Note: should be TD.]* He then joined the Sports Car Club of BC in 1955 and raced at Abbotsford and other circuits. He was the owner and operator of a Standard Chevron Station in Sidney, which eventually became the first home in 1956 for the fledgling Morgan dealership. He began racing a Morgan Four-Seater in 1957. In 1958 he won his first race and also the International Conference of Sports Car Clubs Championship. 1959 saw him win his way onto the Sports Car Club of BC Race Drivers Committee.

During the nineteen years he competed, he exclusively drove Morgan cars. In 1963 he drove a 1963 Morgan Super Sport; in 1966 he ran a 1966 Morgan Plus Four Competition Model; in 1969 he raced a 1969 Morgan Plus Eight; and in 1972 he raced a 1972 Morgan 4/4 1600 until retiring at the end of the 1975 season.

In 1974 he won his 389th trophy – 170 of which were firsts; twenty-six SCCBC Championships, eight of which

were overalls; seventeen ICSCC Championships; and two CASCBC Region Championships, one of which was an overall. Included in his 170 race wins was a first overall in the 1964 Westwood Enduro with co-driver Dave Ogilvy. In addition, he and co-driver Richard Evans won the Index of Performance Award in the 1968 Enduro. In 1972, he and son Robert qualified for the CASC National Championships at Mosport, Ontario. This was his most distant race meet and they drove nearly 3,000 miles towing a small trailer of racing tires behind their cars so that they could compete in this event.

In 1969 he was nominated for the Columbian Newspaper “Sportsman of the Year” Award. In addition to his driving efforts, he was a Charter Member of the Victoria Motor Sports Club, being President on two occasions; was a Charter Member of the International Conference of Sports Car Clubs where he was Vice-President for five years and the Novice License Director for three years; was an Executive Officer for CASC as well as being club representative for VMSC and SCCBC for many years.

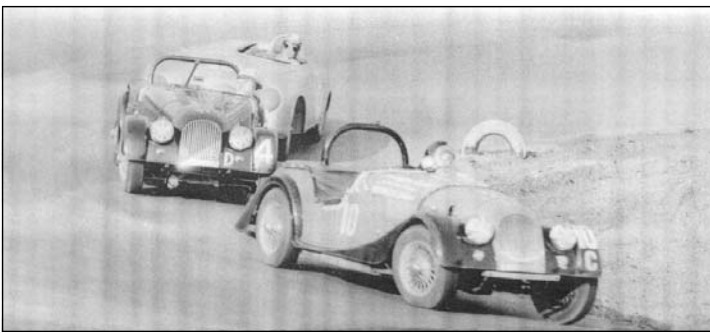
George’s wife Lydia was an active partner during his racing career. She did lap scoring, timing, some corner work duties as well as being a pit person. She also did some driving on occasion during George’s racing career. Although “G.B.” passed away on Oct. 15th, 1990, his memory lives on as a 2005 Inductee into the Victoria Auto Racing Hall of Fame.



George and Lydia were first in line at a 1962 autocross



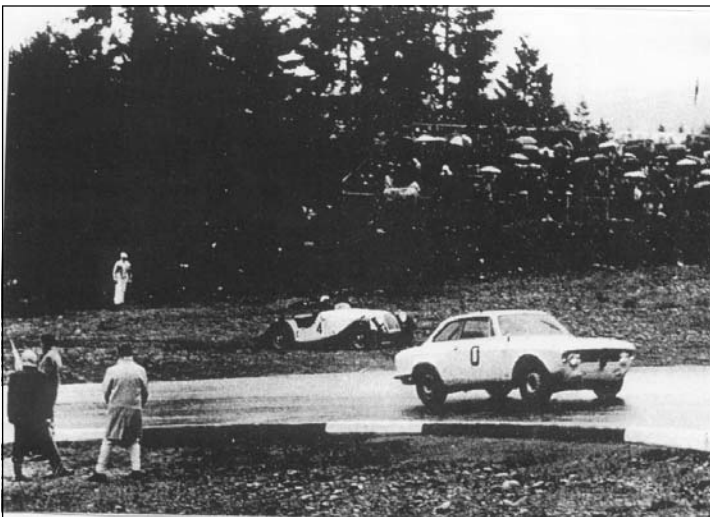
Receiving the green flag at Westwood



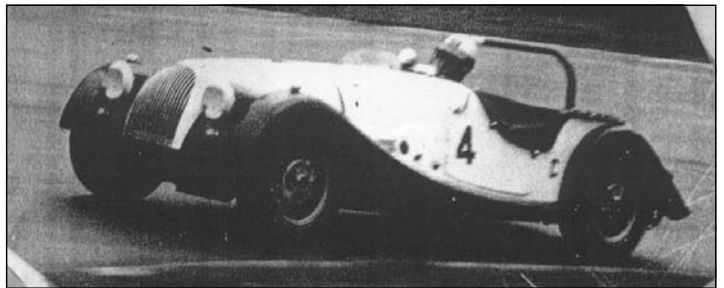
Running in 2nd spot at Westwood in 1962



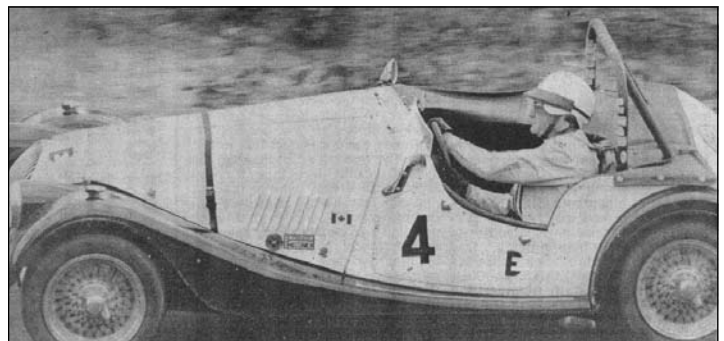
G. B. racing at Victoria's Western Speedway in 1971



G. B. "dirt trackin" at Westwood in 1970



Racing his Morgan in 1973 at Westwood



In action at Seattle International Raceway in 1975

*[Editor's Note: The cover photo and content on pages 47 and 48 are from the Victoria Auto Racing Hall of Fame website: [www.victoriaautoracinghalloffame.com/gbsterne/gbsterne.html](http://www.victoriaautoracinghalloffame.com/gbsterne/gbsterne.html)*



## CHAPTER 8 Final Tributes

*"... and We Thought it Could Never End"*

*A Tribute to G. B. and Lydia Sterne,  
The Morgans, The Track, The Life*

Mike Powley

Sporting Classics Magazine

May/June 1991

"... and we thought it could never end."

This was the only kind of comment fellow Morganeer Larry Emrik and I could come up with, Monday evening, October 15th, 1990, when I got the call that George Beatty Sterne had died suddenly that afternoon, at home in Deep Bay, Vancouver Island.

Many of us never thought that those irksome little British sports cars mysteriously brought to life most of the time by the gods of Lucas would ever stop being produced, or that Westwood track would not always be there to test such cars prowess at dicing around a great track. Well, the start of the 1990s brought the last ever Historic Westwood Races as the track was scheduled to go to subdivision, and now in October a person symbolizing many of the great names in British Columbia motorsport had just passed away.

### **In the Beginning**

What of before all this? After service in the Second World War, GB owned and operated a recycled Standard Chevron Station in Sidney on Vancouver Island as a service garage. Eventually this became the first home for the fledgling Morgan dealership that George had to work so hard to get. In convincing Peter Morgan that it would be viable, it came down to an appeal to Peter's loyalty to serving the outposts of the British Empire with Mogs that finally closed the deal!

Life before Morgans included early eventing with a black MG TD in 1954 that GB and his wonderful wife and partner at the track Lydia would drive over to the Abbotsford track. Later this was replaced with their first Morgan, a 1957 Plus 4 4-Seater, and at age 45 George's driving career began in earnest.

### **From the Late `50s to the Early `70s**

These were the great years of GB, Morgan and Westwood events. GB was the man and the myth in the `60s at Westwood. The fans in the pits all knew of this guy who drove the funny Mog over from Vancouver Island.

Son Bob Sterne considers one of his most precious memories of his dad was when they raced together in 1972, with George in his Plus 8. The Canadian Championships were held at Mosport, and they both DROVE the Mogs to the Ontario races and home again.

G.B. expressed his philosophy many times and in 1974 he told Sun columnist Alan Daniels, "Every other driver put their car on a trailer to get to Mosport (Ontario). I hitched a trailer full of spare parts to my car and I drove it there. When we got to Mosport, we unhooked the trailer, drove the race, hooked the trailer back up again and drove home via California!"

Bob Sterne, also an outstanding driver in his own racing career with ICSCC championships to his credit, has his favourite "cagy-wily" story, too. "The cutest story about dad was during a race he had with Dave Collis,

Mog driver and mechanic at the Burnaby shop, in 1973. They had a race-long dice, and on the last lap Dave was slipstreaming him into the hairpin at Westwood and pulled out to pass just as dad approached a slower car. 'I've got him!,' thought Dave, and at that moment dad put on his turn signal. Dave lifted his foot, thought `what



the '????,' and then realized, too late, what had happened as dad pulled in front of him to win the race! When they got back to the pits, Dave asked him why he used the turn signal. GB just grinned and said, 'Why did you lift your foot?' A few comments were heard about the crafty old fox, etc. and everybody had a good laugh."

Bob Wilkinson from Black Butte Ranch, Oregon, who first met GB and Lydia at Westwood in the late '60s when he was racing a TR3 remembers, "The Sternes home was always open for U.S. people and they always had a great post race time at the house."

For Roland Gilbert and many other of the younger drivers, the Sternes' social events were warmly remembered. "G.B. and Lydia have been like a second set of parents to myself, and attendance at Lydia's Boxing Day Brunch was always a special occasion for wife Pat and I."

For others it was the little shop in Burnaby that became the beacon for dreams relating to Morgan ownership. Long time Morgan Owners Group Northwest member Bob Nelson, a Washington, USA, resident, found it hard to take when, on one of his visits to the Great White North for parts (the first time he actually had one of his Mogs running well enough to come up to Canada with the car) the shop was closed.

### **The Best Thing Ever for the Sternes**

I think from my recent conversation with Lydia in preparing this article, that both the Sternes would feel that

the development and implementation of the Novice Driver Award system for the ICSCC, first launched in 1983, would be the best ever event for both of them.

What other husband and wife team could set up and make this award fair and functional - George's driving career of 19 years, coupled with Lydia's experience at the track and in pit support work, with Lydia doing just about every event job short of the race starter.

The 1990 International Conference of Sports Car Club's Banquet took place Nov. 17th and it is fitting that special mention of this achievement was respectfully noted in the program as follows: "The Novice Driver of the year award is named the G.B. Sterne. G.B. and Lydia were active supporters of the Conference, G.B. being our first Vice-President. Always helping new drivers, George and Lydia ran the Novice Licensing program in the late sixties, and gave many of G.B.'s trophies to the Novices."

It was always fun to note in some of the articles by local columnists the speculation on how many trophies G. B. would finally wind up with. So to Tom Rosseter, Alan Daniels, and Nicole Parton (nee Strickland in 1975), whose great write-ups in the mid-70s helped all cope with the loss of Morgans being imported into Canada at the time, the final count is four-hundred and one.

Special thanks must go to Lydia for spending a half day with me in February, 1991, and providing for me, along with some great pictures, contacts and material, the real inspiration to write this tribute.

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## **Obituary** **George Beatty Sterne** **Apr 9, 1912 - Oct 15, 1990** Ken Hill

It is with sadness I have to report the death of George Beatty Sterne, who died suddenly on Monday, 15th October as a result of a heart attack, at the age of 78. Although not well known in the U.K., 'G.B.' as he was popularly known, enjoyed justifiable fame on the North American Continent.

G. B. started racing Morgans in 1954, at the age of 42, and it was not until 1956 that he had his first win. During the next 19 years 'G. B.' won no less than 400 trophies before he retired from racing in 1976, every one of them in a Morgan.

The Morgans he used in his career were:- 1954-56 Plus 4, 1957-59 Plus 4 four seater; 1960-62 Plus 4 four seater; 1963-65 Plus 4 Super Sports; 1966-68 Plus 4 Competition model; 1969-72 Plus 8; 1973-75 4/4 Competition model.

In 1956 'G.B.' wrote to the Morgan Motor Company asking to become the Canadian West Coast agent. At first the Company refused, but after repeated attempts 'G.B.' got the agency which he held until he retired from active

business at the end of 1976. His son Bob took over the business, and continued as Morgan agent until the mid 1980's.

Throughout his racing career his wife Lydia played a big part in the racing team; she attended nearly every race, helped in the pits, and of course did nearly every other job over the years, including lap scoring, timing, and flag marshalling, as well as having several races herself.

There can be no doubt that 'G.B.' helped the Morgan cause in North America more than maybe any other of his contemporaries. His enthusiasm, technical knowledge, and his willingness to help Morgan owners in both Canada and America, will long be remembered. The Morgan Sports Car Club extends its sincere sympathy to Lydia and his son Bob.

*[MC note: Bob Sterne had two corrections for the obituary Ken Hill wrote:*

- 1) When GB started racing in 1954 it was in an MG TD;*
- 2) Between 1954 and 1956, GB raced an MG TD. The first Morgan he owned (and raced) was a 1957 Plus 4 4-Seater which he raced from 1957 to 1959.]*