



East Sussex Morris Minor Club

In November 1982, a few enthusiastic owners whose sole idea was to improve and preserve the marque formed East Sussex Morris Minor Club as a branch of the national club. On the 12th October 1998 the club ceased to be part of the national and began to operate as the South Coast's only independent Morris Minor club.

The object of the club is to promote and preserve the Morris Minor and to encourage members to engage in a variety of social activities. We meet on the 2nd Monday of each month at 7.30pm, at the Golden Cross pub on the A22 at Golden Cross, near Hailsham, East Sussex, and members also receive 5 newsletters a year with club and event information.



We currently have around 70 members who come from a wide range of backgrounds and ages. We also have an interesting variety of vehicles belonging to our members, ranging from the more usual saloons, convertibles, travellers and vans, through to a police dog van, a racing minor and even a stretch traveller. Our members also get out and about – one couple have done every MOT since the beginning, and are already planning this year's trip.

Every year we have a "Christmas" dinner at the end of January, and we have regular speakers and social evenings at our monthly meetings. In the winter it's a chance to catch up with friends and obtain technical advice. In the summer we try to get out and about - in the past couple of years we have visited the Martello Tower museum at Seaford and the Toy Museum in Brighton.

We usually take part in Drive It Day in April and often have a run out around the Sussex countryside – the response we get from members of the public is always enthusiastic, with lots of pointing and waving. The rural areas of East Sussex are an ideal setting for the Morris', and the sight of a chain of them weaving their way leisurely through the country lanes and villages always brings a smile to spectator's faces - even those stuck behind us are usually very tolerant! Last year we did something a little different, and all hopped on a 1970s Southdown bus (provided by a member's son) and had a day out at Singleton Open Air Museum.



The main event each year is our annual rally. 2008 was a particularly exciting year for the club, as it celebrated it's 25th anniversary. To commemorate this milestone, the club put on it's first ever two day rally, going back to the site of it's first ever rally, Bentley Wildfowl and Motor Museum. The weather couldn't have been kinder, and over the weekend we had over 70 cars attending, auto jumble, an auction, children's rides, charity Scalextric and a beer tent. Camping was also available, and many members camped out for the whole event.

Previous venues have included Michelham Priory, where we were lucky enough to be allowed to park our cars in their beautiful gardens, against the imposing backdrop of the priory itself.



This year we held our rally at Blackberry Farm, near Lewes, East Sussex, and again, camping was available from Saturday night.

The afternoon before the rally the club held it's annual pre-rally run out and BBQ. After a bit of a late start (due to the committee attempting to erect a marquee which would have given a Rubik's Cube a run for it's money), and despite the rain showers, we had a great run through some of the local Sussex villages, with 8 cars taking part. Only 2 were left by the time we returned, but that's another story - everyone did arrive safely back at base in the end! It was then off to the camping area for a well deserved BBQ and social evening - under the gazebos of course!





On Sunday the weather was slightly better, and although overcast we had over 50 cars turn up – a great selection of Minors (including the police dog van featured in a previous issue of Minor Monthly) and a good showing of visitor's cars. The cars were parked up centrally on the farm, in a field amidst the animals and tractor rides, the trade stands and official's marquee were also in this field, so everyone felt included. The field was soon buzzing with both Minor enthusiasts and general visitors, and despite the threatening clouds, not a drop of rain fell.

We had an impressive line up of cars to be judged at the edge of the field along the route of the tractor rides – passengers were saluted by open bonnets as they passed by on the trailer.

Every year, the current Chairman (or woman) chooses a local venue to hold the Chairman's Meal. Like the Christmas meal, this is another opportunity for us to all get together socially, without our chamois leathers and chrome polish getting in the way – although the venue's car park will often resemble a rally anyway, with a variety of Morris Minors on display, and lots of pre lunch chatter. The only thing missing is the club banner!



We also attend a lot of local rallies and shows throughout the year, and often have an official club stand. We're always happy to stop and chat, and the cars really do make an impressive sight lined up behind our banner – wherever we attend, our presence is always noticed! Everyone we meet either had one, knows someone who had one, or always wanted one – I suspect when you're out in a Morris Minor this is case wherever you go though!

