



British Classic Cars galore taking centre stage in Morges: The 19th Swiss Classic British Car Meeting



Words and photos by Stephen Butterworth



Every year on the first Saturday of October, Morges in Switzerland comes alive to the sound of around 1,500 or more beautifully-maintained and collectable British Classic cars and motorcycles arriving in style. Any British make or model is made welcome, preferably at least twenty years old and more recent if the vehicle has special interest value.



Enormous crowds of people come from all over to view the beauties on display and this meeting, which is now in its nineteenth year, sees many thousands of appreciative visitors attend. 2010 was definitely no exception, and unlike the Rolling Stones classic, "19th Nervous Breakdown", the 19th edition of the Swiss Classic British Car meeting, held in Morges on 2nd October 2010, was blessed with bright, sunny and warm summer-like weather bringing British classic cars from all over Europe to enjoy the beautiful weather and location.

Each year, one or two British motoring anniversaries are selected and these makes or models are spotlighted, and in 2010 that light shone brightly on The Riley in the elegant Chateau grounds, which was reserved for all models, celebrating the 111th anniversary of the first Riley. On show were Riley's of the Vintage, pre-war, post-war and BMC eras.

The ornamental recreation park at Morges – normally known as the "Parc de l'Independence" – was reserved for Triumphs, celebrating the 80th anniversary of the forming of the Triumph Motor Company. In view of the huge turnout of Triumphs of all ages from all over Europe the park was renamed Le Parc de Triumph for the day.

Both marques were strongly in evidence and there were some exceptional examples of lovingly restored vehicles, a Le Mans entrant Triumph TRS, with the famous "Sabrina" engine, and the Rally des Alpes winning Riley Brooklands to name but two out of hundreds of extraordinary cars and motorcycles.

Other rarities on display included an Arnolt-bodied MG TD, a delicious Touring-bodied Alvis, and the list could go on, but this show has to be experienced to be believed.

History

The meeting began in 1992, and the first meeting was held at Signal de Bougy near Aubonne. By placing a small advertisement in "La Vie de l'Auto", and despite (or maybe because of) some very authentic British weather of fog, rain and cold (!) the organizers Keith and Mary Wynn were surprised and delighted to attract nearly 200 cars.







They decided to make it an annual event, and went back to the same venue in 1993. The meeting was growing in size by then and was in need of some sponsorship. However, the rules at Signal de Bougy, prevented advertising, so a new site had to be found.

Morges was suggested for the simple reason that it has three roads leading through it and perhaps one of them could be closed for the Meeting. The Morges authorities agreed and on the lakeside quay is where the Meeting has been held ever since and how lucky to get such a prime location! It has everything on the day, fabulous British classic cars, marina and views across the lake to the Alps and Mont Blanc, plus of course all the ambiance of a Swiss holiday destination.

The event relies on its sponsors and the town of Morges and not forgetting the many volunteers who work tirelessly on the day to make the event the pleasure it is each year for everyone, participants and visitors alike. However one has to take one's hat off to Keith and Mary, who put in so much work and planning.

Want to go?

For further information regarding the event for 2011, to be held at Morges on Saturday 1st October, please see: http://www.british-cars.ch/index_a.html. The make of honour in the Chateau grounds will be the Jaguar E-type, celebrating 50 years. And there are always loads of TRs!



Author's note:

For me, as the official scribe and photographer, the event "started" when surfing the internet for Classic British car information in 2003. Having always been a keen photographer, I rang Keith the organizer and offered to take photos at the yearly event. To my delight, he accepted, and thus my annual pleasure of photographing and writing about lovely classic cars began at that time. The photos were taken by myself and my daughter Catherine. Images from 2010 and previous years can be viewed at: <http://www.entourage-butterworth.net/morges>.