

# MORGAN IDENTIFICATION NUMBERS *John Merton*

This is based on an email originally prepared to help a Club member with the history of a post-war Series 1. It has been slightly expanded to cover pre-war 4/4s as well, and has relevance to some extent for post-Series 1 models:

**Chassis numbers.** The chassis number is sometimes hard to find and decipher. It's not stamped on too deeply and can be obscured or even obliterated by rust or layers of paint. It's on the cross-member supporting the gearbox on two-seaters, and the next cross-member back on four-seater models, that is, the one carrying the front supports for the rear springs. It's on the driver's side (right hand drive cars).

On some early Coventry Climax-engined cars it will also be found stamped on the cast iron housing bolted to the rear of the engine block to support the bell-housing, about an inch to the right of the top inspection hole. Earlier cars will precede the number with an "0". The chassis number on some Coventry Climax engined cars will also be on the vehicle's Identification Plate.



Coventry Climax Housing

**Engine numbers.** The Coventry Climax engine will have its factory production number (ie the one stamped on by Coventry Climax), stamped on the front vertical face of the engine block towards the right just above the timing chain cover. This will consist of an "M", a bit of a gap then the engine number, and another bit of a gap then a number signifying the bore diameter in millimetres, usually "63".

The Morgan Motor Company added a Vehicle Identification Plate to the rear right hand side of the engine block probably from around late 1936 or early 1937.



ID Plate on Coventry Climax

It identified the engine maker and supplier as Coventry Climax, and listed the engine number and the chassis number, the latter preceded by "4/4". Intermittently from about car 54 on, and standardised from about car 106, the engine number was preceded by "MA", even though Coventry Climax did not appear to have used the "A" designation in its number. Although this happened at around the same time as Morgan began to use an improved version of the engine, the "A" doesn't mean "improved" as Morgan still used just "M" in

designating a number of the newer engines.

Also, quite a number of the earlier cars, even possibly into early 1937, did not have this Identification Plate. More recently, side plates have been fitted retrospectively to engines which didn't have them originally. So always check if you can, when contemplating the purchase of one of these cars, that the number on the ID plate matches that at the front of the block.



Standard Special

The Standard Special engine has its number stamped on a small raised vertical flange toward the top centre right of the engine block. "Q" preceded the number, and "E" followed it.

In both cases, the engine number (less suffix/prefix letters) was also stamped on the inner bonnet flange. It will be on both flanges, usually towards the front on later cars but at the centre or almost anywhere on earlier ones. If you raise the right hand bonnet you should see it on the left hand flange and vice versa. However, these flanges were prone to rust, and subsequent repairs may have obliterated this number. Bill Hughes (UK) has pointed out that the very early cars, which had hinged bonnets rather than the chrome strip, also had a patent number for the



Bonnet Flange on a +8

hinge stamped into this flange.

**Gearbox numbers.** All Series 1 cars had numbered gearboxes which are listed in Factory records.

On the Meadows gearboxes, the number, consisting of five reasonably large stamped on digits, should be found on the top flange of the gearbox casing just in front of the top cover.



Meadows Gearbox

On the Moss gearbox, the number will be at the rear, also stamped on, and it could be on the casing, the top cover, the rear casting which incorporates the mounts, or even absent. Sometimes, but not always, it will be on a small raised flange at the top rear of the gearbox casing, either on the

right or left side. The numbers are occasionally preceded by "M" and sometimes followed by "S". The number itself will usually be three, sometimes two digits (if followed by "S" for example).

In the case of both gearboxes the numbers should not be confused with the raised casting numbers on the casing and cover assemblies.

Factory production data tie chassis, engine and gearbox numbers together and also detail body type, colour, destination and despatch date for the particular car in question.



Moss Gearbox

*[Ed: the stamped numbers did not show up very well in the photos, so I have added the oval mark to highlight the locations]*