



Against the Odds

by Dave Doroghy

I live on a floating home on a quiet bend of the Fraser River in Ladner, BC. In the summer, I park my 1966 Plus Four Morgan on a vacant lot in front of the river, where I moor the old home barge. While taking the garbage out a few weeks ago, I ran into a friendly stranger enquiring about my car. After a few minutes of chatting he revealed himself as Ted Laturus, the automobile journalist. I knew of him, although I didn't know what he looked like; and I knew that he had a Morgan, so I wasn't surprised over his interest in my car. As we talked further he told me that he and his wife used to reside on a houseboat just down the river from where I am. We had a great chat and he told me that the long cold winters and low tides we have out here in floatsville caused him to move on years ago.

As I walked back down the ramp to my water home, I thought about the odds of owning both a Morgan and living on a float home. They are both considered a bit unusual hobbies and habitats, and certainly only appeal to a certain type of person. To have both I thought must be extremely uncommon to say the least. I'll get back to the odds of that double good fortune a bit later in this article.

Then I thought about what they both have in common with one another. Morgans and Float homes are both things of beauty. Both of mine leak. My Morgan shakes like crazy when I hit a certain speed and my float home shakes like crazy every time a big boat passes down the river. Neither are all that practical. But I'd trade practicality for a romantic notion any day of the week. They are both great places to sit and watch the sunset. Both my float home and Morgan are cold in the winter and drafty inside. But despite the shortcomings of both my old British car and my old houseboat, the most important thing they share is that they both bring a lot of joy and the occasional headache to the owner.

Now here comes the strange part. I know of two other Morgan owners, aside from me and Ted, that live on Float homes. I was down in Sleepless Seattle at a public open house of the float home community on Lake Washington 5 years ago and met Gerry Seligman (sp). I had never met Gerry either, and as I toured through his lovely floating home I saw a picture of his Morgan placed on the mantle. It started a wonderful conversation of our common interests.

It was actually a Morgan that led me to live in a float home. Eight years ago when I was trying to find a Morgan to buy I came across an ad for one in Ladner. At the time I did not even know of the large float home community called Canoe Pass Village that exists just this side of the old wooden Westam Island bridge. The car that I was looking to possibly buy belonged to a lady that lived in Canoe Pass Village. Finding the address for the car took me to this large float home village with about 50 buoyant

palaces overlooking the mighty Fraser. The lady that ran the ad was a denizen of the water and yes she drove a British Racing Green Plus 4 that she was trying to sell. I wish I could remember her name but something tells me that one of the readers of this article will enlighten me. What I do remember though was that she bought the car off of one of the musicians in Loverboy (or maybe it was Trooper). Her car she admitted had a cracked frame too and I passed on buying it. But while I test-drove it I enquired about her home on the water and she gave me the business card of the realtor that ended up showing me the place that I live in now.

So with me, and the three others that I just told you about, that makes four people who drive Mogs and live on top of the water. So what exactly are the odds of that happening? Good thing that my sister is a math teacher. Stick with me now for this next portion of formulas, facts and figures:

As of the 2011 there were 2,313,238 people living in Greater Vancouver. They live in a total of 949,565 dwellings. That last number is important in that it represents the total number of houses, townhouses, apartments and float homes in the area. The total number of float homes though is less than 500. So the chances of living in a float home in Vancouver are 4,627 to one.

But wait it gets better. How many motor vehicles from the Greater Vancouver area do you think were registered with ICBC in 2013? If you guessed 1,520,776 you were spot on. Our illustrious Mogazine Editor Steve has told me that there are 53 Pacific Northwest Morgan club members that own Morgans and live in this area. Now we have to assume that there could be a handful of other Morgan owners living in the region that don't belong to our club. What's wrong with them, do they live together under some rock? So let's add another 25 Morgans into the Greater Vancouver mix. That makes about 78 Morgans in this neck of the woods. So as I pull out the slide ruler again I can tell you that the odds of a Greater Vancouver licensed car owner owning a Morgan are a whopping 19,497 to one.

So here comes the grand total. I checked with my sister and to determine the odds for anyone one person that lives in the Greater Vancouver area to own a Morgan and at the same time live on a float home you need to multiply 4,627 X 19,497. That number is so big that my calculator batteries died while trying to compute it. It is 90,212,619 to one.

I find odds easier to understand when you put them into a comparable context. Here are four odds to consider.

Be killed in a terrorist attack while traveling (1 in 650,000).

Die — during an average lifetime — of flesh-eating disease (1 in one million).

Be killed by lightning (1 in 56,439).

And my favorite less grim one is the odds of winning Lotto 649. I always like to end these articles on a more positive note. The odds of your next \$2 bet paying off is one in 14 million. I say, Ted, Gerry, and that lady that lives in Canoe Pass Village, and I should all get together and split a ticket!

In closing just to really hit home how unusual it is that someone would own a Morgan and live on a Floathome I want to offer one more fact. Let's say I was on an analytical quest to prove my theory and meet that elusive one in 90,212,619 individual. And to do so let's say that I decided to stand on a street corner in downtown Vancouver and spend a minute meeting strangers and asking where they lived and what they drove. And let's say that I decided to do this for 24 hours a day. If each short interview took one minute, it would take me over 171 years to meet that rarest of rare pleasure seekers. I'd improve my odds considerably by just asking people at our upcoming Christmas Party. Float On!

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