

A Spring Drive with a Dash of Sunshine: FolkMog at Hoveton Hall

If May in Norfolk this year has felt more like November, the FolkMog group could be forgiven for arriving at Hoveton Hall with collars turned up and expectations slightly dampened. Yet, as any seasoned Morgan driver will tell you, a little unpredictability is all part of the adventure—and, on 15 May, the elements ultimately played along rather beautifully.

Led by Nick and Lynda, a cheerful group of 12 Morgans—accompanied by two less glamorous but entirely practical “tin tops”—made their way to one of Norfolk’s hidden gems. Against a backdrop of brooding skies that had lingered for days, spirits remained high as engines hummed and gleaming bonnets reflected the occasional teasing glimmer of sun.

The day began gently at the charming Flora Café, tucked near the garden entrance. Ten of the cars arrived in time for a relaxed lunch, where good sense prevailed: with the promise of afternoon tea ahead, most opted for lighter savoury fare. “Light,” however, did nothing to diminish the flavour—plates were cleared with enthusiasm, fuelled as much by anticipation as by excellent food.

From there, the group motored a short distance to Hoveton Hall itself, where, thanks to prior arrangements, they were granted the rare privilege of parking directly in front of the house. The lineup of Morgans—polished chrome, sweeping wings, and

unmistakable character—proved almost as eye-catching as the Hall behind them. It was a moment made for photographs, and the group, now complete, took full advantage.

Welcomed warmly by Rachel Buxton, co-owner of the estate, visitors were soon introduced to the day's programme before meeting Harry Buxton, whose family has stewarded Hoveton Hall since 1946. What followed was far more than a simple house tour. Moving through six principal rooms, Harry wove an engaging narrative of the Hall's history, tracing its origins back to 1876 and its association with the celebrated landscape designer Humphry Repton. But this was no dry historical recitation. The story of Hoveton Hall is one of careful adaptation—of successive owners leaving their mark while respecting the building's character. Under the Buxton family's care, the balance between preservation and comfort has been skilfully struck. Grand yet welcoming, the house retains a lived-in warmth that speaks of decades of dedication (one suspects, considerable effort and expense).

The tour reached a natural finale in the beautifully restored iron glasshouse, its distinctive convex panes catching the light in ways that felt almost theatrical. And as if on cue, the sun—so elusive for much of the week—chose that very moment to emerge in earnest. Freed at last to explore, maps in hand, the FolkMog group dispersed into the gardens. Timing, as it turned out, was impeccable. The rhododendrons were in full,

exuberant bloom, painting the landscape in vivid colour, while the formal walled gardens offered a more measured, geometric beauty. There was just enough time to glimpse the lake before thoughts turned—inevitably—towards the next highlight.

Afternoon tea at Hoveton Hall is not a modest affair. Returning to the house, the group found themselves presented with a spread of truly heroic proportions. It was the sort of tea that demands both admiration and commitment: plates of delicacies, each one more tempting than the last. Conversation quietened briefly as plates were loaded; laughter resumed not long after, accompanied by the occasional remark about “needing a longer walk afterwards”.

Indeed, by the time departures began, there was some good-natured speculation that the Morgans themselves seemed to be sitting a touch lower on their springs—though whether due to engineering or indulgence remains open to debate.

As the cars headed their separate ways, one thing was clear: there is far more to Hoveton Hall than can be experienced in a single visit. The church, arboretum, and icehouse remain for another day, offering every excuse to return.

Above all, the outing was a reminder of what makes such gatherings special—not just the cars, though they are undoubtedly central, but the shared experience of discovery, good company, and a touch of serendipitous sunshine.

Thanks, of course, are due to Nick and Lynda for orchestrating a seamless day, and to Rachel and Harry Buxton for opening their home with such generosity.

For those fortunate enough to have been there, it was a day to savour—much like the tea.