

Y-TYPE NEWSLETTER

M.G. CAR CLUB

THE WORKS Y's IN COMPETITION

by Len Shaw



Y-TYPE REGISTER

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I bought my first 1½ litre saloon, the "Y" at Easter 1949. The car was a revelation being a luxury saloon in the Alvis 3 litre and R-Type Bentley class. As a competition car, despite weighing over a ton and only 1¼ litres it possessed a very low centre of gravity giving excellent road holding coupled with pin-sharp accuracy of steering, independent front suspension, hydraulic brakes etc., resulting in superb handling. The gearbox was such that a pull through was always an option and it was also possible to change into reverse (with care) while Travelling forwards, spinning the rear wheels before changing direction – a decided advantage in the rally type finishing tests of the day. I had never had such an affinity for a car before, and now having owned more than fifty cars never enjoyed one more.

Originally, I was inveigled into making up the entries in the Hagley club's Ludlow Rally and to my surprise won the day. Petrol was now in the blood and a

very busy and successful season's then ensued culminating in a sporting half-day at Abingdon when it lapped the factory faster than the Ken Scales special.

Sometime later John Thornley offered me my second 1½ which I immediately bought. This car OWL 543 had been specially built for the Monte Carlo Rally with an 8.6 compression, 15 gallon tank and special seats etc. Initially the car was loaned to Betty Haig for the Rally (see the Roy Knockhold's painting and subsequent cigarette cards) but was not successful being ditched early on. Recovered and repaired as new by Abingdon, I then campaigned the car vigorously over the next eighteen months, bringing a total of 47 awards out of 49 starts. OWL was now very tired and family ties were taking their toll so I bought my third "Y" MMT 720

Then early in 1953 came a momentous happening, John Thornley having watched the "Y" Type performances over the preceding years decided to build and

officially enter three YBs in the R.A.C. International Rally of Great Britain. This, often forgotten today, was the official re-entry of M.G. into motor sport after so many years of absence. With Reg Holt and Geoffrey Holt I was then invited to drive in the works team purely, I hasten to add, as amateurs, and we were also able to borrow the cars for the National events following. When the new models (Magneite ZA) came I bought my YB from Abingdon and have kept it to this day.

In their time, before the Mini Cooper S and other specially built competition cars the YBs with their luxurious fittings and comfort were a great force to be reckoned with competing with Jaguar XK120s, Allards, Sunbeam Talbots etc.

Remember too we had no "organised assistance other than that available to the private motorist" – tyres we started on had to be worn right to the finish and any damage to the vehicles whatsoever was heavily penalised.



The works team for 53 RAC Rally: Chevron 908 Reg Holt, Stan Astbury, Chevron 909 Len Shaw, Freddie Fimmnore, Chevron 910 Geoff Holt.



HMO 909 on speed section at Goodwood during 53 RAC Rally.

Apart from safety and comfort items all cars had to be to standard catalogue specifications with no extras or additional aids to performance.

I suppose the highlights over the years would be for the first 'Y' the numerous club events, Hagley, Sheffield, Shenstone, Walsall, Cheltenham, Peterborough and M.G. or wherever there was a suitable class.

The 2nd Y (OWL 543) would be, many similar club events and then the first and only in the years National Rally after the War. The Daily Express where Geoff Holt won the event with a TD, Ian Appleyard was 2nd with NUB 120 and OWL came in 3rd in the overall placings, which together with class wins in capacity classes both open and closed car firsts, the team prize and starting control

awards, it was a splendid M.G. clean up.

My third Y Type HMT 720 competed in fewer events than previously culminating however in the RAC international of that year which was divided into two classes, large and small cars. 2 litres I think was the divider, when the M.G. came in 2nd in the smaller class.

I have already mentioned my fourth M.G. the works YB which splendidly fulfilled John Thornley's plans in the R.A.C. Rally by winning the class with the other two YBs 2nd and 3rd and the by now customary team prize and it was 6th overall in the general category. Again an M.G. outing.

Later, many club events, with a liking for Prescott, where 60.01 was achieved on no less than five occasions. The season

ended with, I think, its greatest success the LANCS. Morecombe Coronation Rally (one of the only three nationals in the year) where it was 2nd in the open competition being pipped by that man Appleyard again with his Jaguar, who won the event. Once more the team prize, class win, and starting control prize went to the M.G. HMO 909's last competition was to be twenty nine years later in the R.A.C.s Golden Fifty. Although not up to the works Mini Cooper etc. it managed to gain a very nostalgic silver salver.

I still retain and drive HMO 909, mainly on fine Sunday mornings or to the various classic car shows. It still does not disgrace itself on the open road, but always serves to remind me of perhaps the happiest days of my motoring life.

HMO 909 special section of 53 RAC Rally at Hastings.



FITTING FLASHERS

J. Murray

In the process of restoring my Y I decided that the demands of modern day traffic, and in the interests of safety, I would fit flashing indicators. Before starting, I decided that any additions should be as 'non-invasive' as possible and should involve no drilling on body panels. What follows are my attempts at a solution.

1. Front flashers

The solution to this is quite straight forward. It is possible to purchase new bulb holders that will fit into the Lucas 1130 "torpedo" unit in place of the originals. This holder is capable of housing a twin filament bulb (21/5w) which enables the side lights to operate for their original purpose and act as a flasher too. Of course, it will flash white rather than amber, but this is both legal and perfectly adequate. One cautionary note I would add here is that you need to make sure that you buy the correct bulb to match the holder. My new holders require bulbs which have opposing bayonets rather than the modern version of the 21/5w bulb where the bayonets are offset. Once in possession of the correct bulb, you have to make sure that you fit it to the holder the correct way up. I have some spare bulbs which are marked "top" but some which have no markings at all. This in itself can present difficulties in that you have to decide for yourself which filament is the 21w, and which is the 5w. (Hence the reason for the modern "offset" bulb - it can only be fitted to the holder the correct way.)

2. Rear flashers

Here I encountered a slight problem. It is possible to buy twin filament bulb holders to fit inside your rear 'D' lamps which enable them to be used in the same manner as the front sidelights. However, I discounted this option as it means that the rear flashers will flash red. This too is legal, but having followed a 'T'-type which had this modification, I found that a flashing red light was confusing especially when you consider that the brakes are usually applied at, or about, the same time. In addition to this, a night journey would mean that rear sidelights are showing red too.

Not wanting to drill holes, I decided to make some brackets that would enable me to suspend light units from the rear bumper fixing bolts. Having made them I then discovered that it is possible

to buy ready made brackets from a number of firms who supply parts to make trailers.

I had to search for suitable light fittings to fit to the brackets and found some which had an amber lens and a flat back.

I emphasise this because you can buy similar units which have a large rubber 'boot' on the back. I believe that these are the type that are fitted to Morris Minors, the rubber boot going through a hole in the body work. The units I have used have an amber lens which fits over a flat rubber seal and is held in place by a chromed ring. Inside there is a circular metal plate with wiring connectors and a bulb holder which is fixed by screws through the rubber seal into the bracket. The bulb is of the festoon type.

3. Switch

The next problem to overcome when fitting Flashers is that you must have a "tell-tale" fitted inside the car. Not wanting to drill holes in the dashboard (I had recently spent much time re-veneering it!) I decided to search for a stalk type switch mounted on the steering column which had a tell tale light at the end. (Again the Morris Minor, or as my family fondly regard it the 'Puddle-jumper', comes to mind. Apologies to any Minor owners, but we used to own one and ours definitely lived up to its name.)

I eventually found a suitable switch at an autojumble. It was a type I remember from my youth and I seem to recall that they were available in black or cream plastic. It has a chromed stalk and a red bulb holder at the end. I painted the plastic to match the dark brown of the horn push and the arrangement is hardly noticeable. Incidentally, the switch is not self cancelling.

4. Flasher unit and wiring

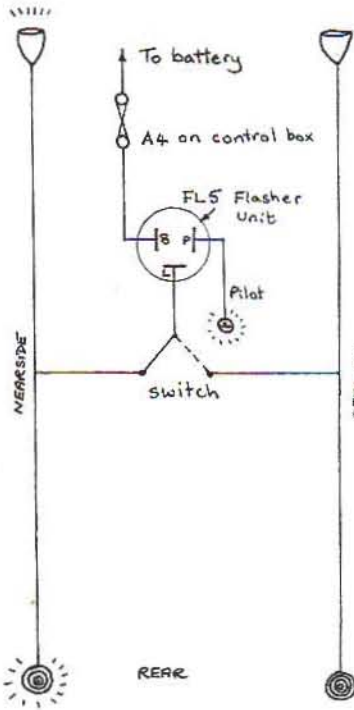
I have used an early type flasher unit which is a cylindrical capsule having three terminals, I believe that later ones have only two. The type is Lucas FL5 and they are still available from Halfords. I fitted the unit on the bulkhead next to the control box. The terminals are marked B, L and P and should be connected in the following way:

B to the battery via A4 on the control box.

L to the light switch. (in my case the stalk)

P to the pilot light. (tell tale light on the end of the stalk)

I've included a simple wiring diagram. On my car the actual wires follow the loom to the rear until it enters the spare wheel compartment. At this point one wire crosses to the nearside, being strapped to the chassis cross member and emerging next



to the bumper support bracket, the other comes out by the offside bumper bracket. At these two points I have fitted bullet connectors which allows me to 'unplug' and remove the flashers if required. To facilitate easy removal, I made the brackets 'hooked' at the top like a coat hanger so that I only have to slacken the bumper fixing bolts slightly. At the front the new wiring follows the route of the loom.

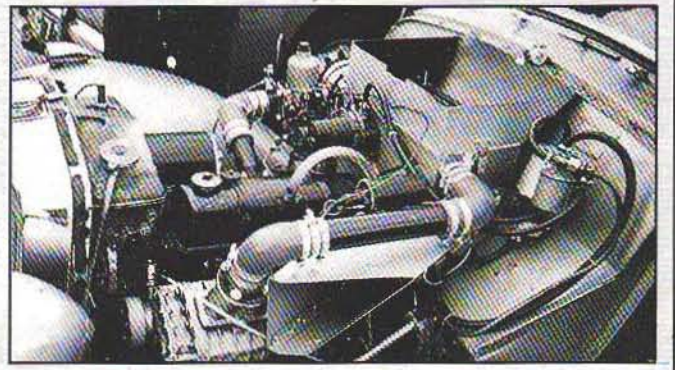
I've kept the original semaphores as standard and the two systems work independently. If you are contemplating flashers for your car, it is possible to convert the semaphores so that they flash and I'm sure that someone out there has a suitable diagram showing this conversion. I'm reliably informed that this doesn't mean that the semaphores flap up and down.

THE SEARCH FOR POWER GOES ON

You may remember in the last newsletter, that Frank Vautier wrote a great article on "The Search For Power".

The attached photo shows why Frank thinks his search is over. This is what Frank is using these days instead of (or should it be as well as) Phyllosan!

But exactly what is it? First correct answer will receive a Y-Type window sticker. Don't forget the other bits and pieces not usually seen under the Y's bonnet.



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