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TOURING DOWN MEMORY LANE

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17th September 1996

Dear Denis,

Your picture of a Y type at the top of the St. Gotthard pass (6800 ft) reminded me of my own Y's first year. It was ordered in 1946 - I had seen a prototype when I took my 1934 PA to the factory for advice on tuning (you could do such things in those days) - and arrived in January 1950. New cars were at a premium and the petrol ration was 8 gallons every three months for a 1250 cc car. The only way to get some real benefit from the new arrival seemed to be to take it to the Continent on holiday. Hence we booked a ferry for August, planning to go as far as the Austrian Alps. (In fact petrol rationing was abolished in May 1950 but I was not to know this at the time.)

We travelled 4 up, making the best use of our holiday foreign currency allowance. To give more room for luggage I removed the boot floor and the spare wheel, putting a small suitcase in its place. I packed an inner tube with the tool kit, but didn't need it.

It was a fairly strenuous three days' motoring across France and Switzerland at that time. At our destination - a small hotel on a lake near Salzburg - we encountered a forlorn TA owner who had sheared a half shaft near the top of the Gross Glockner pass and had been rescued by the local garage's Jeep. The technique, which he understandably found hair-raising, was to

attach the TA to the front of the Jeep by a towbar and instruct the driver to steer his car round the innumerable hairpins down the pass and on pain of death never to touch the brake pedal. The unfortunate owner, having survived this ordeal, was kicking his heels in the hotel while awaiting a new half shaft from the UK. We took pity on him and thus it was that UMG 104 climbed the Gross Glockner pass 5 up a few days later. At the top (8450 ft) the passengers seemed more out of breath than the car and both outward and return journeys were uneventful. This was a contrast to my old PA which, lacking both fan and waterpump, had needed the occasional refreshing pause on some Swiss passes in previous years.

On the journey home the Y's toughened glass windscreen was shattered near Belfort by a large stone thrown up by an oncoming Citroen. The local garage cut a plywood sheet to fit the frame, with a Perspex insert measuring about 18" by 7". It was rather like looking through a submarine periscope. We proceeded cautiously, reaching Reims at about 5 p.m. on a Saturday. Mercifully we found the city's Triplex Glass agent still open. He cut a new laminated screen in about 20 minutes which he and I fitted together. The bill was £3. The glass eventually discoloured and has had to be replaced - but that was 35 years later.

PETER HUDSON

HOW DO THEY DO THAT? PART 2.

PUMPS

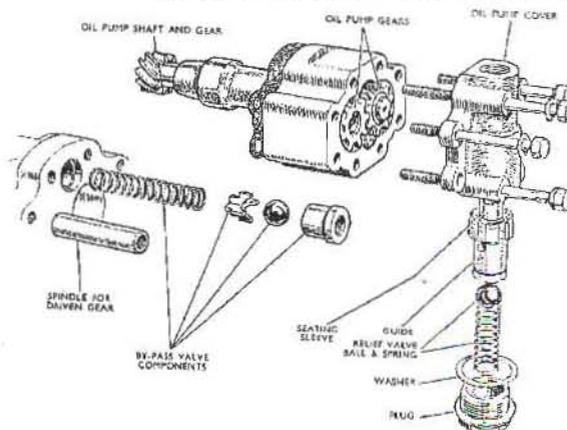
CONTINUED EXPLANATION BY NEIL CAIRNS

Engines have not always had oil pumps. Very early designs relied on 'splash and oil mist' lubrication. The big ends dipped into oil troughs scooping up oil for themselves, and splashing everything else. This was OK at low rpm, and low power. As time and power advanced, so engines were fitted with more positive means of lubrication. The word positive here is the hub idea behind the oil-pump.

On the 'Y' a gear type oil pump pushes oil to vital parts of the engine, hence its similarity to the heart in a living body. There are other types of oil pump, (such as vane pumps in early Minis; lobe pumps as in the 'B' series; etc.) The gear pump in the XPAG is driven off the camshaft. It sucks oil up from the reservoir, the oil sump, and forces it about the engine via drillings and pipes. It is a very close tolerance item, unlike the crude water pump. There are very small running clearances. It has two gears meshed together, and the oil is passed round the OUTSIDE of these gears, NOT between them. Oil is virtually incompressible (like water),

so as the pump moves the oil from the sump to the main oil gallery, via the filter, it develops very high pressures. This pressure is directly related to the clearances of the bearings. Good engine, good pressure; worn engine, low pressure.

The oil pump WILL pump, it's a driven positive displacement pump. If you block off its exit, it will strip its driven gear on the cam, but before this it is likely to split open the oil filter case. To stop this, at cold temperatures, there is a by-pass directly into the main oil gallery, that only operates at extreme



CHAIRMAN'S CHATTER

For those 'of a certain age', 1947 was hardly the greatest year to remember. With the war not long over, almost everything rationed and a long, hard winter interrupted only by power cuts, the launch of the Y-Type M.G. that Spring was one of few causes for celebration. Now, fifty years later, your committee hopes to make the Y's Golden Jubilee a much more noteworthy year. As well as the limited edition Jubilee badge, which is proving very popular, we are looking forward to the Register's Luxembourg tour in late August, and hoping to organise some other special events.

We are therefore hoping that these special attractions will encourage all those whose Ys are not quite ready for the road to make that special effort and join us on at least one, but preferably all of these special occasions.

PAUL RUNDELL

high pressures, to protect the pump and engine. Normally, the delivery pressure is controlled by the relief valve, set at about 50psi.

This pressure relief valve is under the big brass plug at the base of the pump housing. It is often fiddled with to mask low oil pressures on worn engines. It can suffer from a weak spring, and a pitted ball (any ball bearing of the same size will replace it, but do 'seat' the new ball by 'fitting' it onto the seat first). The XPAG oil pump is a very high output pump, that will pump more oil than the engine will ever need, hence it will be dumping oil via the relief valve all the time, which is why this same valve can be meddled with to supply extra oil to hide a worn engine . . . This valve exits directly into the sump.

The by-pass valve will probably never work, unless you are in the habit of starting up the engine on winter days at -30 degrees with only pure STP in your sump. It's a SAFETY valve, some of you probably never knew it was there.

Problems, the many pipes and joints can (and do) leak. The gears can develop too much 'end float' by wearing into the end case. This can be cured by lapping the cover flat again. The relief ball does develop an annular groove from its seat after a while, easily cured with a new ball, and its spring does wear through its coils, reducing its tension.

So the oil pump is a positive pump, that WILL move oil, needing internal control via pressure relief valves.



30th August 1996

Dear Dennis,

I received all the regalia items in good order with only the small disappointment that the "large" shirt is too small - I really need the "extra large". There's no point in an exchange as the return costs nearly as much in post as the shirt. Perhaps I will shrink into it. And I'm absolutely delighted with the RAE YB saloon miniature!

I'm also particularly enjoying the paper items - the booklets, etc. The jackal manual will be very handy in resolving a problem or two, and the posters are lovely. I eagerly await the remaining item - the anniversary badge - which will immediately go proudly on the badge bar of our "Road Hog" '53 YB Saloon!

My wife Lee and I included in our activities this summer a 2000-mile tour to Indianapolis, Indiana with our friends in the Delaware Valley Classic M.G. Chapter. The "Road Hog" somehow managed to grab the "Best Saloon" award, we were reunited with lots of friends we hadn't seen in ages, and we loved seeing more than 1200 M.G.s of all varieties in one place . . . but the real joy of it all was the trip itself - as usual, "getting there" with all our M.G. road companions got top billing with us.

Then, in July, less than two weeks after arriving home from Indy, we again ventured forth - along with Roy & Georgy Jacobson in their pretty red '52 YB - to become the only Y-Types ever to visit Labrador. Yes, we drove the YB all the way there from our home in New Jersey, a round trip of just over 4000 miles, travelling north as far as the Pinware river, just short of where the paved road ends at Red Bay. We and the Jacobsons drove two of the 23 pre-1955 M.G.s that went on the "Run Around the Rock" tour of Newfoundland last month, but only the two YBs - and their intrepid crews! - dared to brave the treacherous ferry crossing to the bleak, storm-tossed, coast of Labrador! (Well, there was a little chop, and it was a little chilly, and those ferocious biting blackflies were absolutely everywhere . . .)

The Newfoundland trip was not without mechanical incident, either. The "Road Hog" decided to take off on a jaunt of his own, slipping his handbrake and rolling merrily off, down the embankment into a fishing-shed on the waterfront in the village of Grand Bank! But everything's relative, they say, and it might have been worse if he'd managed to get two feet to the right and down the town boat launch into 50 feet of salt water, again raising that age-old ponderance: "Do YB's float?" Naturally, we were quite happy to avoid an answer to that one. It did raise the problem of finding another left front wing, however, as this one is too well crumpled to repair, so if you happen to get a line on one, I'd be very, very grateful for the news.

Again, thanks for the regalia and for doing such a fine job with the Y-Register, not to mention that column in *Safety First!* that I look forward to every month.

Y-Types Forever!

Jerry Keller

GOING LEADFREE

With two of my M.G.s now well over the 25 year age group to qualify for Vehicle Excise Exemption, I am due to save about £300, PLUS the rebate on the current licences. Cash in the pocket of a Classic Car Enthusiast does not last very long.

Five years ago I fitted a leadfree cylinder head to my Magnette, it was gasflowed as well, and gives good performance, ready for the day the Greens cut off the Tetra Ethyl Lead. For about a year now I have been thinking of fitting such a head to my YB. The Magnettes 'B' series engine was easy, as many firms do the necessary modifications, and it only cost £185, plus gaskets. The XPAG engine is not so well served for specialist engineers, and I did not want to buy a 'pup'.

At the M.G.C.C. Silverstone Meeting, there were dozens of stalls with XPAG items. One I have dealt with before, "M.G. Classics (Ely) Ltd." My ageing Wolseley 4/44 gained its new camshaft from here, as well as a set of cam followers, last year. On his stall were 3 leadfree converted XPAG cylinder heads. I studied their engineering, and was impressed. Hardened seats had been fitted to all the exhaust valve ports. The guides had been reamed out and phosphor bronze inserts fitted; and into these were the larger XPEG M.G. TF valves. The head face had been opened up to fit the larger valves. The head face had been surface ground, producing about 8:1 compression ratio. The heads were on exchange, for £345. I agreed to collect one the following day, once my YB head had been removed, and this I did, also collecting a head gasket and inlet/exhaust gasket. The total cost of my conversion was £365, plus the petrol to and from Coveney (a trip out in the Magnette!).

Removing my head was straight forward. I removed the studs as I took the items off, such as the manifold studs, rocker cover studs, as the head was to be 'clean'. The end plates came off easily. In fact it was easier to undo the four bolts holding on the thermostat housing IN-SITU than to take the hoses off. Again, the carb I left on the manifold, simply pulling the lot to one side and tying it out of the way. Plug leads removed, the side cover and vent pipe; followed by the rockers and their push rods. Then I undid the head nuts, and simply lifted off the head. With no studs to complicate things, it came away cleanly.

Off to Coveney, swap the heads, and back to fit the new one. The removal took 1½ hours, the fitting over 4. Mainly because I cleaned everything, such as the block face, side cover face, and the manifold face.

The valves required fitting, and I already had spare valve springs and stem seals. I relieved some of the machine burrs inside the ports prior to fitting, left after the machining of the enlarged ports throats. Once all clean, on went the new head gasket and on went the head! The head nuts were pulled down to 500 Lb.in. (41.6 lb.ft.) (*Too little - should be 50 - APW*)

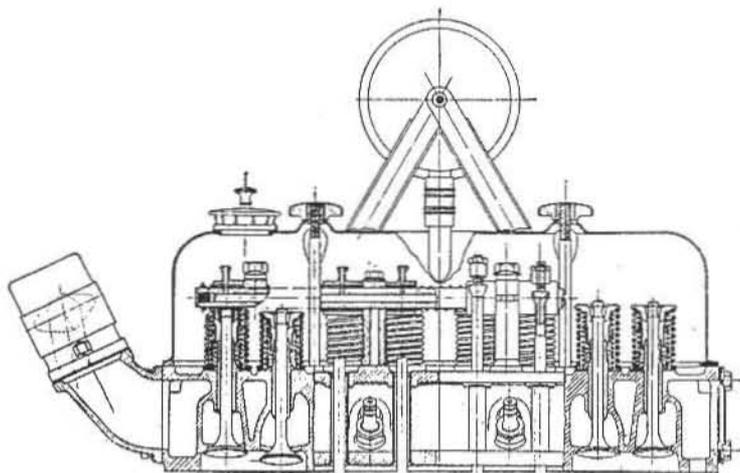
All the hard work had been done, no valves to grind in, no new valve guides to fit, no need to re-cut valve seats, not even any need to clean up the head. Push rods fitted, rockers fitted, side cover and gasket fitted. (I make all my thin cork and gasket paper gaskets, it's far cheaper than buying them.) The rear cover had been fitted, and the thermostat housing gasket glued in place so I could simply bolt it all up. Tappets set to 0.019" (early camshaft) and I started it up.

It ran as it always had, nice smooth slow tick-over, but no little puff of blue smoke indicating worn valve guides. But how would it run with the bigger valves? Even 1 bhp will be noticed in a 'Y', so when I drove the car out I noticed straight away it pulled a lot better. Only a 'Y' driver would have noticed the extra oomph! It still takes a week to get to 60mph, but that's better than the fortnight it used to take. It also pulls up hills more steadily, not dropping off so soon.

On unleaded the car appears to run just the same, in fact I cannot trace any difference in using either leaded, or unleaded petrol, in the car's performance. Never mind, now my 'YB' is ready for the Greens Day of Reckoning. If it ever comes. If it does not, I still have that extra 3 or 4 bhp.

All bits supplied, with a cup of coffee, from M.G. Classics (Ely) Ltd, on 01353 778510. All labour by me, and saying that I must remember to pull that head down after 500 miles.

Yes, it really was that easy, and you can do it.



An XPAG lifting her skirts to show you what she has under her bonnet . . . the cylinder head.

NEIL CAIRNS