



Until recently the 'Y' Type M.G. (or 1¼ litre saloon and tourer, to give the variants their proper names) was very much the cinderella of the M.G. world. In the last eighteen months or so though interest in and respect for these beautiful and eminently practical cars has increased significantly. Given this past neglect it is not surprising that very little seems to have been published concerning the finer points of the production details of this type of car. In this article I aim to begin to put this right and present the following facts not only as a handy source of reference but as a stimulant to further discussion.

The 'Y' Type mock-up was constructed in 1939 for launch at the 1940 Motor Show. Unfortunately Herr Hitler intervened and it was not until 1947 that Abingdon could begin production of a car which was, in the event, very little altered from the 1939 mock-up. The 'Y' featured independent front suspension designed by Alec Issigonis (it was the first British production car to be so equipped). It used a modified Morris 8 Series E body (designed by Gerald Palmer) with the 1250 cc. XPAG engine which had been developed from the pre-war Morris 10 power unit. Production of the 'Y' (there never was a 'YA') began in 1947 with chassis no. Y 0251 - '251' being the factory telephone number. An open tourer version was introduced in 1948 and the updated 'YB' (about which more later) appeared in 1952. It may be opportune to add here that the chassis for the 'TD' was developed from the 'Y' chassis. Year by year production of the 'Y' Type was as follows:

DISCOVERING THE 'Y' TYPE

Y	1947	chassis nos. Y 0251 to Y 1150	900 cars.
	1948	Y 1151 to Y 2208	1058 cars.
	1949	Y 2209 to Y 4239	2031 cars.
	1950	Y 4240 to Y 6284	2045 cars.
	1951	Y 6285 to Y 7285	1001 cars.

The Tourer version (the 'YT') was produced between 1948 and 1950 and the chassis numbers were included in the normal 'Y' series above. There were 6,158 'Y' saloons and 877 Tourers.

YB	1952	chassis nos. YB 0251 to YB 0929*	679 cars.
	1953	YB 0930* to YB 1551	622 cars.

* unconfirmed information.

There were 1,301 YBs in all and a total of 8,336 'Y' Types of all variants.

Chassis numbers can be found on a plate affixed to the left hand side of the car's battery box. This is not always an infallible source of information however and, if you wish to verify the chassis number of your car, it can also be found stamped on the outer face of the left hand chassis member just behind the bumper fixing stud. Points to note about chassis number presentation are:

- (i) There is one known example of a chassis number presented thus: 'Y 0795X'. This car was an early example exported to Cyprus.

(ii) 'YT' chassis numbers are presented thus:

Y/T	RHD for home	Speedometer in MPH
Y/T/EXL	LHD for export	Speedometer in KPH
Y/T/EXR	RHD for export	Speedometer in MPH
Y/T/EXR/K	RHD for export	Speedometer in KPH
Y/T/EXL/M	LHD for export	Speedometer in MPH
Y/T/EX(U)	LHD for U.S.A.	Speedometer in MPH

(iii) Three left hand drive saloons (all 'Y's) are known to exist. The chassis number of one is known to be 'Y 5174 EXLU'.

Colour combinations have, I know, been a subject of some discussion over the years so, for the record, here is my attempt at a definitive solution. Bear in mind that the colours featured in original sales literature were not always provided in practice on actual cars and that, from year to year, shades very often had their names changed for advertising purposes (e.g. Ivory to Sequoia Cream; Regency Red to Autumn Red etc):

	Exterior.	Upholstery.
Y.	Shires Green (a dk. green)	Dk. Green.
		Beige.
	Shires Green/Almond	Dk. Green.
	Green two-tone	Beige.
	Almond Green (a medium	Beige.
	green metallic)	Dk. Green?
	Autumn Red	Red (fairly rare)
		Beige.
	Black	Red (fairly rare)
		Beige.
	Elizabeth Grey	Dk. Green.
		Beige.
	Elizabeth Grey/Black	Red (fairly rare)
	two-tone	Beige.
	Cream	Red (fairly rare)
		Dk. Green.
		Beige?
	Sun Bronze (a metallic)	Red/Beige.

1. A rare occurrence - two YTs caught together in Britain. In the late seventies these both used to live in South Wales. *Photo by Malcolm Meyers.*

2. This superbly restored 1949 YT belongs to Bernie Havel of Port Huron, Michigan. *Photo by the owner.*

3. A line-up of well preserved 'Y's in California. On the extreme left is the famous supercharged '47 'Y' belonging to Al Moss, founder of Moss Motors. *Photo by Rod Schweiger.*

4. John Autry's 1949 'Y' is perhaps one of the best examples in the world and is interesting in that it is one of only three LHD saloons known to exist. *Photo by Rod Schweiger.*

5. 'Penelope', the oldest 'Y' known to exist (Y 0296) was built in early 1947 and now lives in Virginia. *Photo by J. G. Lawson.*





YT.	Regency Red	Red.
	Shires Green	Beige.
	Black	Dk. Green
	Clipper Blue	Beige.
	Sequoia Cream	Beige.
YB.	Shires Green	Red?
	Autumn Red	Beige.
	Black	Dk. Green
	Old English White	Beige.
	Silver Streak Grey (metallic)	Red (fairly rare)
		Dk. Green.
		Beige.
		Red
		Beige?
		Dk. Green?
		Red.

Headlinings were always in beige Union Cloth (if you come across a darker headlining these days it is probably so because the car has been owned for a long period by a succession of smokers!) Carpets were always black (as was wing-to-body



pipings). Different colour seat pipings have been reported but the situation is far from clear.

There were basically two variants of the XPAG engine fitted to 'Y' Types:

XPAG/SC/ 10001 to 16915 – the number was prefixed by an 'X' when the car was for export.

XPAG/SC2/ 16916 to 18460

The 'SC2' was introduced not with the first YB, which has often been assumed to have been the case, but was fitted to a batch of late 1951 'Y's. Engines intended for YTs (these were fitted with twin carburettors) were numbered 'XPAG/TR' for RHD cars and 'XPAG/TL' for LHD cars. Many BMC replacement Gold Seal engines have found their way into 'Y' Types of the years. Examples of such engine numbers follow:

XPAG/SC/B34681 XPAG/SC/G73602 XPAG/TR/B50599
XPAG/SC2/C91900 XPAG/SC2/D06214

There appears not to be a decipherable pattern to the allocation of these engine numbers. Some 'Y' Types have also been fitted later in their lives with 'XPAW' engines from Wolseley 4/44s. The engines are virtually identical to the 'XPAG' series, the only outwardly noticeable difference being that the oil dipstick hole is on the opposite side of the engine to that of the 'XPAG'.

The body number is to be found on a small plate fastened to the left hand scuttle. In many cases these seem to have disappeared over the years. Examples which follow will, I hope, serve to illustrate the body numbering system. It will also be noticed that the saloon bodies were not necessarily allocated to chassis in chronological order of build. YT bodies were an exception to this and had their own, more logical, body numbering system:

Y: 158/206 chassis no. Y 0358
1339/1427 chassis no. Y 1637
2669/2732 chassis no. Y 3498
2392/2773 chassis no. Y 3534
4487/4612 chassis no. Y 5692
4391/4461 chassis no. Y 5765

Why there should be two number groups is not clear.

YB: 5936/150 chassis no. YB 0305
6135/610 chassis no. YB 0647
7124/1334 chassis no. YB 1524

Here it is obvious that the first number group is a consecutive number dating from the beginning of production in 1947 whilst the second number group relates solely to the YB and dates from 1952.

YT: 19604–185 chassis no. Y/T/EX(U) 2509
19630–212 chassis no. Y/T/EXR 2617
45022–342 chassis no. Y/T/EXR 3030
45013–356 chassis no. Y/T/EXL 3075
53094–766 chassis no. Y/T/EXR 4372
53216–875 chassis no. Y/T/EX(U) 4833

The second number group of the YTs' body numbers is simply a sequence starting at 1 and ending at 877 (there were 877 YTs). Even then the sequence does not proceed in strict order. Note that in the first number group the first two digits are '19', '45' and then '53'. The significance of these groups is not known. They do not relate to the three years of production of the YT.

What can best be described as the 'body code' (for its precise

significance remains a mystery to me) can be found on a plate affixed to the engine bulkhead. Above this is a plate which gives the body type and this is fairly straightforward. Type B281 – Y & YB. Type B282 – YT. The body codes however are a different matter. These seem to be very rarely recorded in full by owners I have written to and thus the solution to their meaning has so far eluded me. I give below a few examples and I will then try and comment on them meaningfully:

chassis no.	body code.	body number.
Y 1951	MGA 1763	1702/1732
	125 MG – 1702	
	1702 Z8693	
YB 1524	BMG 928	7124/1334
	125 MG – 7124	
	No. 278 Z12488	

The above are the only two examples I have of the full enumeration but it is also known that Y1805 is also marked 'Z8693' on the last line but that Y5460 is marked 'SLZ 01412' and there is a YB (chassis number unknown) which is marked 'SRZ 12692'. First let me state the obvious. The '125 MG' seems constant and the number following it seems to be the same as the first number quoted on the body number plate. The code on the last line is, however, mystifying. There seems no logic to it and it is definitely not the case that 'SLZ' might mean LHD saloon and 'SRZ' RHD saloon, for both the cars mentioned are RHD examples.

Now let us examine the more noticeable mechanical differences between the Y and the YB:

Y	YB
16" wheels (and YT). The last Y with a battery box offset to the left was Y4459.	15" wheels.
Plain hub cap until Y5420, then with centre medallion.	All battery boxes centrally placed.
Over-riders not generally fitted (available as an optional extra).	All hubcaps had centre medallions.
RF.91 Voltage control box until Y 0584; then RF.95/2.	Over-riders made generally available.
Rear axle (early type) (halfshaft breakage can be a problem).	RB.106 Voltage control box.
Fitted with rear Panhard rod.	Rear axle later, hypoid, type (from YB 0286).
Early Lockheed braking system (many parts now unavailable).	Fitted with front anti-roll bar.
8" Headlamps (to Y4760?); 7" lamps on later cars. All headlamps were overall chrome.	Later Lockheed braking system (all parts readily available) 7" headlamps on all cars. On cars to YB 1239 only the headlamp rim was chromium plated. The rear shell of the lamp was painted the same colour as the body.
Single horn fitted.	From YB 1240 all-chrome lamps were reintroduced.
Push button starter fitted to early 'Y's; Pull starter to later cars.	Twin windtone horns fitted.
	Pull starter fitted to all cars.

The YB spare wheel compartment lid is 1" deeper than that on the Y or YT (to accommodate the wider profile tyres).

The original shape and dimensions of the front and rear bumpers of these cars is still a controversial subject and because most cars during their lifetime have acquired a variety

of non-original bumpers, I have not been able to come up with any definitive answer. What differences there are exist mainly in end shape (pointed or rounded) and invariably this is often a matter of degree which is hard to judge without many different cars being available at the one location at the same time.

Y and YT rear wings are less deep directly above the rear wheel. YB rear wings are deeper directly above the rear wheel.

Difference in rear wings is very hard to judge unless a Y and YB are together in one location for comparison purposes.

Wilmot Breedon Oil Filter (vertical) Purolator PTX 346 Oil Filter (horizontal).
Oil Sump capacity = 9 pints Oil Sump capacity = 9 pints to XPAG/SC2/17383 and 10½ pints thereafter.
7" Clutch 8" Clutch.

The reader should bear in mind that, in addition, there are many other small differences between the Y and YB and also that, throughout production of the 'Y' Series, small modifications and modernisations were made. Research has also shown that it is difficult to be categorical as regards originality as there were many instances of 'special equipment' being specified by the customer and these cars retained an element of personalised building although they were built on a production line and with pressed steel bodies in an attempt, presumably, to standardise and simplify production. The XPAG engine was also the subject of modification throughout its life and, although I

have covered the change from 'SC' to 'SC2' above, it should be borne in mind that from year to year there were many small modifications.

Lastly a word about 'UMG' and 'YMG' registration plates. The 'UMG' batch of registration marks seems to have been reserved for the exclusive use of long time London M.G. dealer, University Motors. The registrations seem to have been allocated chronologically to 'Y' Types and 'T' Types throughout the late forties and early fifties. A selection of 'Y' Type examples will suffice to show the pattern:

UMG 50	Y 3443	UMG 600	YB 0264
UMG 118	Y 4407	UMG 803	YB 0631
UMG 422	Y 7012		

'UMG 422' has a rather nice small University Motors plaque affixed to its dashboard. It is not known whether every 'UMG' car was so adorned. Following the 'UMG's a batch of 'YMG' registrations seems to have been used on late YB's:

YMG 5	YB 0885
YMG 124	YB 1204
YMG 186	YB 1277

In concluding I should like to hope that the above short article has gone some way towards solving for posterity some of the long-standing mysteries concerning the 'Y' Type M.G.

John Lawson



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