

The Restoration of Y 2924 (also known as Mrs Miniver)

Mike Stearn of MGCC Canberra describes the restoration of of his MG Y Type 2924

I bought MG Y Type 2924 in 1997 from Ewan Ward in Kambah ACT who had owned her for a number of years. She came with many new parts including carpets, most rubbers, an interior roof lining, 2 trafficators still in their Lucas box, plus many other small parts. There were also quite a few used parts that came with it. The down side was that most of the car had been stripped and was in boxes so that made putting things back together a little tricky!

Not much history was known about her except that she was registered in the ACT as YJP 386 sometime in the 70s. She was black and had a dark green interior trim. I purchased a Certificate of Authenticity from the UK Y Register but only found out that she was Imported into NSW on the SS Corinthic on the 9th August 1949 and was sold to her first owner in 1949.

House renovations delayed work on the car until 1999. First job was to remove the body which I did with the help of a block and tackle and one daughter. I made up a jig with wheels to lower the body onto; this gave me a good working height. I also made up a dummy axle arrangement which

allowed me to wheel the chassis around once it was minus all its bits. The chassis and all its running gear was stripped and cleaned up and rebuilt as required. The front suspension is basically MGB (or should that be 'MGB front suspension is basically MG Y') so they are quite easy to work on. I rebuilt, repaired or replaced everything. I overhauled the gearbox, replacing all worn parts. I made my own modification to the selectors to stop a known problem on

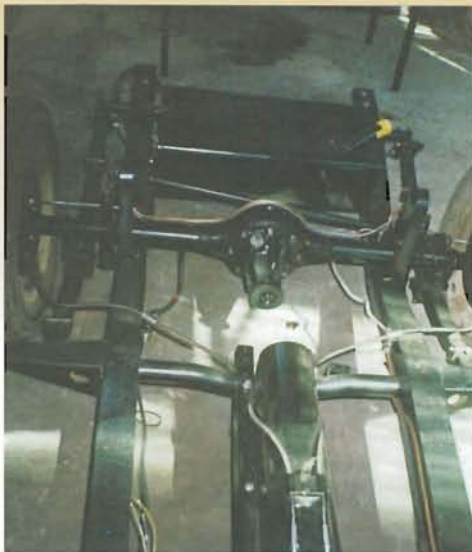


the earlier boxes - that is one of over selecting 3rd gear and causing the sliding hub to go too far and allow the balls and springs to pop out and mince themselves up in the gearbox. A new clutch assembly was fitted along with a new clutch cable and linkage. I had the differential rebuilt by a specialist

as you really need special equipment to do differentials. I made new brake lines, had stainless steel inserts fitted to all brake cylinders, relined the brakes and machined all the brake drums. New rubbers in the rear springs were fitted and also to the Panhard rod. The universal joints were replaced and I also fitted rebuilt shock absorbers.

I had the engine rebuilt using 60 thou oversize sleeves and changed the cylinder head to unleaded. They machined the camshaft to the same specs as an MG TC which has a slightly higher lift. I had the engine rebuilders do all the machine work and I put it together. I fitted twin 1¼ SU carburetors with a TD exhaust manifold and a stainless steel exhaust system off a TF that I modified to fit. The air cleaner set up comes straight from an MG Mk 1 Magnette - Peter Daley's to be exact!

Everything was now fitted up to the chassis and now I had a drivable car, albeit one without a body. I made up some fuel lines, ignition coil and wiring, and a battery and I drove her up and down my driveway to make



sure all was working correctly. It looked strange but it was good fun.



The project now 'had a rest' as I had taken redundancy from my job and I found myself doing all the things that you promise yourself you will do when you retire. After a break of too many years, I was ready for the next installment, the body work.



purchased a TF but he had to take a very sad Y Type in the deal as well. Did I need any parts? Sure did. Well, I got quite a few mechanical parts from it and also I cut out the rear spare wheel area which was in much better condition than mine. Luckily the boot floor had rusted on the opposite side to mine so I was able to cut out the good side of that and weld it in to mine. After much welding and panel beating - about 2 years on and off - the body was getting close to painting.

I decided to paint her green and black. I had some paint colours from the UK which were examples of the correct Y Type green but in the end I chose New Brunswick Green. This colour is one of the many 'British Racing Greens' that are in the paint shop's guide book. As my wife Julie said, 'We are giving her a new lease of life, so let's give her a new colour.' I sprayed 10 coats of colour on, and then left it to harden for a month.

Everything was now ready for the mating of body and chassis.



The rust was in the usual places: one side of the boot floor was rusty from the sun roof drain tubes leaking into it, and also the spare wheel well. The doors were rusty but a partly repaired set came with the car so I used those. Then a welcome event took place, I received a phone call from fellow club member Warren Devine saying he had

Part of being in our MG Car Club is the way in which everyone is willing to help if you need it. I thought six blokes would be enough to lift the body, so I asked around and to my rescue came Brian Calder, Peter Daley, Kent Brown, Ian Farrant, Wayne Smith, Ian Holden. The job went smoothly and I didn't even have to lift, I just gave orders.



After the body was reunited with the chassis I took some advice from Tony



Slattery in Queensland and jacked her up as high as I could. This enabled me to stand (almost) in the car to do the roof lining. This job had been concerning me for some time as it looked very complicated and very easy to mess up. The new roof lining comes in twelve pieces and not much of it made any sense. I decided to buy a publication from the MG Y Registrar in the UK entitled 'How to Fit a Hood

Lining to your Y'. Money well spent is all I can say! The making and fitting of the timber into the channels where the rolled paper used to go was a lot of work. However, once this was done it gave me a good solid base to fit my tacks and staples into. The rear window area was a challenge to say the least. You need to fit timber around the window making sure it follows the contours exactly. Then you need to make another set that will allow you to fit the roof lining onto and tack that to the timber you already have there. The sun roof was a real head scratcher as I just couldn't get it to lift properly at the rear where it seals. This meant taking the sunroof out on a number of occasions to sort the problem out. Another frustration was the sound deadening material. This has two jobs to do. Firstly it is an anti-drumming material to stop drumming from large flat panels. Secondly it also acts as a sound deadener from road noise. As this was an upmarket car in its day MG were

the driver. The driver is able to lift the roller blind and lock it in place from this hi-tech control line 'to prevent headlight dazzle from following vehicles.' I modified a roller from a blind shop and fitted up the blind which kindly came from Alf Luckman's



on the car. I have also fitted orange trafficators in the front parking lights, (white), which look original outside but flash orange when you operate the trafficators on the steering wheel. The trafficator switch is interesting; it is a large ring around the centre of the



wife Dot.

The dash was re-veneered with burr walnut by my dad a few years ago as he is much better with woodwork than I am. I then had to fit the gauges and wire everything up. I was amazed that the electric clock was working even after 62 years.

Next job to tackle was the wiring loom. I had a brand new loom that came with the car which I had fitted to the chassis before the body was lifted on. Using a wiring diagram I went through the wiring systematically. I have fitted up rear trafficator lights as well as the semaphore arms that were standard

steering wheel with the horn button in the centre. The mechanism to operate the turn signals is clockwork; it is a timer unit and you can hear the clockwork working if it is quiet.

The boot plywood floor was made and fitted and the petrol tank filling neck, (there is even a MG logo on the release button for the cap) and the left hand rear guard fitted. The boot lid and lock mechanism were installed, new boot hold-open chains sourced and vinyl chain covering made for them by my wife Julie. Rubber boot seal fitted, wiring to rear stop/tail lights done, and chains and vinyl covering

for the spare tyre cover hatch were also made.

After all the hard work and the end never getting in sight, one day I realised that there were only a few jobs left to do.



I needed to check in for the registration inspection, that terrifying process where all your work is examined and tested by someone with no feelings for old cars. It is quite a strange feeling to get in and drive a car that came mostly in boxes and you have spent quite a lot of your life working on - some say too much of my life. Anyway, she went well - a few minor niggles, but on the whole I was pleased with the result.

On the day of the inspection I had a mate, Tom, with me and together we arrived at the Phillip Authorised Inspection Station. OK, the tester was impressed with the car's looks and

then proceeded to give her the once over. When it came to the brake test (drive the car at 30 kph with a brake test computer hooked up) he said, "I'm not driving it, I'll show you how to do it". You have to strap a big block with



sensors in it on to your brake pedal and this is in turn hooks up to the computer. You zero the machine and then push 'enter' and balance the machine and drive at 30 kph and slam the brakes on. It must read over 47, but my first attempt only managed 44. I had another go and this time I locked up the brakes. But I hadn't zeroed the computer so it had the same reading of 44 on it. By now quite a few mechanics were coming out of the other workshops to see what was going on. This time I did zero it and we got up to 55. I never thought '55' would be a number I would be so very pleased to see.

I then received the 'pass' paperwork and paid the money for the test. It was a nice feeling to have got that out of the way and I drove home with Tom

electing to test the passenger's seat, the sun roof open, the engine



sounding sweet and all was right with the world. I took all my paperwork to Dickson rego and received my new Historic number plates '1227'. Now I will be going for short drives to run her in and get used to driving what is in effect, a pre-war designed car. I hope to see you on the road soon.

Mike Stearn

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Brian and Christine Calder's MG YA No 3095 (Esme) was restored from two cars in Canberra in 1989. Since then it has completed over 12,000 miles on Club runs mainly with the MG Car Club Canberra. Its longest journey has been a faultless run on the Great Ocean Rd. It is in good original condition apart from having twin SUs carburettors.



Trevor Clement's 1955 MG TF1500 has been in Canberra since the early 1960s. In 1970 it was pushed into a shed needing some minor mechanical repair. There it sat until I purchased it in 2007. The complete strip and rebuild that followed was more a refurbishment than a restoration given the fantastic original condition.



1951 TD XPAG 7981 is a locally owned vehicle purchased in 1990 by Terry Earle - and since his passing the Earle family continue to run and own this concors vehicle. It has successfully participated in Natmeets and won prizes including the Canberra Club's historical sporting trophy.