

Y-TYPE NEWSLETTER

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September seems to be the month for travelling so far as Y Types are concerned. As you will have read in previous issues of "Safety Fast!" the Y-Type Register's first continental car rally was run from Portsmouth to Brittany during the second week of the month. No doubt a full account of the trip will grace the pages at a later date.

Written below is an account of another September trip some fourteen years ago.

The "Sunday Times" carried an article on 3rd September 1978 concerning the noted American humorist and traveller, S. J. Perelman, who set off from London to re-run the route of the 1907 Paris to Peking road race. Mr Perelman, who was 74, had bought the YT used in the trip to Bangkok in 1949 when new. He told the reporter that his navigational asides consisted of a few press cuttings and a slim volume alleged to contain details of roads between his home in Kensington and China. He was, so the reporter was told, "anxious to avoid

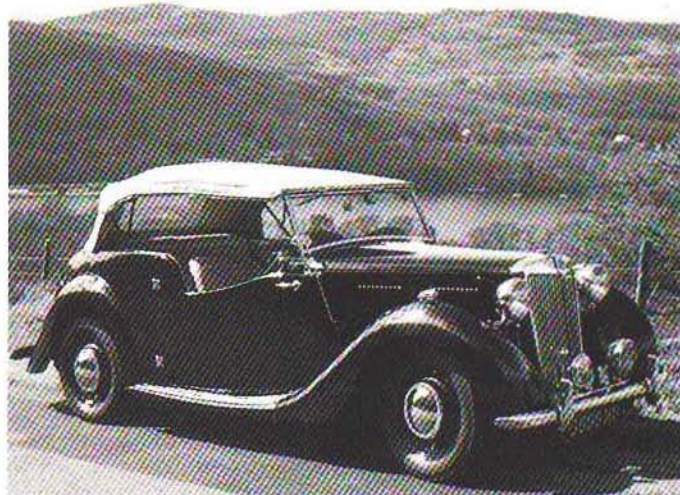
the trap which befalls so many expeditions . . . over-planning".

Mr Perelman had thought long and hard about provisions and had already purchased some cans of iron rations and a bag of nuts and raisins for one of the party who was a vegetarian. According to Mr Perelman his original travelling companion and mechanic was going to be a blonde amazon, from Pine Bluff, Arkansas. "She knew zilch about engines, but she was a dazzling creature, six feet two inches of dimpled beauty."

Unfortunately this lady secretly proposed writing a book about the trip which did not go down too well when he heard about it at a New York party. As can be seen Mr Perelman had an interesting style when it came to reporting. He used to be a scriptwriter for the Marx Brothers. The blonde was replaced by two Englishmen. Mr Eric Lister, a London gallery owner and M.G. enthusiast, and Mr Sydney Beer of the MGCC, to act as mechanic. These two gentlemen qualified as they didn't possess any literary pretensions.

The three men on the "Anglo-American Paris to Peking Expedition" were to travel from Paris across central Europe to Germany, through the Balkans and down the Aegean coast to Turkey, Iran, Afghanistan, Pakistan, India and then China via the fabled Karakoram highway. Mr Perelman had visited all these countries before as he followed up writing the script for "Around the World in Eighty Days" by doing it himself and recording his experiences in a book 'Westward Ha!'. Obviously he enjoyed the experience as he performed the trip again later, but his time in the opposite direction and wrote "Eastward Ha!"

He was confident in reaching his objective, saying that he had a "totally unfounded belief that the Creator will look after me. I have been told that if the car breaks down it should not be too difficult to repair and I can't see why anyone should want to try to hold us up for ransom." He also added that "should provisions run short Mr Lister, the vegetarian, can live on roots and berries. As for Mr Beer and myself, I am told that worms are terribly good nourishment if you are really driven to it." (This last piece of advice is not one that the writer of



A YT in more civilised surroundings than the Perelman machine. Harold Jackson's car near Windermere, Cumbria.

this article recommends to Y Type drivers, as most trips undertaken in a Y Type should only need a thermos of coffee and some sandwiches.)

When they were due to depart the reporter was told that months of "dedicated planning are behind us" and recalled that he had packed and re packed his two suitcases many times to get his kit just right but admitted that he still ended up like the rest of us with the last few bits and pieces stuffed into supermarket plastic bags. They departed from the Arc de Triomphe on September 2nd intending to cruise at a steady 50 mph 'which is about the best the veteran model can do unless pushed hard'. (Seeing that the car had three adults and a fully laden trailer it was not a bad speed I would have thought.) The trailer was a small two wheeled affair packed with mosquito nets, sleeping bags, sun hats and oilskins "for wear inside the car", as the canvas side screens were suspect in anything other than a heavy shower. Indeed on the outward trip they encountered a shower on the Dover Road and the windscreen wipers failed, much to the concern of the reporter from "The Times" who accompanied the trio on the first leg of journey to Paris.

It took just 15 days to drive across France, Germany, Austria, Hungary, Romania, Bulgaria, Turkey and Iran. En route a pause was made to inspect the fantastic Schlumph motor collection. Whilst driving through there was a mild earth tremor. A stop was made in Vienna where the hotel

was mislaid, they having got lost.

Despite the initial intention to cruise at 50 mph they were stopped for speeding at 70 mph in Hungary. The traffic cop was obviously intending to retire early on the proceeds of the fines as Sydney Beer later told a reporter. He charged £800 for the offence. After a bit of bargaining they managed to get the fine reduced to £8.00 which they considered to be nearer the mark.

They arrived in Budapest in torrential rain. We are not told how the side screens held up.

It would appear that the Turkish roads needed re-surfacing as Perelman complained that the jolting "loosened long-cherished inlays in everyone's teeth".

On arriving in Iran they experienced their second earthquake and timed the arrival along with the start of the civil unrest with the Shah. The journey finally ended in India as flooding had made all roads impassable. Apart from the failed windscreen wiper on the Dover Road the only other part that needed replacing was the petrol pump. So your Y Type is quite a hardy beast.

I hope that the Y Type Register's trip to Brittany was not as eventful. With any luck no one was reduced to having to sustain themselves on roots, berries and worms whilst following Dennis Doubtfire's rally route.

Having left out intrepid trio in India we stay in that country for the next piece. It is from "Tappet Chatter" the magazine of the M.G. Car Club of Cumbria.

MAHARANI

The Story of an Indian Princess by Geoff Becher

Long term readers of Tappet Chatter will recall my sleuthing throughout India during the past 18 months of an old M.G. suitable to bring back to Australia at the end of my posting at Easter.

The trail ran hot earlier on when one or two TCs appeared on the horizon only to disappear when prices became ridiculous or the cars got snapped up when I was away on holidays. A desirable PA turned out to have so many non-standard parts to really be no more than a chassis and body, and with an asking price that made me wonder what the owner was smoking. That too fell from contention. I still have the memory of a photograph of a well preserved K1, but all attempts to locate either it or the owner have so far been unsuccessful. Which brings me to May this year.

In May, one of my scouts reported that he knew of a 6 cylinder M.G. saloon up-country somewhere, was I interested or did I only want a tourer? After further discussion and attempts to elicit more detail, I learnt that the car was possibly a Y-Type built in 1947. I then asked another Indian friend and contact, who was going to be in the area, if he would have a look at the vehicle and if it was in good condition and driveable, to negotiate up to rupees (Rs) 50,000 for the car.

Early in July, after one or two false starts, my contact armed with photographs of what a Y-Type should look like and preferably have under the bonnet, finally journeyed to Indore, a city some 1,100 kms south of Delhi, where the car was located. Why didn't I go myself, you may be asking? Well, the method in this madness is if I, as a Westerner, had gone the price would most certainly have doubled and been non-negotiable.

A telephone call on 6 July from my contact informed me that he had seen the car and it was in good condition, the engine started and all the badges and instruments were in place. The owner was asking Rs 45,000. What should my friend do. Containing my excitement, I advised him to click on the deal. Don't ask me why, but in India one clocks to finalise a deal.

That night my friend called again. His first call, he explained, had been from the Manager's office where he couldn't talk freely and he hadn't been able to tell me that the car was going through an Indian restoration and had re-

cently been painted and the engine supposedly done up. He went on to explain that after a lot of talk and persuasion he had been able to negotiate another Rs 5,000 off the price, was that OK?

Now, what could I say. The Indian Government had just devalued the rupee by 20% the week before so that the exchange rate was not SA1=Rs20. I was prepared to go to Rs 50,000 for the car in any case. Admittedly, I was buying sight unseen but after all these months of searching it appeared I had a bargain for just \$2,000. I thanked my friend profusely and told him the money saved was his commission for the deal. We were both now absolutely delighted.

And so it turned out. It took four days to truck the car from Indore to Delhi. The local 'restoration' was not quite how it would have been done in Australia or England but still the old girl looked good and was driveable.

John Lawson's book on the Y-Type was quickly purchased and airmailed to Delhi from which I have subsequently been able to determine that I have car number YA2399 manufactured around February 1949. A colleague in the High Commission had subsequently bought a Y Tourer which I had also been looking at but wavering over it as it required a lot of work to make it roadworthy. The price was also about double what I was to pay.

The details of both cars were sent off to the Y-Register in England from whom we have now learned that no previous records of our vehicles existed and that these are the first two Y-Types to be located in India. Apparently it is usual amongst many Y-Type owners to give names to their cars. It seems only fit and right to continue that custom. And what better name for a stately old lady discovered in India than that of an Indian Princess - Maharani.

It has been impossible to find out Maharani's bloodline

(previous owners) but efforts continue. A rolling restoration is also continuing in which most of the perished and non-existent rubber has been replaced, wiring replaced, shock absorbers refurbished - they had no oil and didn't work before - suspension being by the supplementary coil springs only. Etc. Etc. Etc.

The plan is to have Maharani fit and ready to emigrate to Australia in time to make her entrance at the '92 NatMeet in Launceston. After that we hope to be back in Canberra - all going well - shortly after Anzac Day. Those seeking an audience with the Princess should note their diaries accordingly.



Frank Vautier complained to APW recently that he had not been featured in S.F. recently. So, here he is at Wiscombe just after the ice age!

COLOUR CODES

by David Haig

For those undertaking the full restoration of a Y-Type, the choice of body colour is of course a personal matter. However if an original colour is decided upon, the following may be of assistance. I am indebted to John Lawson for his book in the Abingdon Classic series, to B. Lacey-Malvern's article in "Safety Fast!" (May 1974), and Martin Brent's article, also I believe in "Safety Fast!"; finally to my colleagues at my former place of employment, ICI Paints Division.

As ever with M.G. the information is incomplete and not totally reliable. For instance although Almond Green is supposed to be a metallic, the ICI code is for a non-metallic paint. No ICI code is available for either of the greys, Elizabeth nor the

metallic Silver Streak. Cream on the YA may be the same shade as Ivory, later Sequoia Cream, on the YT. It is known that colours names changed often at the whim of the advertising department. However the ICI codes are specific to a shade.

Two-tone schemes were also used, the most common being Shires Green or Woodlands Green with Almond Green, also with Elizabeth Grey and the latter with Black. For ease of manufacture the colour split was normally with bolt-on wings and running board in one colour, with the rest of the body in the second.

All the ICI codes shown above are current at the time of writing in the 'Belco' range. They are available from ICI Paints Distributors, especially Brown Bros and will be classified under Rover cars.

Original Colour	Original Colour			BMC Code	ICI Code
	YA	YB	YT		
Shires Green (later Woodlands green) - a dark green	✓	✓	✓	GN29	P030-9767
Almond Green - metallic green	✓			GN37	P030-3483
Autumn Red (later Regency Red) - a maroon	✓	✓	✓	RD6	P030-2145
Clipper Blue			✓	BU14	P030-3300
Elizabeth Grey - a light grey	✓			-	-
Black	✓	✓	✓	BK1	P030-1222
Cream	✓			-	-
Ivory (later Sequoia Cream)			✓	YL5	P030-3487
Old English White		✓		-	P030-2379
Silver Streak Grey - a metallic paint		✓		GR25	-
Sun Bronze - a metallic paint	✓	✓		-	P031-2027M