

Y-TYPE NEWSLETTER

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Sixty years ago in 1947, the MG Car Company presented the public with its 'new' six-light sports saloon. The very pretty little saloon was, like many post war models of the late forties, in fact a model from the late nineteen thirties. It had been held over to await a better time, whereas the sports cars had been on the production lines within days of the ending of WW2. It was export or die time, so people such as you and I had very little chance of getting a new car. You might order your new car, but then wait up to three years to get it. We desperately needed to export to pay of our war debts, mostly to the USA for their lend-lease scheme as well as for our food. So the chap who got hold of a nice new YA, YT or YB was very lucky indeed. In the case of the YT it was most often through someone who purchased the car in the UK to take home

overseas, as they were supposedly only for export.

2007 is almost here, and here we are still pottering about in MGY series cars, with an excellent back up of spares and technical advice. Traffic has overloaded our roads to the point that a car only capable of a 50mph cruising speed is again quite happy in that traffic. We are the 'greenest' of them all, as we are 'recycling' an old car rather than buying a new one. That way we need not pollute the world with the thousands of tons that the production of new cars produces. That is a concept I have baffled many 'moderns' with.

To celebrate the 60th anniversary of the 'MG One and a Quarter Litre' sports saloon, Jerry Birkbeck is arranging a superb two-day function. All the details were in the November issue of *Safety Fast!* and there

are more on the website above. Note that the entry fee for Y Types to the event is FREE, but you have to pay your own hotel bills. The date for your diary is 12th & 13th May 2007 at Charlote Park. For those staying overnight, the hotel is The Charlote Pheasant on 0870 6096159 quoting reference No63. Jerry is contactable on 01926 424053.

We welcome to our midst's Paul Gardiner from Oxfordshire with Y4245, Allen Bachelor in Michigan USA with YT 4127EXU, Paul Thompson from Gloucestershire with YB 1230 and Bill Harrison from London with YB 1283.

For this centre spread we have two journeys for you. The first is one from Ted Gardner and is of the Register's 2006 trip to France, the second of a trip to the Isle of Sky by Andrew and Arlene Coulson in their YA.

A BRIEF ACCOUNT OF GETTING TO AND FROM THE ARDENNES BY Y

by Ted Gardner



MAY 25TH TO 30TH WAS the Y Register's six day escapade to the Ardennes in which four cars from the UK took part and two from the Low Countries. Unfortunately due to an ignition problem in the most difficult place on the docks at Dover, our friend Alan Chick was unable to continue, being trucked home the next day.

Paul Gresser, our committee member, had kindly arranged the hotels and communicated with those members from Holland and Belgium whom we met later.

The Catamaran fast ferry was taken to Boulogne from Dover with all four Ys parked together in the hold and soon we were trying to get out of Boulogne and head towards our first night's stop at Auchy Les Hesdin. Trying is the operative word, as a temporary stop had to be made to try and locate the way out of the town. A very kind French couple offered to get into two of the cars and guide us to the correct road and then they had to walk back! Now that's good service.

A pleasant ride to Auchy where Paul and Felicity Gresser had already done a reconnoitre and a welcome drink and meal in the restaurant



Picture 1: Following Paul & Felicity towards Boulogne.

Picture 2: Being followed by Jack Murray.

Picture 3: The locals take interest in the mist.

Picture 4: The River at Bouillon,



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hidden out the back. I think it was here that Jack Murray made quite an impression on one of the lady waitresses.

Next morning we set off after refuelling to make the journey via the side roads, stopping at Albert for a bite. After a further journey in the rain and a stop in a lay-by overlooking the river valley, we arrived at our base for three nights in the French Ardennes in the town of Les Hautes Rivieres. This was a Logis Hotel chosen by Paul Gresser and a very good one too. We parked our cars in front of the Marie not far from the Hotel and it didn't take long to sup a drink or two and meet our friends from Belgium (Rob and Trudy Silk) and from Holland (Bert and Mia Keuren), who had already arrived in their Ys. Yet another Y owner, Jean-Marie, had also arrived in a Jaguar with Sylvie and sons Marc and Max from Luxembourg.

I seemed to be the only one with a view overlooking the river, but I didn't know this until the following morning when I realized that the view of the night before after a drink or five was in fact the inside of the shutters!

In the morning, breakfast was followed by an

"age 6 and under" task. Mollie had brought the Tour plaques and some clear plastic film with which to cover them.

We had two complete days so, after breakfast, we all decided to drive to the town of Bouillon and visit the Fortress. The drive was very pleasant being on winding mountainous roads in the thickly forested Ardennes with little other traffic. Strangely the rain didn't seem to spoil the enjoyment. At the town, one of the party who was leading at the time unfortunately managed to park us in a private car park which needed a certain amount of negotiating to get out of without spending money.

The Fortress is located on the top of a cliff with the river in a deep ravine below it. After driving there via a convoluted route through very narrow streets some of us (it may have been all) managed to get into the Fortress at a reduced rate by saying we were "anciennes", a fact that was swiftly denied the other side of the barrier. The Fortress was fascinating, but so was the display of birds of prey including a pair of Eagles and a Condor – a magnificent sight.

In this area one tends to drive between

France and Belgium rather regularly, so much so that often one doesn't know which country one is in. That evening we had been promised a special group meal by the Hotel proprietor, who said he had arranged for a wild boar to be shot and cooked for us. So now there are only 5999 of the beasts in the Ardennes. This was a very enjoyable meal, as were all the group had on the trip.

The following day we all chose to drive into Sedan and visit another castle in a more relaxed manner, but first to park in the deserted square and take a coffee before the visit. On the return journey after another meal in the town, a stop was made at an indicated viewpoint but the view was difficult to see because of the trees. Maybe that was the view?

The following morning we said our goodbyes to our friends from Luxembourg, Belgium and Holland and started the journey back to Auchy again, the Hotel we had stayed at on the journey out. Mostly side roads were taken again and stops made for "urgent" reasons and food. Again we rested for a while in Albert where Jack pinched a parking place that a Frenchman was

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Picture 5: The Fortress at Sedan.



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Picture 6: The English contingent – nearly there.



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Picture 7: Bert and Mia cover their Tour Board successfully.

about to reverse into. There was no international incident so perhaps the Frenchman liked the cars.

During the whole trip the group was led by a particular car and the navigator was either Mollie, Suzie or Felicity. In this way we got where we wanted to go except for a minor glitch driving into Auchy for the last evening where some of us took the wrong road. Turning around in a driveway, two cars got away with it but the writer was blocked by the drive owner and this clearly almost caused an international incident.

On the final day we had only to get to the Quay at Boulogne that was not too far, so four Y types headed first for the Hypermarket just

outside the town to stock up with wine and things. It was here that the writer came into his own, and can claim to be the only driver to lead the formation and not take a wrong turning, taking the group the full six miles from the Hypermarket to the Quay without a hitch.

After the channel crossing, we diverged on our final legs home after a very pleasant few days on the kind of trip many will recognize and like myself will be aching to repeat in similar form before too long.

Thanks go to Paul and Felicity for much of the organising and navigating, and to Suzie and Mollie also for navigating and again to Suzie for translation services frequently needed.

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Fuelling up at Talisker distillery.

Skye's the Limit!

by Arlene and Andrew Coulson

A 420 MILE afternoon drive from Sligeachan, on the Isle of Skye to Ripon may not be everyone's idea of a 'little run in the Y', but the organisers of the IVUSS had decreed it so by not finishing their papers until noon!

Having taken the YA via Glencoe on the way up, we followed the "Road to the Isles" – used for the backdrop in the Harry Potter films – through Glenfinnan (site of the viaduct filmed with the Hogwarts Express) to Mallaig and the Skye ferry. A further 40-plus miles brought us to Portree and our base for the week in, fittingly, the old coach house of a Victorian house (now the Viewfield Hotel).

Andrew soon fitted into his role as chalet maid, shopping, cooking and cleaning, etc for the other house-guests joining at differing intervals during the week. Skye showed us wonderful weather, ferocious midges and spectacular scenery – with runs around Trotternish and the steep hairpins of the Quiraing offering suitable hill climbs as well!

The rumours of 'never seeing the tops of the Cuillin Hills' seemed misplaced with clear and sunny days at the beach; the forest and the gloomy edifice of Dunvegan Castle. Our Y continued to attract attention from all quarters, everywhere from the town square in Portree to the Trotternish Art Gallery (actually a small croft on the far north of Skye). The wife at the latter used to 'court' in a TD and insisted on sharing the front seats of the YA with Andrew – never experienced the back seat! – to

rekindle her youth. Her husband produced a fine watercolour of a 1950s Bedford coach (used to be the Skye bus) which is now owned by someone we know in Darlington!

Just to confirm how small the world is, on Monday morning while touring the north east of Skye a lady came up to us. "You're Andrew, aren't you?" It turned out that Jill (the lady) had been at College one year behind us – over 30 years ago! Now the only question is whether her memory is exceptional or Andrew's use of ethanol has pickled him permanently.

Having visited many of the other Hebridean islands, the distances on Skye almost seemed 'mainlandish' – daily miles of 60-80 being typical, although petrol at 103.9 pence per litre is painfully higher. Obligatory visits were made to the various castles, and in keeping with tradition we now have photos of the car at yet another distillery (Talisker). (Arlene's suspicion is that when he gets the right number, Andrew will be producing a 'distillerY' calendar or something!)

Performance of the car was admirable until a journey, with four up, to Staffin generated a strong burning smell! The brakes for the nearside rear wheel had locked on, and despite the wonders of the Jackall, the toolbox and some well aimed blows, the cause could not be immediately found. Enter Neil, mechanic from Macrae's garage, and finding Andrew had already dismantled, refitted and re-dismantled the brakes spotted that the handbrake lever was not pivoting as it should. The pothole

bouncing with a full load (NO! I'm not saying anyone was overweight!) had moved us in mysterious ways.

Suitably restored, Andrew rejoined his party at the Columba Centre – although too late for home made cakes and coffee! (The Columba 1400 Centre is the base for a charitable trust which runs leadership courses for youngsters from 'challenging backgrounds' as well as for business leaders and mix these groups such that chairmen of banks are in groups led by street gang kids, with spectacularly successful results.)

A further breakdown (almost too embarrassing to admit) was caused by uneven closure of the points – but it did force Andrew to remove and clean all plugs, check all leads – corrosion on HT lead from coil – and eventually back to the first idea that it was a points failure! So the summary goes:

Mileage total	1190
Fuel consumption	c. 33 mpg
Oil consumed	c. 3 pints
Water top up	Nil

And to return to the opening comments, we arrived home at 21:45, equating to a driving time of around 8.75 hours – at an average of 50mph. The final coincidence came in an email over the weekend when Andrew Adamson (former Y owner) admitted to being the car that flashed us on the A82 as we headed for Loch Lomond. Having sold his car, he's now wondering how to spend some more of his time and money!