



WELCOME TO THE Y TYPE NEWSLETTER

The beginning of May is always the start of the Y Register's annual activities: the Spring Run. This year we are starting with dinner at the Clive Arms in Ludlow and a drive through Shropshire byways. The run takes place after this issue's deadline, so you'll have to wait until the July issue to read about our adventures and any excitements at the AGM.

Recently we heard from a Y Type owner who has a car previously unknown to us and which has a unique specification and pedigree. The owner is John DeCesare, who has kindly written its history for us. The car's complete bare-metal, chassis up, full restoration will very soon be complete, and we look forward to seeing it and him at future events.

A FOREMAN'S DREAM: THE UNIQUE STORY OF FBL 192

MG Y Registration No FBL 192.

First Registered April 14 1949.

Chassis No: Y 2634.

Engine Number: 'See Engine'.

FBL 192 is a 1949 MG Y which, although built on the MG factory production line, was in fact a bespoke 'one-off' car for Gordon Phillips, its first owner. Gordon was an MG Car Company's production line foreman at the time. He had started work for MG in the late 1920s, when they were based in Edmund Road Cowley, where they first established a production line. In 1930 he was sent out to Montlhéry to help with the Magic Midget EX120's successful attempt to beat Austin in reaching 100mph with a 750cc car. He worked at Abingdon until his retirement in the 1960s.

We were told that Gordon Phillips, being an MG factory line foreman, had been in the privileged position to have his MG Y built just as he desired, to his own detailed specification. As result, Y 2634 was built with a number of unique features and extras. It is clear that, even before it was completed, he had planned to make regular upgrades to keep his Y updated with all the latest features.

With Gordon's access to factory parts and services, the first notable feature that gave away his intention to make upgrade modifications was on the car guarantee plate. While the chassis number was naturally stamped on the car plate as usual, the engine number was NOT. Instead, it was simply stamped with the



MG Magic Midget EX120 at Montlhéry, Gordon Phillips on far right in white overalls

words 'SEE ENGINE', so that Gordon could make future engine changes without affecting the car's Factory Identity Guarantee Plate (see below photo of Y 2634's guarantee plate).



So, despite upgrades, Gordon clearly intended to keep the originality of the car intact, while keeping open the possibility of making upgrades to both mechanical (engine) and other items.

Engine-wise, the car left the factory in 1949 with engine XPAG/SC/12582 (as registered on the first logbook). This logbook has Gordon as the owner from new up to April 1966 when, after he passed away, his wife Lilian took ownership of the car. After that, the car was registered to me from May 1978, when the first buff logbook was replaced with the (at that time) new V5 logbook registration. Fortunately, the vehicle licencing office allowed me to retain the original buff logbook.

Y 2634 ran with engine XPAG/SC/12582



FBL 192 Cornwall 1978 with Kathie and Julia

for a few years until Gordon decided to replace it with an XPAG TD3 Competition engine, fitted we think around the late 1950s. The MG Car Co was of course taken over by BMC, and BMC was taken over by BL (British Leyland).

THE IMPORTANCE OF THE LINKS BETWEEN Y TYPE AND TD MODELS

In late 1949, the TD went into production, replacing the TC.

The TC, which was launched immediately following the end of WW2 in 1945, was regarded as an out-of-date model from 'day one'. The TC, which had replaced the TB, was hurriedly put into production at that time because it was essential to get MG car production back online. The influence of MG sports cars on American servicemen posted in the UK meant a new sports model targeted at the export American market was obvious. The international car market was fiercely competitive, and though the Y had been prototyped in 1939 (as EX 166, a ground-breaking car for its time), production was delayed by the start of WW2. As a result, the Y Type was launched in 1947, and the TD (derived from the Y) was born in late 1949. The TD chassis was effectively an upside-down Y chassis at the rear - with

the rear axle on the TD being below the chassis, whereas on the Y the axle is above chassis.

With the very competitive car market of the time, upgrades to attract new customers were essential; so, at the very beginning of January 1950, the MG Company prototyped a competition version of the TD (I was personally informed of this by Henry Stone when we met in the early 1980s) and I was told that by mid-January MG Car Co launched a 'Competition TD' (which later would be modelled as the TD/c on the chassis - and badged externally as the TD Mark 2 whereas the XPAG competition engine was identified as XPAG TD3).

This brief history on Competition TDs is only relevant because our Y 2634 was fitted with a factory replacement TD competition unit (XPAG TD3 - numbered C 32837; see photo of engine plate) - the replacement engine (being the later horizontal oil filter XPAG unit) was a bespoke build for Gordon with a brand-new crankshaft, while the cylinders were bored out to +40, hence making the engine's capacity more than the standard 1250cc. The engine is currently undergoing a sympathetic rebuild, and to our delight the crankshaft does not need

a re-grind, so it is remaining as standard bearings while the bores are being bored out to +60.

The engine ID plates on the replacement engine unit were stamped on an aluminium back plate and the brass 'Type XPAG TD3' roundel (see photo).

When Gordon passed away, his wife Lilian took ownership of the car. On her passing, the estate (complete with FBL 192 in the garage) was acquired by a senior British Leyland Director. He did not register his ownership of the Y, but advertised the car for sale in 'The Exchange & Mart' in April 1978. The asking price was £1,000, extraordinarily high for a Y Type at the



XPAG TD3 Replacement Plate

time. It was that very high asking price, and the fact that my wife and I (with our then 18-month-old daughter Julia) were actively looking to acquire a suitable family MG saloon, which prompted me to enquire and arrange to view the car. It came with three massive tea-chests stuffed full of brand-new MG parts (too numerous to list). These included a pair of brand-new SU carburettors, TD inlet and exhaust manifolds etc, clearly indicating Gordon's intentions to upgrade from the single carburettor setup with oil air filter arrangement to the TD Competition carburettor arrangement. (We've decided that the restoration was a good time to complete Gordon's upgrade from single to twin carbs.)

In 1978 (as a young married couple in our early 20s) we actually could not afford the asking price, but, when we viewed it on May 9 1978, we were simply blown over by how stunning it was. The masses of brand-new spare parts that came with the car partly explained the high price - though to be fair, once we saw the car in its stunning condition, it all became clear why it had a £1,000 price tag.

Needless to say, and after some very hard negotiations (and also based on the fact that we were actually, perhaps not surprisingly, the only people who had enquired to view the car), a deal was struck involving the part-exchange of our 1969 (G Reg) metallic green Singer Vogue plus £450 cash. We still couldn't really afford it - so a bank loan had to be secured.

Anyway, happily we became the second registered family owners of FBL 192 when we collected the car on Thursday May 23 1978, from Carterton, Oxfordshire - it was an early and still sunny evening. We travelled to Oxford after I finished work for the day (I was at that time working at the Bath Royal United Hospital Pathology Department), and we had a very exciting but nervous maiden drive back to our home in Bath, arriving just after dark.

The Y was our family car for around 10 years; I drove it back and forth daily to my place of work at the hospital, which included using it for my medical 'on call' sessions (evenings and weekend sessions). It was without doubt the most reliable car we'd ever owned.

The BL Director (whose name I cannot remember and whose signature on the receipt is impossible to decipher) had known Gordon personally for many years.

He told us that all the car's mods and the factory parts which Gordon acquired were all above board.

Mechanically, Y 2634 has the larger TD front and rear shock absorbers and holes for the additional Andre shock absorbers on the front lower wishbone arms (as would have been fitted to a TD Mark 2). We have the Andre shock absorbers to fit if we decide to do so, though our preference is to simply go with the YB anti-roll bar arrangement instead.

The car came with numerous extras fitted, such as a push button valve radio, providing a beautiful mellow deep sound. The dashboard was fitted with an additional water temperature gauge located in the section between the centre instruments console and the glove box door.

Other extras include:

Body Colour

Black with thin, very skilfully hand-painted red coach line from front of bonnet extending to the rear across both front and rear doors, plus red highlighted bonnet louvres.

Interior

Red leather seats and red carpets (bespoke carpets).

Headlamps

Chrome (larger than standard) fitted with tripod reflectors (bespoke).

Horns

Twin chrome trumpet horns fitted on brackets below the headlamps (bespoke).

Fog Lamp

Large (Type FT 57 - 6 inch), chrome, centrally mounted and fitted onto a superb bespoke bracket. Annoyingly it had to be removed in the 1980s in order to pass its MoT - but it's now being re-fitted, so it will be 'as it left the factory' in 1949.

Radiator Curtain

Fitted between the chrome radiator shroud slats and the radiator to allow for fast heating of water in the system during cold weather.

Mechanical

XPAG TD3 Competition engine (see photo), larger late TD clutch assembly & plate, TD suspension F/R dampers, etc - too many bespoke features to list in this brief article.

On Saturday May 27 1978, the three of us (John, Kathy and daughter Julia) took our new Y Type for our family spring holiday to Cornwall at Sennen Cove. We covered just over 1,000 miles that week, touring and visiting several of the Cornish south and north coast beauty spots. On our journey to Cornwall, I recall trying it out for speed (typical young man thing to do!!). We were on the A30 on a section of dual carriageway when I overtook a fairly newish Ford Cortina 2000E that was motoring at around 90mph - the Y speedometer was hovering at around 105mph. I noted the Cortina driver's jaw drop as we overtook him!



FBL 192 1989. Red Cheatline and Louvres