

WELCOME TO THE Y TYPE NEWSLETTER

Y TYPE REGISTER SPRING RUN 2026

This year's Spring Run, again expertly organised by Jo Birkbeck and Mick Breare, was based at the Wroxton Country House Hotel in Wroxton, near Banbury. The weekend started with our traditional Saturday evening meal, though a number of early arrivals got there on Friday and enjoyed an evening meal together.

For Gillie and me, it was a change to have a shortish drive to this year's Spring Run venue; usually, Buckinghamshire is just the start of our journey. On Saturday morning we took the opportunity to explore the footpaths around the village as the rest of the runners and riders gradually appeared. The evening meal was enjoyed by all, judging by the level of noisy chat, and ended with the presentation of this year's awards.

The Doubtfire Shield, for the Car of the Year, went to Keith Powell's YB. In 2025 he and his wife Wendy undertook not only a journey from Land's End to John O'Groats, but from Essex to Cornwall to begin with, and along the Highland 500 route on the way back. Wendy's uncle served aboard the destroyer HMS Exmouth during the last war. On January 21 1940 it was torpedoed, with the loss of all hands, off the coast of Scotland at Wick. Part of the reason for the trip was to pay respects to his memory. We



Bill Hunt looking over Jo Birkbeck's YT; David Harrison's ZA in background

were not sure who deserved more praise for endurance, the YB or Keith and Wendy.

The Grafham Tankard for the car used most during the year as an everyday vehicle went to David Robson from Northumberland and his YA. He uses his car most days of the week to take his two dogs, Lola and Logan, to the beach a few miles away and to 'pop to the shops' when required.

The Jack Murray Helping Hand Shield for services to the Register was awarded to Peter Vielvoye. In the last year, as well

as maintaining our website and Facebook pages, Peter has helped many new Y owners with advice and practical assistance, also giving advice to people wishing to buy themselves a Y Type. Of special note was the advice, practical help and support he gave to Dennis Doubtfire's

daughter and son-in-law, Karen and Terry, in successfully preparing Dennis's car for sale after his sad death in January this year.

The Piston Broke Award is a blown piston that Dennis Doubtfire's YB suffered on the first Spring Run, mounted on a wooden plinth. It is awarded to a car which failed to arrive because of mechanical failure or which suffered similar on its way. This year's award went to Fran Smith. Fran set out in his YA, but after a short time the interior light fitting fell from its mounting. Suspecting that this may be the harbinger of further catastrophe, he turned back and took his modern to travel safely to Wroxton.

Our excellent dinner was rounded off with a two-part quiz set by Mick Breare. Questions were in two sections, each part promising a prize for the winning table. In the event, a tie between two tables resulted in a win only after tie-break questions (although scurrilous accusations of cheating were made by some vocal members of the losing team).

Sunday morning's activities began, as ever, with fettling and fiddling and car chat. "What do they find to talk about?" said one wife. »

Sue and Gary Gibbs' 'Best in Show' YA in the contestants line-up



Participants then used judging sheets to choose the cars they would most like to take home. Winners receiving trophies were: Best YA, Gary and Sue Gibbs; Best YB, Neil and Janet Cairns; and Best YT, Joe Birkbeck.

The run commenced in cold weather, a complete contrast to the sun of previous days. We were waved off from beneath the Y Register banner archway and drove the 43-mile run through winding lanes and picture-postcard Cotswold villages. The route, and the Tulip map accompanying it, had been perfectly planned. There were none of the usual (deliberate!) direction errors in the instructions, which I was strangely disappointed by.

Our destination was Parkwood House, south of Solihull. Although we arrived before midday, the car park was full to overflowing, and it proved almost impossible to arrange our cars together. By careful parking and we managed a few, with others stacked behind.

We were joined by David Harrison in his immaculate ZA Magette. He had bought a friend with him, 96-year-old Bill Hunt. Bill had owned a YB in 1955 and was keen to see our cars. Bill still drives his Jaguar and has had many vehicles over the years, including an MGA and a Bentley Continental among others, and also traction engines. These included a showman's engine named Leader,



Spring Run Annual Dinner 2026

considered by many to be the finest showman's engine in existence, with which he hauled a fairground organ to rallies. Bill spent time looking under the bonnet of Jo's YT, and wished he'd had two carbs on his YB. It was pleasure to meet someone who had not only owned a Y in its heyday but had happy memories of them from so long ago.

At a certain age, the age most of us Y drivers find ourselves at now, certain facilities are required at the end of a drive. Unfortunately, those at Packwood House were unavailable without paying the full entrance fee, a

cost of £36 per couple. I speak of course of the café, but other facilities were equally expensive. National Trust members could enter for free, but it seems that Mr and Mrs Sharp are the only pensioners in the UK who are not members.

An enjoyable, excellent weekend spent in good company with an interesting drive through gorgeous countryside. Thanks to Jo and Mick for all their hard work in making it so.



Peter Vielvoye receives the Helping Hands Shield



Fran Smith with his Piston Broke award

ONE MORE UNTO THE BEACH



David Robson's YA at Cambois Beach

We Y Type owners ("We Y" doesn't sound right, does it - maybe it should be Us Y Type owners) would all love to be able to drive them daily, as our everyday vehicle, but it's rarely possible. So we like nothing more than hearing from someone who does so. We noticed David Robson's regular drives on Facebook, where he regularly posts videos of his journeys to and from beaches with his dogs.

David lives in a village outside Morpeth in Northumberland and drives a smart cream YA. He says he thinks he doesn't drive the YA that often, "only about twice a week and to pop down the shops" - which I think is many times the number of trips out that the average UK Y Type gets! He's had the car since June 2025, and before that drove an Austin Ruby. He says he likes the sight of a long bonnet in front of him. I hadn't thought about this before but it's a big reason that I enjoy driving the Y. My VW has a longer bonnet than the Y, but I can't see it, which I still sometimes find disconcerting. David's videos on Facebook show that he drives normally, by which I mean not 'sedately' like some classic car drivers. You get the real YA 'ship at sea' roll when he speeds out of roundabouts. Our late lamented friend Andrew Coulson always said about his Y Types, "They need thrashing"; and as he'd driven one in the Monte Carlo Rally, he

knew what he was talking about. As David says, "It'll keep up with anything on B roads."

The incentive for using the car regularly is his trips to the coast to walk his dogs, Lola and Logan, who are ten-year-old brother and sister American Cocker Spaniels. I'd never heard of the breed (but then most dog breeds mystify me nowadays), but a quick search informed me that the only dog on the Mayflower when it sailed to America was a spaniel and that the lady dog in the 'Lady and the Tramp' was an American Cocker Spaniel; remember the spaghetti scene? Sitting on their special seat cover in the rear of the YA, they go with David to a beach near Blythe, on a route that takes them through Bedlington, where local terriers no doubt look on in envy. The dogs get to run on Cambois Beach, to the north of Blythe, and on Blythe Beach itself. Although all the

local beaches are perfect for taking dogs to, some are barred to them, for the benefit of non-dog lovers.

I know the coast north of the Tyne, I've visited family up there all my life. If there's anything I envy, it's being able to drive an MG 1 1/4 litre saloon along country roads to the Northumberland seaside any day of the week. Oh, and if that wasn't enough, David's looking forward to a birthday treat flight in a Tiger Moth!



Lola and Logan