



1949 'Y' TOURER

by Ross McGowen

The M.G. 'Y' series have been overshadowed by the 'T' type sports MG's of the late forties and early fifties. Whilst a total of 7459 MG 'Y' sedans were produced between 1947 and 1953, the tourers were produced from 1948 to 1950, with a production run of 877 cars. Interestingly, the model was designated for export only when introduced, with the company's sights set on the Americans market, All but 42 were exported making tourers quite a variety in their home country



Like many of Britain's early post-war vehicles, the MG 'Y' series was actually a pre-war design having been built in prototype form in 1939. The model had a newly-designed chassis, fitted with independent front suspension, using coil springs, with the rear end on semi-elliptic springs. Rack and pinion steering was provided for the first time in an MG, and braking was fully hydraulic. The engine was a detuned version of the famous XPAG 1250 cc unit, as used in the 'T' series sports cars. The gearbox was a four-speed, with synchromesh on the upper three ratios. The tourer was introduced in October 1948, on the sedan chassis, but with the trim carburettor engine of the 'TC' sports car. Power output was 54 bhp at 5,200 rpm compared with 46 bhp at 4,800 rpm for the sedan. Modest this may seem by today's standards, but the compression ratio of 7.2:1 was limited by the low octane petrol available to the public. The XPAG engine had immense tuning potential, and it was not uncommon for the 'Y' series cars to be upgraded by their owners as better fuels became available.

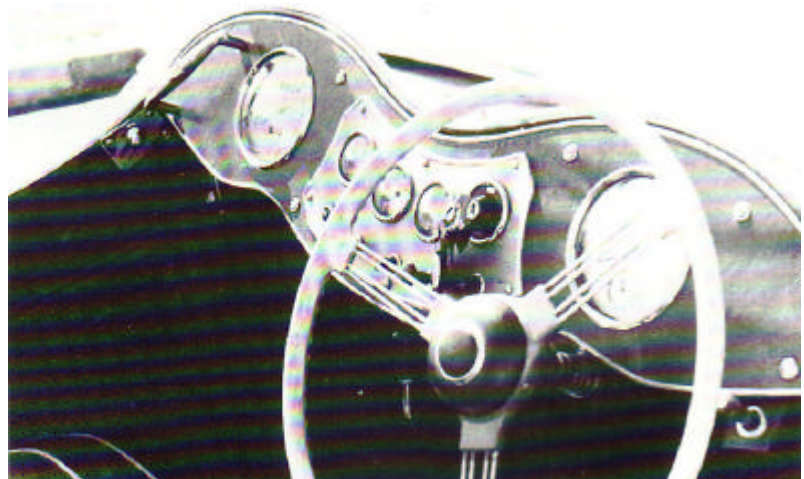
Undoubtedly though, these cars were outdated when introduced to the public. When reporting on the 'Y' sedan 'The Motor commented that The MG has a distinctly old-fashioned appearance... but there are many who will rejoice that the appearance continues a long tradition... after only a few miles at the wheel of the car, one becomes very deeply impressed by the retention of many old-fashioned virtues which have in large measure been washed into the sea of time by the inexorable flow of progress.'

These qualities enhance the attractiveness of these MG's to enthusiasts now. Fitting such as leather upholstery, adjustable steering column, comprehensive instrumentation and the Smiths 'Jackall' hydraulic systems were standard. The 'Jackall' system enabled either front, rear, or all four wheels to be raised with an under-bonnet crank.

The tourer differs from the sedan in several detail features not readily noticeable to the casual observer.



Twin carburettor motor is easily accessed in traditional manner



Interior is narrow but handy controls, adjustable steering column, and excellent bucket seats provide comfortable travel

The sedans were fitted with octagonal shaped instruments, set in a walnut dash, whilst tourers used round faced British Jaguar instruments in a vinyl-covered dash, identical to the 'TC'. The 5 inch tachometer sits directly in front of the driver, whilst the speedometer is on the passenger side. Unlike the sedan, there is no glovebox. The windscreen can be folded flat, whilst the sedan screen opens forward. Both models were strictly four seaters, with the tourer's doors featuring the cutaways considered so essential for the sporting motorist in those days. The hood and supports fold into zip fasteners compartments on each side of the rear seat, providing very tidy storage. These are also useful for carrying small items when travelling with the hood up.

The car featured belongs to Paul Dever of Cleveland, Queensland. Sold new by Lanes Motors in Melbourne to Mr. B. Owime of Quintree Gully, the car was registered until 1973. It lay idle until 1981 when it was purchased by Mr David Ordill, of Ballina, NSW. Over the following three and half years he undertook a full restoration.

He realised after purchasing the car that the body was beyond redemption, and there were numerous parts missing. Another tourer was located in Melbourne and provided the necessary parts to recreate the MG. The story of the cars' restorations was recorded by Mr Ordill, and it is interesting to reflect on some of the difficulties encountered. For instance the petrol tank was not fitted prior to bolting the rebuilt body to the chassis, with the result that it was extremely difficult to re-fit. The original hood bows were way out of plumb when the time came to re-fit them, and finally in desperation were cut and re-joined. It appeared the assembly was 'skew-wiff' from new.

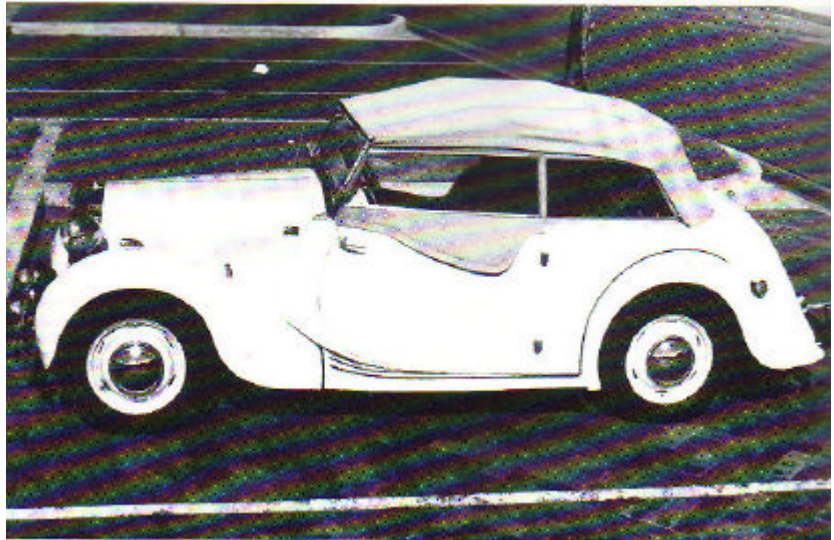
Finally the car was finished in ivory paintwork, matched to an original colour. Trim was in the correct green leather and vinyl, with a brown salt and pepper hood. The standard of restoration was rewarded with first prize in the 'Y' class of the 1985 MG national Meeting Concourse in Newcastle, and

Australian Classic Car Magazine subsequently a similar award at the Gold Crest MG Car Club concourse in August 1985.

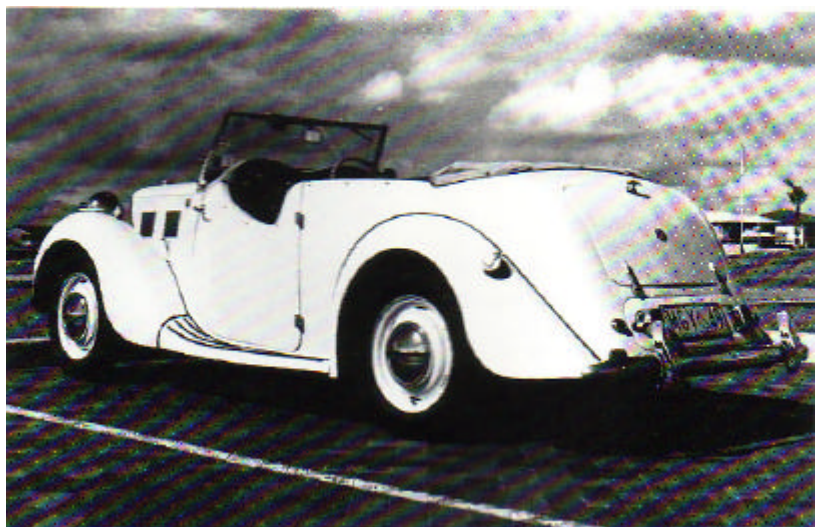
Mr Ordill sold the MG to Paul Rever in 1986. Since then it has enjoyed a new lease of life, providing reliable transport for the family on a regular basis.

Contemporary road testers found the top speed to be 76 mph but the free-revving engine enabled an easy

cruising speed of 60 mph to be maintained. Good handling and a high level of driver comfort assisted in achieving high average speeds in its time. The 'Y' tourer may not have been the export earner the Abingdon people had hoped it would be, but these days the cars are very much sought after, and understandably so. It is able to hold its own in modern traffic, and has a feel of quality and strength which is only found in the most expensive of modern vehicles.



With hood up, the Tourer is a snug and weatherproof four seater



Hood is completely hidden when down. Note personal number plate.