

WINGS RUN 1993

I read with great interest an article. published last year in the Bulletin, of a YB owner's somewhat frightening experiences of driving, via Norfolk and London, to Abirigdon for last year's Wings Run. My experiences were thankfully less fraught but equally as interesting.

The chance to attend the run came through an acquaintance with a fellow 'Y' owner and seemingly one of the few in Warwickshire —Richard Dick from Pillerton Priors. Richard was looking for a co-driver as his wife, although having been to several events with him, was perhaps not quite so keen on attending as many as her husband would wish!

I had met Richard quite by chance when I followed up a letter published in John Lawson's Y Type Newsletter requesting information on wheel trims. Regrettably I was unable to help but I did meet him and his car — a 1953 black YB (USV 420) which he had owned for over 5 years. Painted black the car was comparable with a YB Richard had bought new in 1952 even down to the chrome wheel rim embellishers (originally manufactured by 'Ace' from Coventry) although I believe Richard is still seeking a set of 'Turbo' embellishers as fitted to his original YB. USV 420 is excellent and no doubt Richard would give further details if so requested.

The invitation was taken up as I knew that my YA (RVW 761) would never be ready for the run. The arrival at Richard's house in a Citroen BX and subsequent departure in a YB was like a timewarp. It was the first time I had ridden in a 'Y' type since 1979(my former YA — JGD 208 — having departed for Belgium after seven years' regular use in London, Suffolk and Warwickshire). The smell of leather and oil was unforgettable and how small it seemed — perhaps people were smaller 40 odd years ago! Richard offered me the keys at the outset but I decided that it would be better if Richard gave me an indication of the car's capabilities. I have to say that the first couple of miles took awhile to get used to but we reached our departure point at Knowle without a hitch — the YB purring along at a steady 50 to 55.

At Knowle the T typers gathered round in interest as Richard outlined a few interesting points about 'Y's. In spite of the relatively small number made and even smaller number remaining (thankfully now recognised through the Octagon, MG Car Club and John Lawson's Register) it was remarkable how many people (of that vintage!) knew them as the 'Doctor's car' and someone later on remarked that they had been used by the police (does anyone know if this is so and which force it was?). The jackall system was novel to several — why weren't they ever fitted on to models in the '60's and '70's and indeed why not present production models?

Our departure from Knowle saw us following a J2 and we arrived in Henley to see a line of splendid MG's of all ages (but pre '56, of course!) outside the Ice Cream shop. We pressed on not fancying an ice at 10.30 am. — though on reflection we perhaps would have then been part of the parade

towards Abingdon. Nonetheless we pressed on and about five miles before Burford Richard handed over the keys.

Despite having now travelled in the car for well over an hour it was with some trepidation that I eased the YB out of the layby we were parked in on to the A424. It was straightforward the steering crisp and light and the engine pulling well — just as I had remembered it all those years ago. When I applied the brakes just before Burford they did, of course, stop us though it was a reminder of anticipating ahead much more than in a modern vehicle.



Y's as far as the eye can see!
Left to right – 2 YB's and 3 YA's. Wings Run '93.

We arrived at Millets Farm at 12.45 p.m.—just in time for a couple of well earned cans.

The remainder of the day flashed past; some 9 Y's were present, far more than I have ever seen together, and their owners and followers were extremely friendly and helpful. Thanks to Jack Murray for some useful points that he had picked up on the marathon rebuild of his superb white YA and to Dennis and Mike Jeynes with I guess what must be the definitive YA. It was fascinating to note that black was the common colour — Jack's white and Steve Randle's red model being the only significant departure from the norm, although from recollection Peter Hutchinson's YB in black and green did also buck the trend. Peter's car, which he uses every day in London, was fitted with a Datsun 5 speed box and 1 25 in. (I think) thin SU. carbs. — certainly

practical though may be frowned on by the purists. (No doubt Peter could elaborate the pros and cons of this exercise.)

Perhaps the only drawback in an otherwise well organised day by Charlie Plain-Jones and his helpers came in the concours which caused some concern amongst those present. Some were 'in' and others not so despite having stated their wish to participate on their application forms. It has to be said that all the 'Y' owners accepted the situation philosophically —nevertheless there will no doubt be some feedback. In the event the concours was won by Geoff Tulley in his YB — YMG 17.

We left at 4.45 p.m. and arrived at Richard's home just after six to end a thoroughly enjoyable day. My only regret was not having my 'Y' RVW 761 present but Wings '94, certainly!

Jerry Birkbeck

Bill Atkinson's 1952 YB, Richard Dick's 1953 YB, and concours winning Geoff Tulley's 1953 YB Wings Run 1993.



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