

YT FOR TWO

It takes confidence to plan a 2,000 mile overseas tour (with caravan) before restoring the car John Williams reports

MERVYN and Mary Davies had barely completed their MG TA restoration (June 1990 issue) when they started looking for another project. They wanted something bigger than the TA and, already, they were anticipating a trip to France with the completed car and a caravan. At the beginning of 1986 an MG YT was advertised in the MG Octagon Car Club's Bulletin. It proved to be in an awful condition, but Mervyn bought it. The YT was built for export only from October 1948 to early 1950. Some went to America and others (in right-hand-drive) to Australia and New Zealand. In terms of sales it was not a success by MG standards. Its styling was pleasant enough, but hardly exciting, and its performance was handicapped by around 380lb of extra weight compared with the then-current TC two-seater. Only 877 YTs

were made.

The first owner of the Davies' car was a British officer serving in Germany who, no doubt realising that he would bring it home eventually, ordered a right-hand-drive car.

This was not going to be an easy restoration. The body had rotted away completely under the two doors. The running boards were missing altogether. The sills, of complicated design, were so far gone that the rear end of the body was no longer attached to the front.

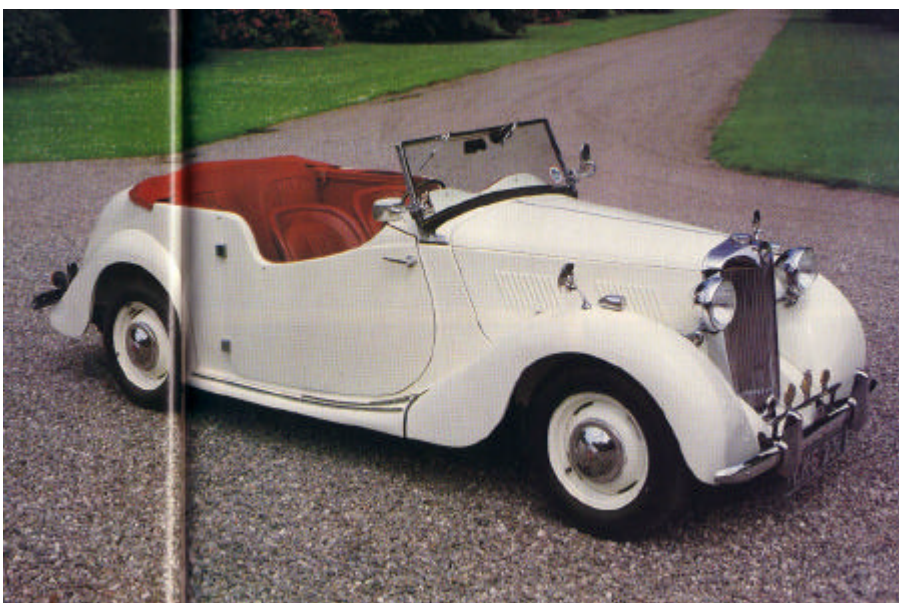
The mechanical aspects were not expected to present any problems, thanks to the availability of so many components which were fitted to the TC, TD, YA and YB models. However, so far as body parts were concerned the YT might as well have been a one-off. Just working out how to tackle the bodywork was a task in itself



The YT as found – almost all of the bodywork from the rear of the windscreen needed to be rebuilt.

Work started almost immediately. Vintage Wings, of Oldham, made the complicated sill sections and fitted them, together with a new metal floor panel which extends from the front edge of the back seats, under the seats and above the petrol tank, to the rear of the car.

The nearside door needed to be reskinned, as did the front halves of the panels to the rear of the doors on both sides of the car. The lower halves of the inner wings were renewed. The whole rear end of the car was rebuilt, using a panel supplied by NTG for the YB saloon which was then modified to suit the YT. A pair of running boards, also made for a saloon, were advertised in Wiltshire and duly acquired. They were not quite right for the YT either and, as they had been made out of a very heavy gauge of metal which defied all efforts to bend or shape it, they had to be cut and welded to make them fit. The four wings had collected numerous dents over the years and required a lot of panel-beating, together with some welding along their inner edges



Restored and resplendent in 12 coats of paint.



Mervyn Davies at the wheel.

where the rust had started. The bonnet was in good condition. The original 1,250cc engine was basically the same as that used in the MG TC but there had been a change of engine in this car. The replacement engine must have been fitted, or reconditioned, shortly before the car was laid up because it was found to be in very good condition with no measurable wear anywhere. Mervyn dismantled and rebuilt it with new rings and bearings. Valves, valve guides and seats made of a harder steel were

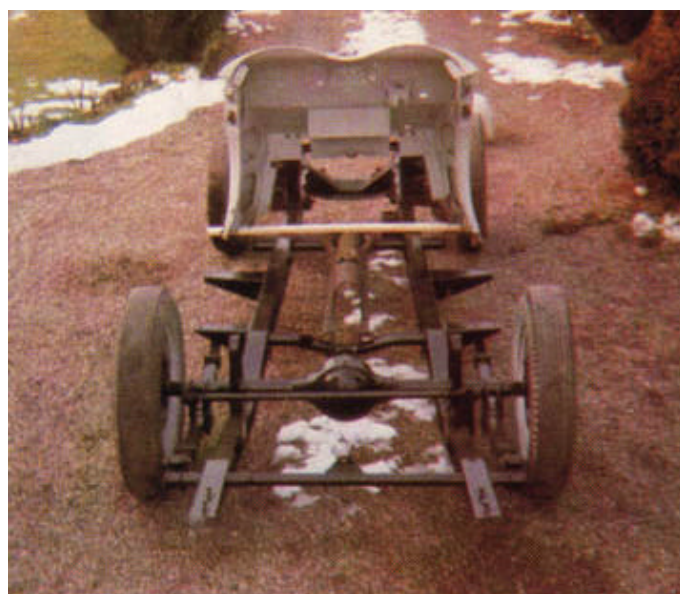
installed by Meredith Engineering at Welshpool so that unleaded petrol could be used, and the car has run well for 4,000 miles since then.

All the running gear was completely overhauled. All steering joints, seals and bushes were renewed. The front wheel cylinders were good enough to overhaul and a pair of new rear wheel cylinders was found at an autojumble. The master cylinder was in a bad way so it was bored out and relined with a stainless steel insert.

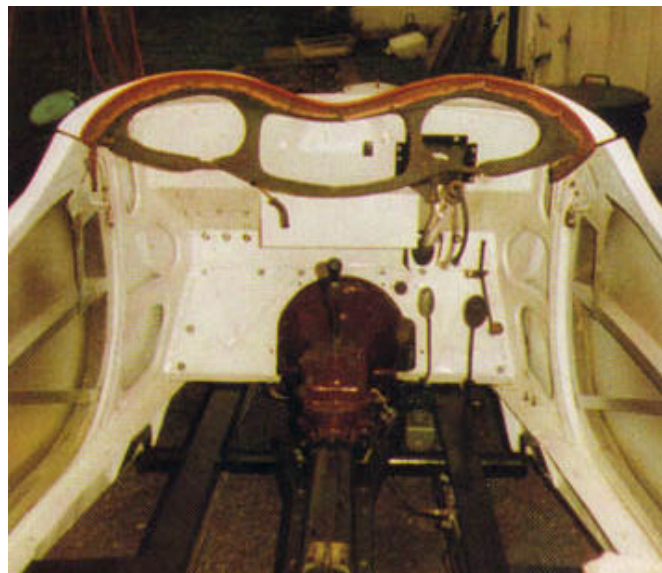
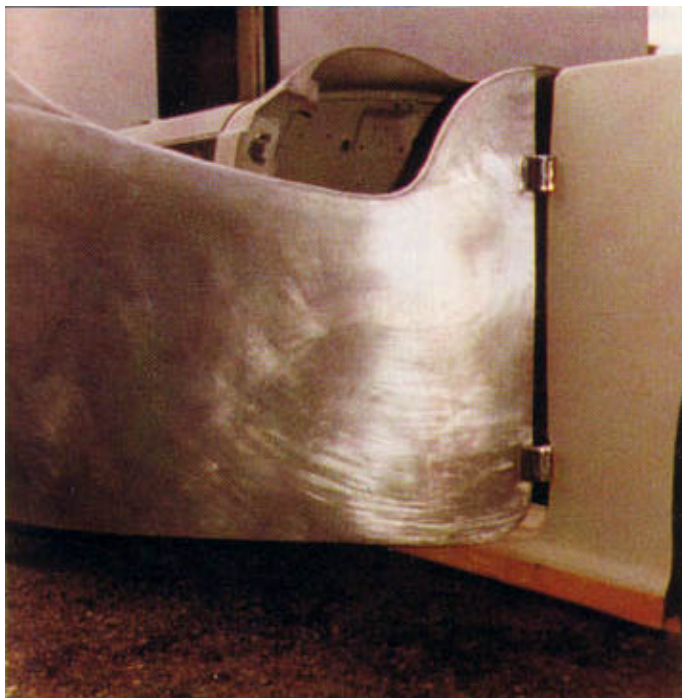
YT's running gear would have been the same as that on the YA saloon. However, Mervyn had decided to use YB running gear, from a scrap car. This would give the YT a stronger back axle, better brakes and an anti-roll bar at the front — all desirable features in a car that was expected to do a lot of towing.

The conversion presented a few problems. He had to settle for the YB's wheels, which are 15in with four studs rather than the 16in, five-stud YT originals. A YB propshaft had to be found to go with the YB rear axle and the YB

Originally the



Left and above, despite the condition of the body, the chassis was remarkably good and needed little more than cleaning and painting.



Left, both doors were reskinned in steel, as were the front halves of the panels behind them. Above, a new instrument panel had to be made to fit the skeleton shown here.

rear dampers required special brackets which were not used on the YT. Unfortunately Mervyn didn't discover this until the body was back on the chassis and painted, so he compromised by making some special brackets and fitting telescopic dampers which, he says, have worked very well. Paul Langman, at Coachtrimming Supplies of Birmingham, made the interior trim. The two rear side panels presented quite a challenge. Each of them is hollow with a zip along its upper face so

that the hood irons can be accommodated inside the panel when folded down. It would have been much easier to have reproduced these had they been a nice regular shape but instead they were narrower at the front than at the rear and their outer edges were curved to fit the shape of the bodywork. A new windscreen, complete with cutouts to accommodate the wiper spindles, was made by Salop Glass at Shrewsbury. New door

and bootlid handles were found at an autojumble, as were the tyres. West Mercia Radiators made a new core for the radiator. All the rivets were removed from the radiator grille and the individual components, together with the windscreen surround and various other parts, were sent to Derby Plating — "The best platers I know," says Mervyn. The correct bumpers for the YT are no longer available and the best solution (used by Mervyn) is to use a pair of TD rear bumpers (the TD front bumper has a hole for the starting handle which the YT doesn't need). TD bumpers have a different profile to the original YT items so the overrides are different too and the rear mounting brackets needed some modification.



Interior was retrimmed by Coachtrimming Supplies of Birmingham

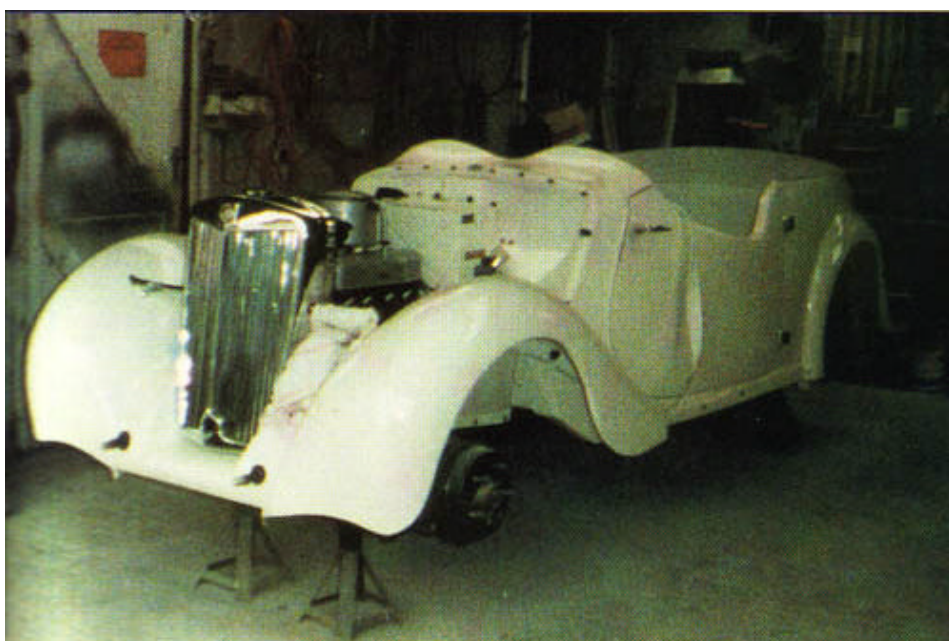
A stainless steel exhaust system was made by Bell Silencers of Swindon, using an old pattern from a YA saloon supplied by Mervyn, and following his instructions by incorporating a larger tailpipe to suit the YT's



New instrument panel

twin carburettors.

The SU petrol pump was reconditioned by a friend. New Bundy brake pipes were made



The worst is over ... the engine, rebuilt by Meredith Engineering at Welshpool, is back in the engine bay.

and fitted all round. The original brakelight switch was spring activated and mounted under the floor in the master cylinder housing. if anything went wrong with it, seats, carpets and floorboards have to come out to



allow access. To overcome this problem, Mervyn fitted a Morris 1000-type four-way connector and switch in the brake line under the bonnet.

Auto-Sparks supplied a new wiring loom, into which they had incorporated extra wiring for flasher units. Mervyn is convinced that flashing indicators are vital for safety, but in any case he needed them for towing the caravan.

The door sealing strips seem to be unobtainable, but Woolies was able to supply a strip which fitted the channel, and Mervyn trimmed

this to suit.

All the old paint was removed from the YT and the bare metal was sprayed with etching primer and then several coats of primer. Then the rubbing down began, to find all the imperfections. Mervyn filled these, then applied many more coats of primer, followed by cellulose colour three coats at a time. Flattening the paint after the first and second set of colour coats revealed more minor imperfections but eventually he was satisfied and applied the remaining colour coats — 12 in total.



Grille and windscreen surround were rechromed by Derby Plating

The restoration was completed in August 1990 and, though Mervyn had not set out to win concours awards, the YT came first in its class at the Holker Hall MG Day just a week later and again in the Royal Bank of Scotland Concours at Tatton Park the following week.

Now it was time for the trip to France which Mervyn and Mary had long anticipated. In June 1991 they set off for Royan, north of Bordeaux, in the YT with their Piper 1100T caravan hitched to the back. It was a great adventure. Everywhere that the car stopped in France, a crowd gathered around. Many eyebrows were raised in disbelief when the YT was refuelled at the Sans plomb pumps. The trip lasted a month

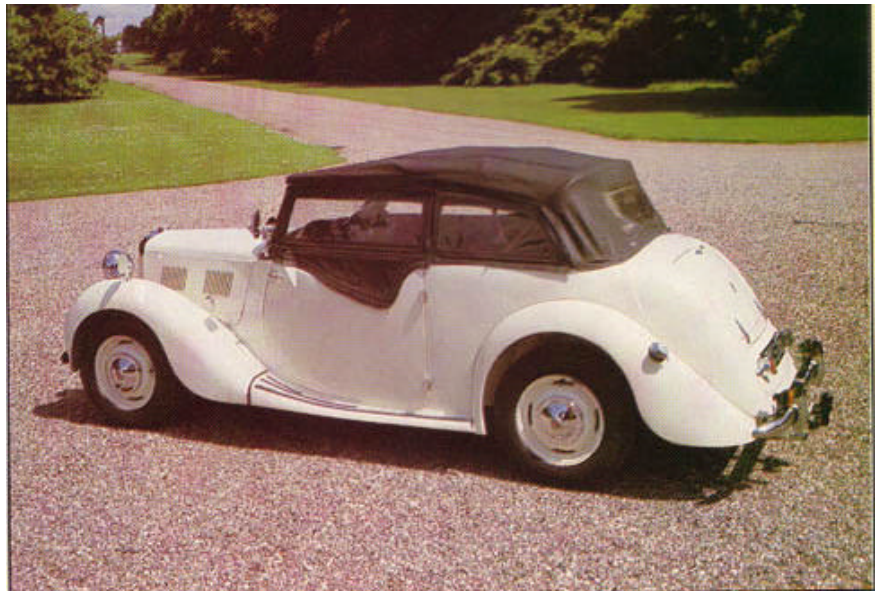


Replacement valves, valve guides and seats were fitted so that the engine could run on unleaded petrol.

and the caravan, weighing at least 13½cwt, was towed for around 1,200 of the 2,000 miles total. The YT returned an average of 25mpg and suffered only a carburettor overflow.

A further tribute to the YT's standard of preparation came after its 2,000-mile marathon — a Car of Show award at a South Staffs MGOC event.

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Restored YT topped with a new hood. The two rear side panels were complicated and difficult to reproduce.

It was with deep regret that the MG Car Club Y Type Register heard of the untimely death of both Mervyn and Mary Davies in a tragic accident while on holiday in Thailand in 1999. Mervyn and Mary had both been very active members and were sadly missed