

MG Y-type

The MG 1 ¼ litre left the gates of Abingdon in the Spring of 1947. The 1 ¼ litre is better known as the Y-type the counterpart of which was the Morris 8 series E four doors saloon. It is true that the MG is based on the Morris 8 body but the drivetrain has been based on the Morris 10 series M. The Y-prototype was built in 1939 and was announced to the market as MG 10 at its launch on the Motor Show in 1940. The car had to become a narrower or smaller version of the S, V and W-models. It was to be a competitor to make as Singer, Riley, Triumph and Sunbeam Talbot. The 2nd world war spoiled the party, the development and production were halted and the factory converted over to work on tanks and army vehicles.

Syd Enever and Alec Issigonis started work in 1937 on a project with codename EX166. This project involved the fitting of an independent suspension on these newly to develop saloon. And indeed the Y-type is one of the first British production cars that had such a suspension. Very state of the art at the time. A rack and pinion steering rack was also fitted for the first time on a MG. This system was mechanically more precise than the Bishop Cam type used on the T-series. The complete new chassis is strong and robust and formed the basis of several future MG sports cars. It consists of strengthened longitudinal box sections between the axles with four cross members for support. The engine and gearbox are mounted up front in the chassis for good weight distribution and to let the back seat fall within the wheelbase. This sturdy chassis meant a weight disadvantage with a finished weight of more than 1 ton, so performance was not so good. The detuned XPAG engine of 1250cc from the TB and a single SU carburettor naturally did not contribute much. This was of course the ideal touring car with a high level of comfort with a touch of luxury. The gearbox is a four speed unit with synchromesh on the 2nd, 3rd, and 4th. The drive was on the rear wheels through the same rear axle as the Morris 10. The car had lots of standard equipment like the "Smiths Jackall" hydraulic system. With this system, the driver could raise the entire vehicle by means of a hydraulic system. If necessary the front or could be used independently. Other characteristics are the steel sunroof and the opening windscreen for improved ventilation. Telescopically adjustable steering wheel column, adjustable front seats and a rear window blind that could be operated by the driver. The bodywork of the Y-type is clearly like that of the Morris 8 with a number of small adaptations. The body has a separate boot with an external lid and a separate compartment for the spare wheel under the floor of the boot. This compartment is accessible through a narrow removable panel in the boot. Generally in pre-war cars external boot lids were not common, instead luggage was loaded in behind the driver. The boot lid hinges at the bottom so that one large objects can be laid on the boot lid. The Y-type was announced in the Spring of 1947 to the public at large. This model sold well in Great Britain as well as overseas but not as good as the TD Midget. In 1951 after 6158 cars had been made in Abingdon it was replaced by the YB. Of the Y-type, only 103 were sold in Belgium. At our Northernly neighbours (The Netherlands) only 62 were sold.

YB

At the end of 1951 Abingdon planned several mechanical



changes to the Y-type. The successor was named officially named YB and began selling through dealers in 1952. The improved brakes were welcome with a complete new Lockheed hydraulic system. The hypoid axle of the TD replaced that of the antiquated Morris 10. A heavier 8" clutch replaced the old 7 ¼ clutch. Other changes are the improved handling by reducing the understeer. This was achieved by fitting heavier rear shock absorbers and a thicker anti-roll bar and the diameter of the wheels was reduced from 16" to 15". To house the smaller wheels the rear wings were adapted. An adapted voltage regulator was fitted together with a double horn and chromium overriders as option. Of the YB 1301 cars were produced up to 1953. Of those 1301 cars only 2 were sold overseas, everything was for the own English market. MG didn't have to worry about their sales because the Americans bought every TD that was produced.

YT

It became quite generally accepted that the conversion of the Y-type in an open version by a Swiss coachbuilder gave cause to MG to build its own version. The YT was launched at the 1948 Motor Show. For this sporty Y-Type the performance was raised by the fitting of twin SU carburettors and the fitting of the camshaft from the TC. The power rose from 46 hp to 54.5 hp. The top speed rose from 70 mph (112 km/h) for the saloon to 76 mph (121.6 km/h) for the open version. The YT was only offered on the export markets and this resulted in a bodywork that was easy adaptable for right to left hand drive. The open version is not just a model of which the roof was omitted. The doors were reduced to two for a more sporty look whilst in the interior four seats could be easily fitted. The changes at the dashboard were similar to the TC like the large rev counter in front of the driver and a large speedometer in front of the passenger. The use of leather for the seats is standard. The windshield can be folded flat as becoming in true MG traditions. The hood can be put away nicely behind the rear seats. The YT is one of the last open four seaters built by MG and was in production from 1948 until the middle of 1950 by which there were 877 examples assembled in Abingdon. Only 46 vehicles remained in Great Britain, the rest were exported with Australia (325 ex) as main taker and the USA (105 ex) as second. And naturally Belgium on the seventeenth place with 7 YT's.

Colours

The YA was offered in the following colours: Elizabeth Grey/Shire Green, Black, Elizabeth Grey Marcham Grey, MG Maroon, Sequoia Cream, Autumn Drove, Sun Bronze and Almond Green. For the YB, this is: Black, Autumn Drove, Woodland Green, Grey (later on became this Silver Streak Grey).

And for the YT this is: Shires Green (later Almond Green), Regency Red (later MG Red), Black, Sequoia Cream (later Ivory) and Clipper Blue.



Technical specifications	YA 1947-1951	YB 1952-1953	YT 1948-1950
Engine capacity cc ³	1250	1250	1250
Bore X stroke	66.5x90 cm	66.5x90 cm	66.5x90 cm
Compression	7.25:1	7.25:1	7.4:1
Carburettor	Single SU	Single SU	Double SU
Power	46 hp	46 hp	54.4 hp
Top speed	115 km/h	115 km/h	122 km/h
Production	6158	1301	877

Models

What companies make models of the Y-type?

DG Models: Autocraft produce a whole range of models originally made during the seventies and now made in small quantities. Made in the style of Dinky is this no Meccano product but a brand in itself. Autocraft is a small firm that produces its cars on the basis of the original templates of the seventies and then hand finished.

In their range, they have two Y-types in 1/43 scale. The first is an MG Y Saloon and the second is an MG YT (with hood). Website: www.autocraftmodels.com.

Lansdowne Brooklin Models: In their range is a black 1947 YA (1/43) and they even have a green 1956 MG Magnette ZA. Website: www.brooklinmodels.co.uk.

RAE Models: They have different Y and YT-types in kit form in their range. Website: www.raemodels.homestead.com.

Conclusion

We do not see them drive around much on meetings but at the last MG Happening (2003) I saw a really beautiful black Y-type of 1951 driving around. And at the last Balade of the Passiones (2002) at Stavelot even a German YT attended. Fortunately thus, not totally died out!!

Highly recommend is the next website: www.mgytypes.org is certainly worth the trouble with so many photographs, technical specifications, details, etc about the Y. The webmaster keeps track of all Y-types in the world, that's why they ask you to register your Y-type with them, so they have an idea how many survived the ravages of time. Currently they know approximately 200 Y-types (totally 8336).

Sources: www.mgytypes.org
The MG Collection — Richard Monk
MG Saloon Cars — Anders Ditlev Clausager

Patrick Menten

