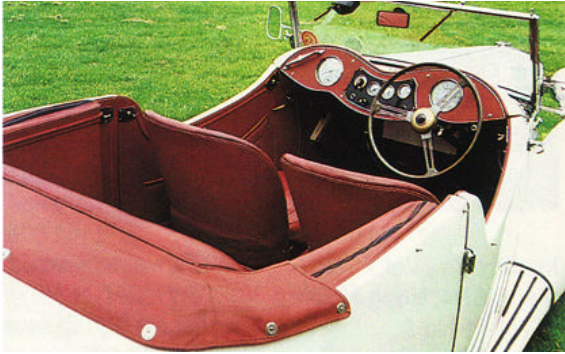


Martyn Wise examines  
the quirky Y Tourers  
produced to boost exports

# YT exudes novel charm

**A**LTHOUGH SOME 877 EXAMPLES OF the touring version of the Y-type, MG's immediate post-war austerity saloon were produced over a two year period, the car is still a rare sight at MG shows held in this country. To see one at a meeting is a bonus, while a couple parked side by side is about as common as a winning lottery ticket!



**The hood neatly stows in the zipped compartments in the rear sides to give a clean appearance once the top is down.**

The duo which turned up at the Octagon Car Club's Holker Hall MG Day earlier this year scarcely drew more than a passing glance from most visitors to the event, although many would have noticed the slightly curious lines of the Y Tourer which displays something of a "Noddy-Car" like charm.

Conceived as a sportier version of the Y-type, the open tourer was produced from late 1948 to 1950 as an export earner when the Nuffield Organization, like the rest of the country's manufacturers, was desperate for overseas cash. America was the prime market for the car and it was thought it would sell well in the sunnier states where the kudos of the MG badge coupled with the practicality of four seats would prove a winning combination. To help it on its way, Abingdon ensured the car was more than a chopped down version of the "Ugly Duckling" Y-type saloon. Weighing some one-and-a-quarter hundredweight less as a result of decapitation and the loss of the rear doors, the Y Tourer also

received a power boost thanks to the use of the twin carb XPAG engine as fitted to the MG TC which increased output from 46 to 54bhp. Although sportier, the power increase failed to deceive the more discerning immediate post-war purchaser who was looking to shake off tangible links with the past and ahead to a brighter, more attractive future. And, despite features such as coil-sprung independent suspension, it was obvious that this Morris mish-mash had more in common with cars produced before the war than after it. Compare the YT with the attractive Arnolt TD offered to Americans at the same time and it is not difficult to see why tourer versions of the Y-type were not taken up in larger numbers. Italian styling houses were influencing European car design and in this area the home market appeared woefully inadequate.

America may have been the target market with the bucks to buy, but the YT was perhaps better received in the more colonial outposts of South Africa, Australia and Ceylon where the new MG

## Popular with ex-Patriots

would be made welcome by expanding families keen to keep their love affair with MG whilst enjoying the added advantage of seating for four adults. No doubt the YT was seen as something of a status symbol at many an ex-patriot golf or country club as both the car and its owners basked in the last rays of sun setting on the British Empire.

Forty years on we should be grateful for the YTs departure to warmer climes which has helped preserve the cars in greater numbers than if the model had been for home consumption. Seen today, the Y Tourer may be no stunning beauty but close examination reveals some clever touches which disguised the car's bulk. Viewed side on the car does have a slight "bath tub" appearance and, with the pram-like hood in situ minus the side screens, the YT seems out of



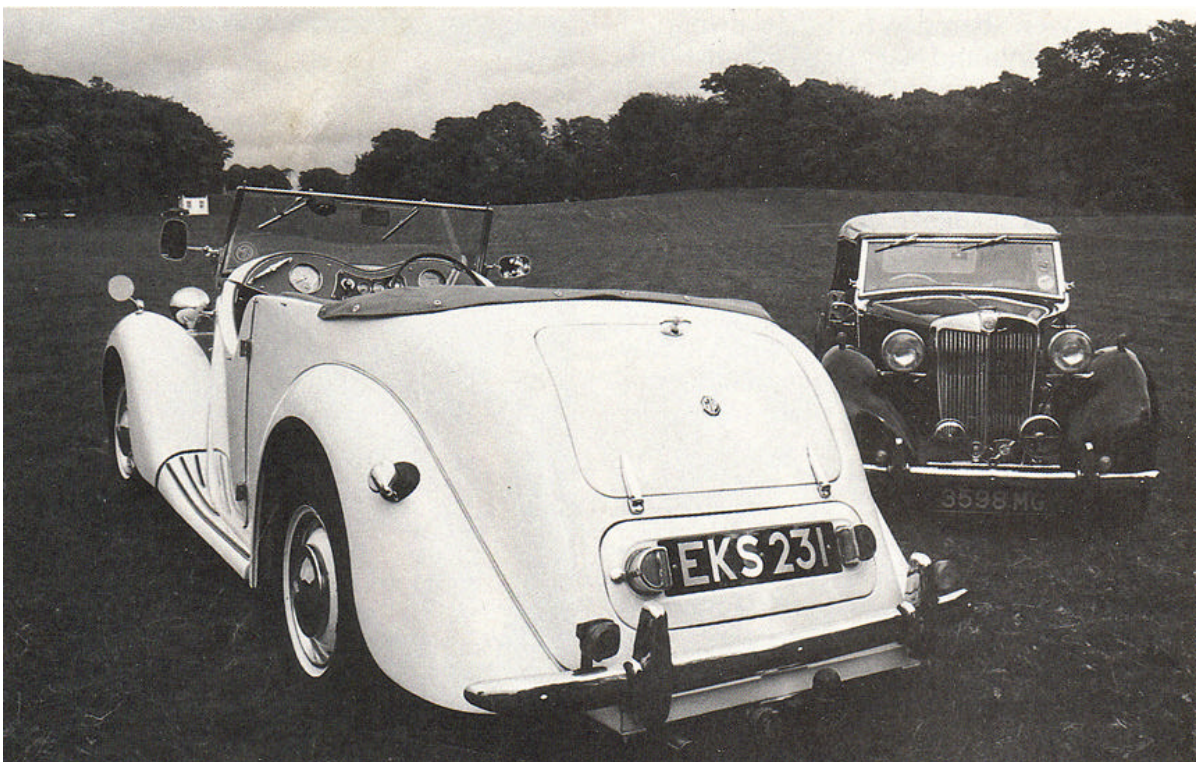
**The two Y Tourers photographed here represent what is believed to be a third of the total running on UK roads today.**

proportion as the long canvas hood meets the short snout of an upright front end.

A slight cut-away to the doors helps offset an otherwise slab side while the chopped down rear three-quarter view shows a rather ponderous rump. Where the YT does score points is inside. Here, the clever use of padded bolstering to the sides in the rear create compartments for the neat stowage of the hood mechanism which is accessed through a neat zipped top. The hood itself tucks down behind the rear seat finished off with a tidy tonneau cover which gives the car a very clean and uncluttered line.

The larger, single access doors, make entry

into the front seats much easier than in the YT's saloon brethren, while there is adequate room in the rear for most adults. Children would have positively oceans of space. For anyone looking for a good sized open four-seater tourer who still wished to remain loyal to the MG marque, the YT would appear to be an ideal choice, albeit one which would come at a price. With few examples around and restoration costs higher than its saloon counterpart, this novelty MG motoring would not come cheap. Prices anywhere from the mid-teens to £20,000 are commonplace when the Y Tourers rarely change hands.



**Viewed from the rear three-quarter angle the YT can appear to have a rather ponderous rump!**





**Mervyn and Mary Davies regularly use their YT for towing a caravan and see the car as the ideal tourer.**

For most this would be too high a price to pay for a car which offers little other than the appeal of a four-seater TD, although this is not a view shared by fortunate owners of the cars. Mervyn and Mary Davies from North Shropshire have owned the Ivory White YT photographed here for the past 12 years and use it regularly to tow a caravan on holiday.

“We took it to France for the first time this year and the car caused quite a stir, not least because we were towing a caravan,” said Mervyn, who describes their car as an ideal tourer. “The YT is ideal because you get the benefits of a larger, heavier and slightly more powerful car which is suitable for towing combined with the open top of the Ideal Tourer two-seater sports car. This gives us the added bonus of touring with the top down which we do whenever we can. The hood is only erected if it is raining. It’s a bit of a nuisance to put away but, after 12 years practice, we have got the time it takes to stow it down to about two or three minutes.”

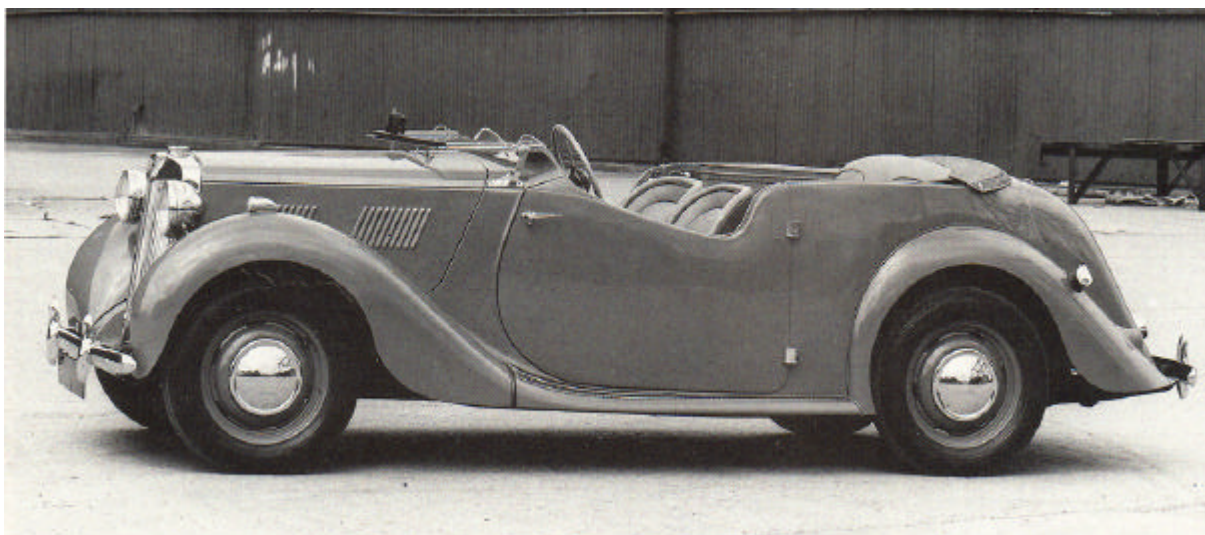
The Davies’ car was originally ordered as a right-hand-drive model by a British officer serving in Germany in 1949. Mervyn has been able to trace most of the history of the car which returned to Scotland. Since then the YT has only

had five recorded owners and, prior to Mervyn and Mary’s acquisition and subsequent restoration of the car in the early eighties, it had stood unused for 17 years. Mervyn believes his is only one of around ten Y Tourers known in this country, of which just six are running out of the 877 produced for export.



**Harold Jackson enjoys the novelty of his MG YT and feels the only real drawback is that the car does not lock and he therefore feels uncomfortable leaving the rare car unattended.**

The remaining third of the running UK contingent on display at Holker Hall was made up by the black example belonging to Harold and Alice Jackson of Blackpool. Their right-hand-drive model was also manufactured in 1949 and exported to Ceylon where it enjoyed some 13 owners before finding its way back to the UK in 1979 when it was part restored.



**The press photograph taken at the car’s launch shows the windscreen folded flat to enhance the sportier appeal of the Y Tourer.**

Harold bought the car in 1982 and completed the job since when the YT joined its Sunbeam stablemate and now covers around 2,000 miles a year attending shows. Commenting on ownership Harold says he enjoys the novelty value of the car. "People are for ever asking what it is," he says, "they often think I have taken a giant can opener to a saloon or made it up out of a lot of bits."

No doubt many an MG purist would feel the same way, seeing the car as an anagram of the Morris corporate parts bin, but such a view would be unkind. Quirky it may be, but the YT is

as much a part of MG history as the popular pre-war, two-seater sports models. Its production in the post-war aftermath played a small, yet not insignificant role, in putting the MG name back on the road to recovery helping to pave the way ahead for more important models.

That enthusiasts are prepared to stand the higher restoration costs to preserve the cars today is to be applauded and the next time you see a Y Tourer let us hope the novelty MG draws a smile rather than a snigger. For, love it or hate it, the YT deserves nothing less.

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