



MG YA

Steve Randle, Coventry

BONNIE and Clyde have more to answer for than their gun-totting hank heists. About the time that the film came out, I bought my very first MG Y-type. First loves and all that. But then I ran out of money, and despite the mobsters' hype, could not be convinced to follow their lead. Some years later, looking through the back pages of Practical Classics and with a slightly healthier pocket, decided to get another MG Y.

What a wreck. Partially dismantled with unrecognisable pieces of metal scattered about. It looked like the pile of junk my wife said it was.

BELOW: YB rear wings are among a number of enigmatic modifications by a previous owner.



Then, more fool I, learned that it was the seventh-oldest Y on the MG Car Club's register and was the 112th built of 8000. Her fate was sealed! And so was mine, come to think of it.

With unflinching spirit I wrote to a previous owner and discovered that the original green and buff log

READERS RESTORATIONS

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books and petrol ration coupons had been sold with the car but were lost with subsequent ninny owners.



ABOVE: Cosy interior says welcome. Could the doors with draught excluder be from a Morris or Wolsely?

I also discovered that several unique features had been added, such as glass on the top of the door window openings, oil-bath air filter, alloy rocker cover, YB rear wings, anti-roll bar and some interior changes.

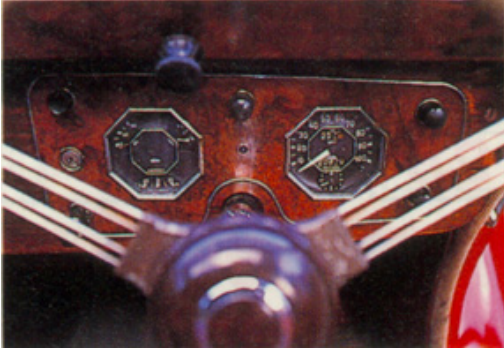
But where to start? I decided to dismantle the rest of the car. As with every restoration project, I too found rust in all the usual places such as the spare wheel aperture, doors, wings, bootlid and sunroof.

A repair panel is available for the rear of the YB, but the opening is larger. Why do anything easy? I bought a metal shrinker/stretcher, fabricating my own. With a grin on my face, I proudly reported success on the wings and running boards with self-styled MIG-welding and lead-loading techniques. Tech college professors would have probably shuddered and banned me from their classes.

The doors, I thought, looked good in their primed state. Lesson no 256 - never assume anything. Only rust was keeping them in place.

Although by now I wielded a mean weld, I left the painting to my friend Dave Sowerby, who prepared the body then etch-primed and painted the car with cellulose. The underneath of the wings and running boards were painted in stone-guard

and treated with antirust wax - I want to protect my efforts!



ABOVE: restored MG Y certainly cuts a dash.

With the bodywork out of the way, I set about tackling the mechanical overhaul, sorting the brakes, fitting new tyres and having all the chrome replated. Lesson no 478 - enthusiasm is catching. My wife caught the bug and helped fit new window seals, carpets and the new headlining, which my sister Susan sewed for me. My MG now looks like a Y should. Having my car chosen for the Octagon Car Club stand at the 1997 NEC show was a special bonus, particularly as this was the model's Golden Jubilee. This pile of junk has risen from the depths like the proverbial phoenix.

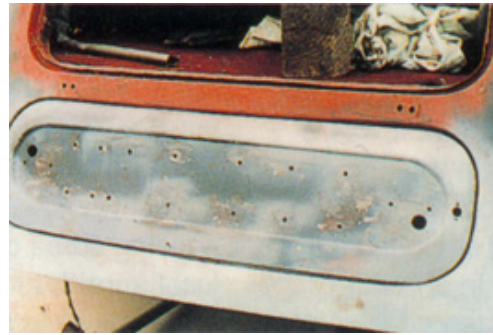
THE RESTORATION



1. Steve saw beyond the chaos and recognised the MG's potential. But there was much to learn from the adage, looks can be deceiving ...



2. ... for although the doors looked in excellent nick, they were little more than rust with filler. Steve ended up fabricating his own repair sections.



3. Available rear panels have the wrong-shaped opening, so Steve made his own and developed his lead-loading skills along the way.



4. Most of the body structure was thankfully sound, but localised repairs were required thanks to a long dead sunroof drain tube.



5. Fresh paint transformed the appearance of the MG, renewing Steve's enthusiasm and encouraging his wife to get involved.

In the April 1999 edition of the same publication, the following letter appeared in relation to Steve Randle's car. This is now reproduced below:

I remember you

The registration number of Steve Randle's superbly restored MG YA (February issue) almost leapt off the page at me.

I instantly recognised MFC 579 as being once owned by A E Keen, a director of Morris Motors Ltd. I used to see it every day at work.

In the early Fifties, I was an assistant experimental engineer for the Nuffield Organisation's Experimental Dept. Back in those days, no-one, not even directors, had company cars, but their own vehicles were kept up-to-date by incorporating later engineering changes. Alf (as everyone knew him) would have had the various modifications carried out in our department.

I'm not sure about the glass panels at the top of the door window apertures – they may have been from a Wolseley Eight (same body), or a prototype set. The anti-roll bar would doubtless have been fitted to reduce the YA's quite violent oversteer.

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