

Front view of the 1949 Y/T Series MG.

DRIVE TEST MG Y'T

by Ron Gay

It was November 1945 when the first post-war M.G. car left the M.G. Car Company at Abingdon-on Thames in England. The vehicle was the first of 10,000 T.C. midgets to be produced up until the end of 1949. This slightly-modified pre-war MG T.B. was of the typical M.G. sports car image of the tall distinctive radiator shell, long bonnet, slab tank, and large wire wheels. The XPAG 1250cc pushrod O.H.V. engine fitted with twin S.U. semi-downdraught carburettors produced 54.4 B.H.P. at 5,200 R.P.M. which propelled the car along at quite a good speed for the era.

Early in 1947 the T.C. was joined by another model, the YA four door sedan which had been designed prior to the war. The general specifications of the car had been updated to "post-war standards", producing a well-made car with above average performance for its type. The XPAG 1250cc engine was fitted with only one carburettor and in this form only 46 B.H.P. was produced at 4,850 R.P.M. The car was fitted with a welded box section chassis underslung at the rear with independent front suspension by coil springs and wishbones. Rack and pinion steering was fitted with a telescopic steering wheel. Another practical item of standard equipment was the fitting of Smiths Jackall four-wheel hydraulic jacking system. The well finished body was related closely in design to the four door saloon body of the Morris 8. The performance of the YA saloon was not up to the standard of the T.C. due to its extra weight of 5 cwt and its less developed engine. In spite of this, a YA sedan was fitted with a low pressure Sharrock supercharger and driven by Gardiner during the 1950 record attempt at Jabbeke where the car recorded a timed run of 104.7 mph prior to engine failure.

The introduction of the M.G. Y/T, a tourer, occurred in October 1948. The body and chassis was based on the YA sedan, but the twin carburettor engine, instruments, and the electrical system of the T.C. was fitted. The tourer was 3½ cwt heavier than the T.C. giving it a performance midway between the sedan and the midget. The body is a two door full four seater, with much the same luggage and passenger space as the sedan. The updated specifications of the sedan complete with the mechanical advantages of the T.C. components gave a well balanced design. As with most sports tourers, the appearance lacked the flair of the T.C. and the Y/T did not sell well. With all the 2+2 coupes being sold today, this is hard to understand. The Y/T was withdrawn early in 1950 after only 877 vehicles had been produced. Thus, it is one of the rarest post-war M.G. cars to be manufactured. The Y/T chassis numbers were mixed in with the YA numbers which started at YA0251 and finished at YA7035. It appears that the Y/T chassis numbers range in between YT-1922 to YT-5139.

During 1949 a Y-type chassis was reduced in length by 5 inches and a modified T.C. body was fitted. From this prototype the T.D. midgets were developed and produced during the period 1949 to 1953. A total of 29,664 T.D. cars were sold. There is of course, a "strong family resemblance" between the Y/T and T.D.

At the end of 1951 the YB sedan was introduced, which was fitted with smaller 15 inch wheels, hypoid axle, and better brakes with the two leading shoes system adapted from the T.D. The YB was also fitted with larger shock absorbers, and a front anti-roll bar which improved the cars handling. The YB sedan was discontinued late in 1953 after 6,158

YA sedans and 1,301 YB sedans had been produced.

The car featured in this Drive Test is owned by Marg and Ron Gay of Ballarat, Victoria. They also have a restored 1927 Austin 7 Chummy, an unrestored 1925 Dodge 4 Tourer, and a very original early VW beetle that they have had since new. Ron is a member of the M.G. Car Club (Melbourne Centre), CHACA, and VCCC (Ballarat).

This particular Y/T was sold originally by Lanes Motors in Melbourne and much of its early history is unknown. The car was finished in Woodland Green (B.R.G.) with green leather interior. During the mid-sixties the car was owned by a Mrs Gwen Rees of Balwyn, and while it was still quite original and sound, it was finally deregistered as the motor was not running. It was purchased by Clive Dickinson of Balwyn (a member of the MG. Car Club—Melbourne Centre) late in 1969 who set about restoring the car.

The hood, interior and mechanical components were removed prior to the body being dismantled to its basic all steel shell. During the engine reconditioning, breathing of the head was improved and a full balance carried out. Most mechanical and electrical components were replaced or reconditioned while the body was prepared for painting. The body was painted the G.M. colour of Jervois Cream in Dulux Spraying Enamel, whilst the interior, hood and side curtains were retrimmed in black vinyl. Some chrome plating was done and a full length tonneau was produced—supplementing the original half-tonneau that had been retained with the vehicle. New tyres and tubes were fitted and the car was finally re-registered in December 1970. Since that time, the car has travelled 20,500 trouble-free miles

and was purchased by Marg and Ron Gay in August 1974 with 16,490 miles travelled since restoration. They have carried out further detailed improvements on the car, so, at the time of writing, the only restoration still to be completed is the reconditioning of the Jackall system, the fitting of rear carpets and other minor trim work.

As with most M.G. cars today, the vehicle is not quite standard. In addition to the engine improvements, the single oil bath air cleaner has been replaced with two separate air cleaners, a temperature gauge fitted, and the hood does not have a removable zip-fastened rear window.

Sitting behind the steering wheel, the driver cannot fail to be impressed with the T.C. type dashboard with its large British Jaeger rev counter and speedo, which flank the smaller ammeter, oil pressure and fuel gauges. The driver sits high on a comfortable bucket seat similar to the sedan front seats which give good side support. The front view is excellent with the parking lights and external octagonal radiator filling cap defining the front of the car very well. At night the ruby glasses on top of the parking lights are extremely useful. The windscreen is shallow and folds on to the bonnet, while the windscreen wiper motor restricts the view of the front passenger. Side view through the fully-framed side curtains is excellent, but rear view is very restricted with the hood in place.

Adjustment of the seat, coupled with the telescopic adjustment of the thin spring spoked steering wheel, gives a comfortable driving position for drivers of all shapes and sizes. The foot pedals are small and close together with a roller type of accelerator pedal. There is room for the left foot near the floor-operated dip switch. The gear lever and handbrake are identical to the sedan and are positioned for easy use. The 'fly off' type of handbrake of the midgets is not used in the Y/T. With the hood up, the double compartment—surrounding the rear seat for storage of the hood and side curtains—is handy for carrying small articles of luggage. The boot is small by today's standards but the lid can be used for carrying luggage as well. Straps are provided to hold the luggage in place. The two doors also have fairly large pockets provided for the usual set of maps and trivia. The spare wheel and tools are stored in a separate locker just above the fuel tank.

After the S.U. electric fuel pump has filled the carburettors, the motor starts easily from cold with about half choke and settles down to an even idle very quickly. The oil pressure gauge registers about 60 psi when the engine is cold, dropping back to about 45 psi when the engine warms up. The roller accelerator takes only a few moments of familiarization for a driver used to the modern platform accelerator pedal. The clutch is smooth and progressive with no vices, and allows easy positive gear selection. It is possible to beat the

synchronesh in the gearbox when changing gears quickly. The gearbox is fairly noisy, particularly in the lower gears, while selection of reverse against a spring action, has no problems. The rack and pinion steering is fairly high geared, but light and precise with good castor action. The front coil suspension is firm, but gives a very good ride under most normal road conditions. Body roll on cornering is minimal, but the cars cornering ability is restricted by its narrow 5.25/16 inch tyres rather than by its suspension. Acceleration is quite good, even by today's standards, and the car will cruise happily all day at 50 to 60 mph. Cruising in the range of 60 to 70 mph is within the cars capabilities, but, due to the lower gearing inherited from the YA sedan, the engine is obviously working very hard. The car is not affected by strong cross winds, and third gear is useful up to about 50 mph. The Y/T is definitely a delight to drive under most conditions. When travelling with the snug-fitting hood in place, the car is particularly weather-proof, but without the hood, wind buffeting is fairly severe above 50 mph. This is due to the shallow windscreen coupled with the cut-away doors and the fairly high front seating position. There is also a fairly pronounced whistle from the upright radiator surround above 50 mph.

The King of the Road headlights allow a good penetration and spread of light for night driving, while the indirect green dashboard lights are a little on the dull side. The two "D" type tail lights give a good bright rear illumination. Reversing lights are not fitted.

This particular Y/T has been timed at 82 mph, which is in excess of the normal top speed of a standard version. Again due to its balanced engine, this car will pull away very easily and smoothly from about 15 mph in top gear. The exhaust note "comes in" between 2,000 to 2,500 rpm for this particular exhaust

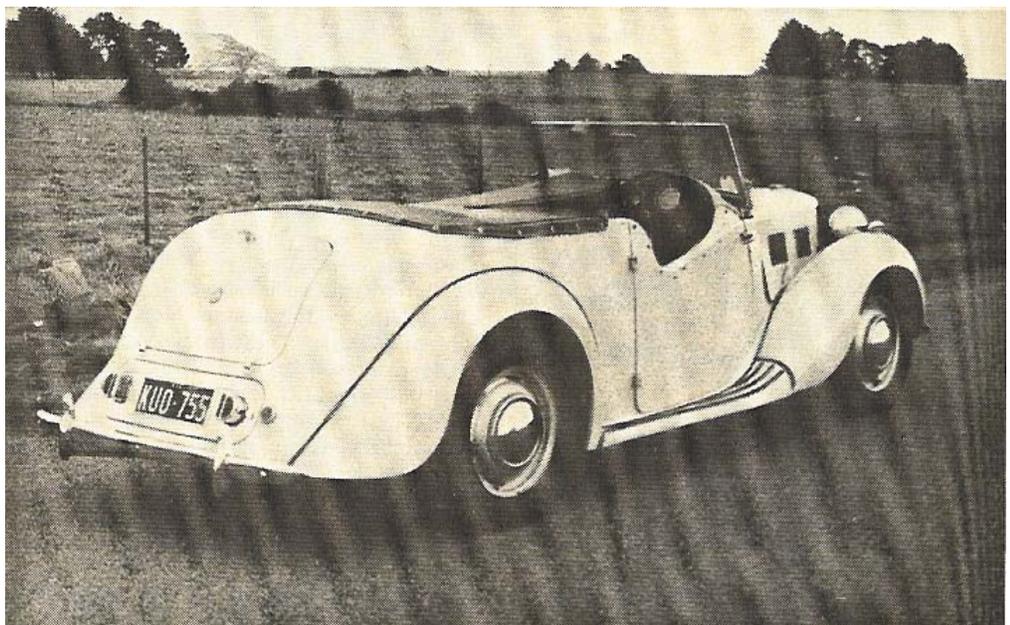
system. Fuel consumption at normal cruising speed is usually around the range of 32/34 mpg.

Finally, on the road, the driver cannot help but be impressed with the strength of the open tourer body. Scuttle movement and door movement on rough roads or under cornering is very nearly non-existent. The problem of the front opening doors suddenly flying open under hard cornering just does not happen as do similar cars with tired wooden-framed bodies.

The performance figures included in this drive test are taken from contemporary MG Car Company material and road tests, to give a true indication of the difference between the standard MG cars produced in 1949.

Looking through motor magazines or books written on the MG cars, it is very difficult to find much material referring to the Y/T. Whether this is due to ignorance or to lack of interest in the car is hard to gauge. The car is definitely overshadowed by the T.C., which is to be expected. One unfair aspect is that most "experts" usually compare the Y/T unfavourably with the T.C. The Y/T was never intended to be more than a sports tourer, and should be compared with other similar cars. This writer has either owned or driven extensively a number of similar tourers over the years, namely: a 1938 Talbot London 10, a 1946 Sunbeam Talbot 2 litre, a restored 1951 Singer 9, and a 1946 Morgan 4/4. When compared with these vehicles, there is no doubt that, in most aspects, the Y/T is the superior car. In fact, we need to look at a late model Morgan sports tourer to find a better vehicle. Again this is unfair as the Morgan has had over twenty years of further development since the Y/T was produced.

It would be interesting to know how many of the original 877 Y/T cars still exist. Kevin Leishman of the "T" Register of the M.G.C.C. (Melbourne Centre) informs me that they can account for 12 tourers in Victoria, 10 of which



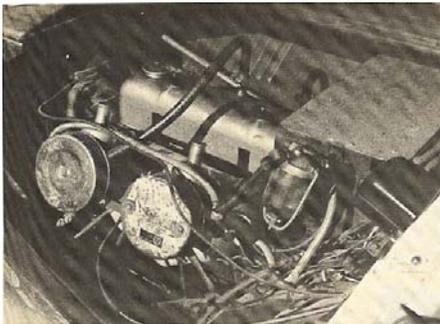
This MG Y/T was introduced in October 1948. Its chassis and body were derived from the Y/A sedan. It is owned by Marg and Ron Gay of Ballarat, Vic.

are "on the road". Richard Knudson from the New England "T" Register Ltd in America carried out a survey a couple of years ago of all the known Y/T cars in all the various registers throughout the world. He could only document the existence of 48 Y Tourers. The earliest on record was his own vehicle YT 1924 (the third Y/T produced) and the latest car was YT 5139, which is in Australia. This writer knows of the existence of 6 other Y/T cars that are not documented in Australian Registers. Nevertheless, the total number of Y/T cars in existence today would be only a fraction of the total original number. As with most MG cars produced in the late forties, they were built mainly for export, It would be interesting to know how many were sold in England originally, and how many exist there today.

In conclusion, we in Australia are indeed fortunate to have so many of these rare, well-made, and versatile sports tourers using our roads. At one extreme, it can be used in club competition with the windscreen folded flat and the tonneau fitted or, at the other extreme, it can have the hood and side curtains fitted to give most of the home comforts of a small sports saloon. The guise that the Gay family like to use their Y/T is with the hood folded, but all four side curtains left in place. In this form, it is ideal for touring or attending rallies in fine weather without the children being blown out of the back seat! Instead of being called a sports tourer, perhaps the term "family sports car" is a better description of the M.G. Y/T.

One other aspect that even the M.G. Car Company would not have anticipated is that the Y/T is capable of towing a light two-wheel trailer, complete with its load of a vintage Austin 7 Chummy!

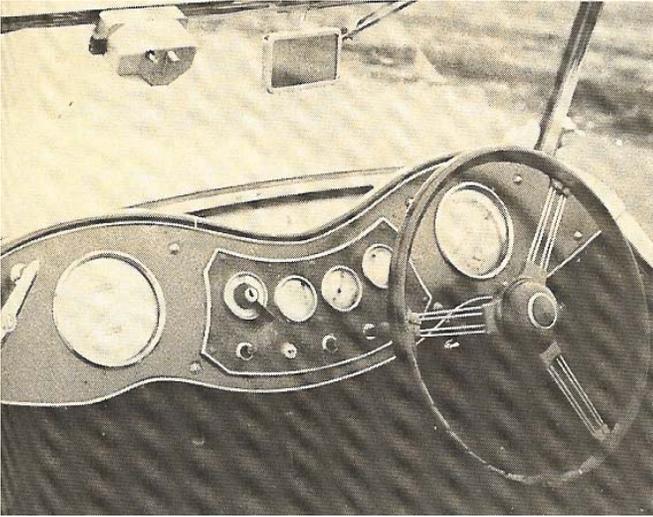
What more could you ask of a T Series M.G.?



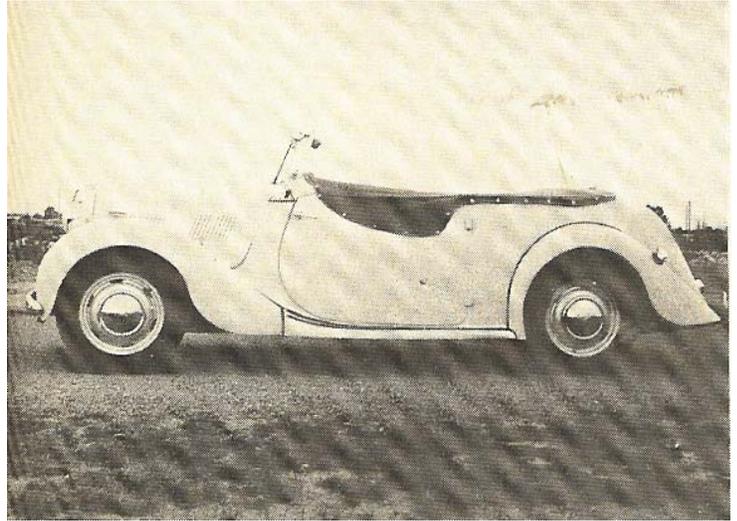
Motors for 1949 were 1250 cc 4 cyl. BHP was 54.4 at 5,200 RPM for this twin 1½" SU carburettored motor.

1949 MG Data

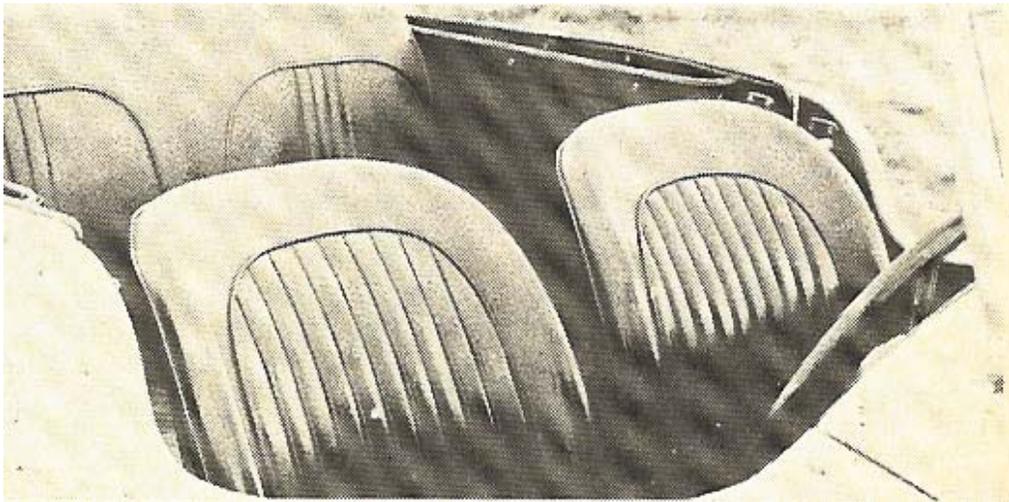
Model	TC Midget Series	Y/A Saloon Series	Y/T Tourer Series
ENGINE			
DIMENSIONS			
Cylinders	4	4	4
Bore/Stroke	66.5mm/90mm	66.5mm/90mm	66.5mm/90mm
Cubic Capacity	1,250cc	1,250cc	1,250cc
Piston Area	21.6 sq. in.	21.6 sq. in.	21.6 sq. in.
Valves	Pushrod only	Pushrod only	Pushrod only
Compression ratio	7.2/7.4 to 1	7.2/7.4 to 1	7.2/7.4 to 1
ENGINE			
PERFORMANCE			
Max bhp at	54.4	46	54.4
Peak piston speed H/min	5200 rpm	5200 rpm	5200 rpm
ENGINE DETAILS			
Carburettor	Twin SU 1½" Semi-downdraught	Single SU 1½" Coil	Twin SU 1½" Coil
Ignition	Coil	Coil	Coil
Sparking Plugs	Champion L10S	Champion L10S	Champion L10S
Fuel Pump	SU Electric	SU Electric	SU Electric
Fuel Capacity	13½ gallons	8 Gallons	8 Gallons
Oil Filter	Full Flow	Full Flow	Full Flow
Oil Capacity	9 pints	9 pints	9 pints
Cooling System	Water pump & fan	Water pump & fan	Water pump & fan
Water Capacity	14 pints	13½ pints	13½ pints
Electrical System	12 volt, earth return	12 volt, earth return	12 volt, earth return
TRANSMISSION			
Clutch	7¼" Borg & Beck Single Dry Plate		
Gear Ratios			
Top	5.125	5.143	5.143
3rd	6.93	7.121	7.121
2nd	10.00	10.646	10.646
1st	17.32	18.00	18.00
Reverse	17.32	18.00	18.00
Prop. Shaft		Hardy Spicer Needle Bearing	
Final Drive	Spiral Bevel	Spiral Bevel	Spiral Bevel
CHASSIS DETAILS			
Brakes	Lockheed hydraulic, handbrake cable to rear only		
Friction Lining Area	104 sq. in.		
Suspension –			
Front	Semi-elliptic	Coil spring indep.	Coil spring indep.
Rear	Semi-elliptic	Semi-elliptic	Semi-elliptic
Shock Absorbers		Luvax Girling piston type	
Wheel Type	Wire, knock on hub	Vent disc	Vent disc
Steering gear	Bishop Cam	Rack & Pinion	Rack & Pinion
Steering Wheel	Bluemel's 17" three spoke adjust	Bluemel's 16½" wire spoke 3" telsc. adjust	Bluemel's 16½" wire spoke 3" telsc. adjust
DIMENSIONS			
Wheelbase	7ft 10in	8ft 3in	8ft 3in
Track			
Front	3ft 9in	3ft 11-3/8in	3ft 11-3/8in
Rear	3ft 9in	4ft 2in	4ft 2in
Overall length	11ft 7½ in	13ft 5in	13ft 5in
Overall width	4ft 8in	4ft 11in	4ft 11in
Ground clearance	6in	6in	6in
Turning Circle	37ft	35ft	35ft
Dry weight	15½ cwt	19½ cwt	18¾ cwt
PERFORMANCE DATA			
Max Speed in gear			
First Gear	25 mph	25 mph	25 mph
Second Gear	44 mph	37 mph	40 mph
Third Gear	63 mph	55 mph	58mph
Top Gear	80 mph	72 mph	76 mph
Acceleration			
0-30 mph	5.8 sec	7.5 sec	6.7 sec
0-50 mph	13.9 sec	18.8 sec	16.2 sec
0-60 mph	21.1 sec	29.5 sec	25.2 sec
Std ¼ mile time	21.8 sec	23.9 sec	23.1sec
Overall Fuel Cons.	33 mpg	32 mpg	32 mpg
Brake in Neutral from 30 mph	35 ft	31 ft	30.5 ft
Top Gear mph per 1000 rpm	15.84	14.6	14.6



The impressive and comprehensive dashboard of the 49 Y/T Series MG British Jaeger instruments are used.



Profile of the Y/T Series MG.



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