



# The Classic 'Y'



## The Newsletter of The M.G. "Y" Type Register

Issue No. 161

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### **DISTRIBUTING SPARKS\*\*\*\*\***

The "Wings Run" for the year 2000, where enthusiastic M.G. owners set off from Baldock in green, leafy Hertfordshire, followed the normal routine - shiny elderly M.G.s, often each with an equally elderly driver (let us be honest, nearly all the males had grey hair). All took part, though it was a bit touch-and-go for one entrant. There is always some poor unfortunate whose car lets him down at the last moment; but then, these are very old cars. And that usually means that there are also some very old parts fitted in these cars. Some people expect some items to go on indefinitely; one of these is the distributor.

The old adage about "out of sight, out of mind" still applies to things like points, condensers, auto-advance weight springs, the drive gear, and shaft and internal bush wear. As expert enthusiasts, we all keep an eye on the points, and probably also the static ignition. But just how old is your distributor, that rotor arm and that condenser?

Here is a bit of activity for you. Go out into the garage, lift the bonnet, remove the distributor cap and rotor arm, and then rotate the engine until the points are fully open. With the points fully open, at the nice correct 12 thou' you set them at, hold the rotor arm drive and push it towards the heel of the points. Now pull it away from the heel, in the opposite direction (you are rocking the cam on its shaft). If your distributor is in good condition, you will hardly be able to see any movement at all in the points' gap. But it may be possible, with the points set at 12 thou' static, for you to move the shaft-top backwards and forwards, and find that in one direction the points nearly close, whereas in the other they open far too wide. The reason for this is that the shaft, or its bushes, or both, are worn.

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The bushes were fitted at manufacture and they are made of "sintered" iron. This means that ground-up particles of metal were subjected to high pressure, then cooked at high temperature. This process leaves a lot of tiny gaps in the bush, so that it can hold oil for lubrication. Sometimes called "Oil-lite" bushes, they need soaking in oil before fitting. The lower bush is fed by oil-splash from the camshaft drive-gear, but the top one relies on regular servicing by you. When did you last put a few drops in it? Well, after 50-odd years there is a chance it has perhaps worn a little by now. If you can move the points about by simply rocking the rotor arm drive-shaft as described above, then your ignition timing will be all over the place. This can be checked with a strobe light fitted up to highlight white marks on the timing chain cover and engine fan pulley. It has been said that lead-free fuel is less tolerant of faults like wandering ignition timing, and overheating is common if you run the engine either too advanced or too retarded.

With the strobe light set up, and the ignition timing marks on the timing chain cover and crankshaft pulley highlighted with "Tipp-Ex", run the engine. Taking care not to let your tie or pony-tail catch in the spinning fan, watch the timing marks move about as if by magic as you increase and decrease the engine r.p.m. (By using the carburettor's butterfly spindle, you can work the throttle and watch the timing marks at the same time.) You will need a darkish place in which to carry out this operation. Now, if you leave the engine idling, and the timing mark still moves about as the strobe light catches it at each spark, then your distributor is worn. You will probably already have confirmed this with the "rocking the rotor arm drive" check.

The cure? You can buy a new "remanufactured" distributor, or refurbish your present one. Or, you can use a later type, in better condition. The unit fitted to the 1940-50 M.G.s is virtually identical to the units fitted to later B.M.C. cars. Timing curves differ, but then you need to swap over the advance weights, or in many cases just the weight-return springs. Eyebrows now raised, you will be further surprised to hear that the later "25D4" will easily fit the XPAG engine. Oh yes it will, as the last of the Wolseley 4/44s used it, complete with vacuum advance. As the 25D4 was so widely used, they are still cheap new, and often almost free second-hand. You can use cheap, modern, quick-fit points as well if you swap over the points' base-plate from an even later 1970s' version. To fit your, for instance, ex-Mini distributor, you need to swap over the Mini "A" Series engine's "D" drive for the gear drive of the XPAG. As Lucas was the supplier of both types of distributor, a pin is simply drifted out of the drives and you just swap them over. The end-play of the shaft may need a shim or two, unless you have an original "pipped" brass washer (see later sketches).

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If you still do not believe it can be done, the photo (to appear in a later issue - Ed.) shows a 1970s Mini 1,275 c.c. distributor, complete with quick-fit ignition points and vacuum advance, fitted to an M.G. YB. Mine. A standard 1,275 c.c. Mini has a virtually identical advance curve to a YB, up to 4,000 r.p.m. The cost was minimal, and certainly a lot less than the £300-plus needed to have a specialist fit a new "remanufactured" item. But did you know that the "new" item is actually an M.G. Midget unit after all?

If, however, the above makes you wince, then here is a list of the correct units for the XPAG, as fitted to the "Y" Series:

DKYA4/40089: distributor fitted with camshaft MG900/106 to "YA" up to engine no. 14022. This was replaced with DKY4A/40197 at engine no. 14023.

DKYH4A/40058: with camshafts MG900/106 and 22326 fitted to YB up to engine no. 17669. This was replaced with DKY4A/40197 at engine no. 17670.

DKY4A/40162: with camshaft MG900/906 used in the YT.

Cotter bolt D2A4/40369 used with camshaft MG862/171 in the YB from engine no. 17670.

Beware a DKY4A/40058A distributor - this was fitted to the 1,140 c.c. Morris and Wolseley versions of the "X" Series of engines. A 40048 is from a TB or TC, as is the later 40162. A 40367 is from a TD Mk.II or TF. Distributors 40115 and 40411 were for high-lift camshafts.

What is the point of vacuum advance, I hear someone ask? It permits extra advance on weak mixtures on light throttle-openings (i.e., when cruising). This increases m.p.g. quite a bit, and the system is still in use today. It is NOT good for sports engines, and is therefore deleted in these applications.

Neil Cairns.

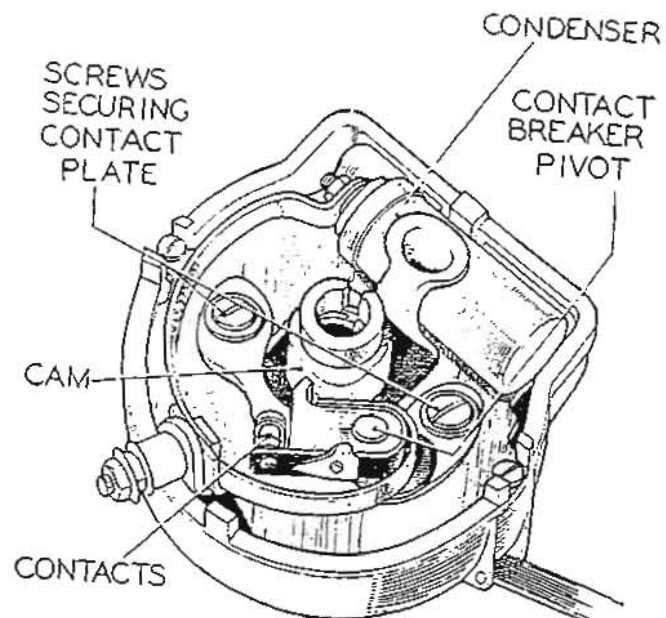
(The first two diagrams, of seven diagrams and a photo which make up the remainder of Neil's article, appear on page 4, after the usual "credits", below. The remaining diagrams and photo can hopefully be included in issue no. 162 - Ed.)

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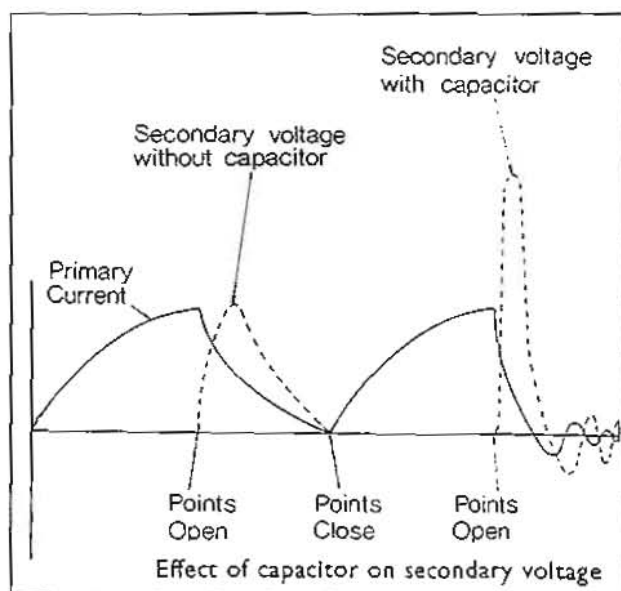
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Our old friend, the standard XPAG 1930s- type distributor.



For technophobes, a diagram of what the capacitor actually does by storing power.

# LetterS

Dear John,

I am having doubts about the reason I postulated in TCY159 for the out-of-sequence registration of Y/5205, in 1951. A book on P4 Rovers I have just read says that Double Purchase Tax was introduced in the April 1951 Budget and not, as I had been told, eliminated at that date. The theory that Y/5205 stood unregistered in University Motors' showroom until 6th April 1951 in order to make a tax saving is thus very suspect.

Double Purchase Tax at 66% applied to cars with a basic price of £1,000 or more and did not affect Y-Types; on the face of things there was no tax advantage from delaying the car's registration until after Budget Day 1951, as the rate of Single Purchase Tax remained unchanged.

Five possibilities occur to me. One is that the Rover book is wrong about the date when Double Purchase Tax was introduced. Another is that Y/5205 was retained in the factory or at University Motors from its manufacture in late 1950 until April 1951 for the rectification of defects - which sounds a very long time. Third is use by the factory or U.M. of Y/5205 as a demonstrator - though that conflicts with the recorded mileage of just 132 when the car was registered (unless the mileometer was zeroed!). Fourth is the possibility that U.M. could not find a buyer - which is unlikely, as they sold several other Y-Types in early 1951. Finally, the purchaser may have thought there would be a reduction in the rate of Single Purchase Tax in the 1951 Budget and asked U.M. not to register the car until after Budget Day.

Any further ideas would be welcome.

Trevor J. Austin,  
[redacted] Surrey.

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## REGISTER NEWS

Readers following our series on the much-modified 1951 "Y", "KSC171" (see next page), will be pleased to hear that we think we now have a chassis number for this important car. Subject to final confirmation, it was/is Y/6551. And, if that is so, the car was last noted in at Naylor Bros., Yorkshire, in June 1995, undergoing restoration. Further details of the car's recent history will appear at the end of our current series. As Register No.1224 was "KSC171", and Register No.1186 was Y/6551, the entries have been combined under No.1186, and Register No.1224 has been reallocated to a "new discovery", Y/5542 (which is now in [redacted], Arizona, having been rescued relatively recently from a scrapyard after being brought to the U.S.A. in 1972).

Y/3764 (Register No.1234), last heard of with Mr. Malcolm F. Grant of [redacted], is now owned by Mr. J.L. Edwards of [redacted], Hampshire.



## 'KSC171' - Development & Modification History

### Section D. Part 3.

#### Electrical Modifications (not ignition)

3 Screen De-misters, rear one fitted with master control on Dashboard. Driver's wired via ignition circuit. Front passenger's wired direct to terminal box.

Twin Chrome Windtone Horns. Screenwash, wired via ignition circuit.

Second fog & pass lamp to match original & wired through quick action change over switch.

Main Beam warning light fitted in rev. counter & wired from dip switch.

Second stop light & rear lights modified to comply with new lighting regs.

Stop lights wired via ignition circuit. Petrol Pump anti-thief switch.

Head Lights fitted with long range units & 42/36 watt bulbs.

"T.D." Midget Dynamo with power take off for 2:1 rev. counter drive gear box.

Reverse light mounted under spare wheel comp. & wired via side lamp switch; controlled by reverse position of gear lever.

All cables to rear lights & stop lights fitted with 'snap' connectors.

#### Miscellaneous Modifications & Additions etc.

Twin Wing Mirrors. Slipping Interior Mirror. Vanity Mirror fitted to passenger Sun Visor. Fitting for anti-glare shield fitted to driver's Sun Visor. Vent pipe fitted to rear axle breather hole. Tappet cover breather fitted with strainer at engine end of pipe. 6" Chrome extension fitted to exhaust pipe. Tachometer (as fitted to 'T.F.' Midget). Redex robot vacuum gauge. Redex Lubrocharger for cylinder lubrication. Adjustable rear reflectors. Loose Covers. Link type Floor Mats. Starting handle guide on front bumper secured by additional screw. Front number plate mounted on bumper. Model 'Y.K.' 1 1/4 Saloon Overriders. Special Chrome screws securing rear number plate. Fire Extinguisher mounted in bracket by driver's seat. First Aid Kit under driver's seat. Aluminium Cable Carriers under wings for light cables. Aluminium mountings and special Chrome screws for Windtone horns. Various bolts and brackets made to correct lengths & drilled for lightness. Dunlop 'Underseal' rubber paint applied under wings, running boards, various parts of chassis, inside door panels, inside boot & spare wheel comp. Main components of front suspension, chassis, rear suspension etc. painted with two coats of anti-rust paint. Nipple protectors fitted to all grease Nipples. Badge Bar. Fittings on bonnet for detachable snow & bug deflector. 9" wiper blades in place of 8". 'Kirk' cable lubricators fitted to throttle & radiator control cables. Fitted waterproof cover for the whole car. 'Portarack' Minor roof luggage rack (only fitted when required).

Section E. (History & Overhaul Details) next...

Derek Ringer.