



The Classic 'Y'



Issue No. 182 October 2004

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

EDITORIAL

You will find only four pages in this issue, one which marks the official start of a new editorial policy for *TCY*. In recent years, the M.G. Car Club's Y-Type Register has gone from strength-to-strength, hand-in-hand with enormous development and growth in the Internet and e-mail, media which they have embraced enthusiastically. To try to compete with such *modus operandi* would be folly indeed, nor do I wish to, for I regard the Internet and e-mail as methods of communication insufficiently regulated and (self)-disciplined to be taken seriously. However, this approach has left me receiving very little Y-Type-relevant correspondence these days; and, of course, there is very much less to add to the Y-Type historical scene nowadays than there was, say, in the 1980s. So, henceforward, only new, exclusive (to me) and accurately researched material of relevance to Y-Type M.G.s will find its way into *TCY*. In other words, I no longer wish to "cheapen" the content and serious nature of the newsletter by including "fillers" which have appeared elsewhere before or which are known to be inaccurate or irrelevant in content (this has happened on a number of occasions in the past in order to make up the number of pages to the full six). You might find in future, therefore, that a bi-monthly issue of *TCY* may consist of as little as one page, if this is the situation I find myself in when I come to compile that issue.

David Lawrence's book *Let There Be Ys* makes mention of the small badge-like stampings on the right-hand chassis rail (pp.24 & 25) ("MG14T" and "MG58"). These were later referred to in *TCY* 176 (October 2003). Jerry Ticknor, of Michigan, recently sent me a copy of the December 1979 issue of *Sacred Octagon* which contains the following request for information as part of Chip Old's "Technically Speaking" column:

While readying the frame of TD 20481 EXL/NA for sandblasting, Norm Harvey found the figures "MG 7T" stamped on the right hand drum (sic) iron. The figures are 1/16" high and are surrounded by an elongated octagon 3/16" high and 3/8" wide. The chassis number appears in the usual place on the opposite dumb iron. If you can explain the significance of this marking, contact Norm at 510 Madison, Rawlins, Wyoming 82301.

The latest
Mail.

LETTERS to THE EDITOR

Following on from the last issue, the owner of the ex-Dick Jacobs special-bodied YB, YB/1551, has kindly provided us with these interesting details...

Dear Mr. Lawson,

I bought the Dick Jacobs in October 1972 from a gentleman who was only interested in the registration number ("XND1") which he wanted to transfer to his new Mercedes. This he had done the month before. Our interest stemmed from the fact that at the time we were running a YB saloon ("RKE192") which had been passed on to us by my father, and the idea of a fibreglass-bodied YB was appealing due to its rust-free characteristics. I remember telling my wife not to expect it to be any quicker than the saloon which she was using as her everyday car. How wrong I was! All that the seller said about it was that it was noisy (certainly compared to a new Mercedes!) with its absence of sound-proofing, and that the window-winders were stiff.

We soon learnt just what we had bought and, after a bit of tinkering, I found myself not only using her as 20,000 miles-a-year business transport in the early- to mid-seventies, but racing, sprinting and hill-climbing with her extensively in M.G. Car Club "T" Register and Historic Sports Car Club events, as well as taking part in historic all-comer events at Snetterton and elsewhere (through the seventies). The most notable success during that time was our winning the M.G. "T" Register Newcomer Award for 1974 and just beating a Formula Junior single-seater for second-from-last place in a Snetterton all-comers ten-lap race! I have a lovely photograph of her overtaking the single-seater around Russell's corner on the final or penultimate lap, with all four wheels hanging down and seeming to tower above it! We had been trying to get past all through the race, but the single-seater could out-accelerate us out of the corners. Happy days!

She was as happy on a circuit or on a fast dual-carriageway as she was pottering around lanes or shopping. Quite remarkably flexible and seemingly unbreakable, considering that the compression ratio was over 10:1 and that she revelled in pulling 6,000 r.p.m. through the gears. Usable maximum speed was a shade under 100 m.p.h. with her unblown 1,250 c.c. In "T" Register races the blown TCs of Glyn Giusti & Co. would out-corner and out-accelerate her, but given a decent straight the streamlined shape would come into its own and you could find yourself beginning to close the gap before the next corner.

We covered a lot of road miles in her; more latterly she was used by my wife as her everyday car (it took my wife longer than she expected to take over!) until it was clear that an overhaul was due. This has taken longer than expected (due to being distracted by Vintage and Pre-war Alvises, Vintage Singer Juniors and Morgan three-wheelers, amongst other things) but I have re-tubed the body where necessary and it is awaiting finishing. Mechanically she is fine and it would take little to re-commission her once the body is finished.

cont'd...

When Dick Jacobs first built her it was on a chassis supplied by the Works. She was to be the prototype for a GT version of the M.G. TD/TF. He used no mould - this was to be the body from which the mould was to be made. Pictures of the car under construction are to be found in Dick Jacobs' book *An M.G. Experience*. The body is formed on a tubular frame which is mounted on the YB chassis. Unfortunately, it was the last YB chassis to leave the Works before production of the YB ceased. This rather upset Dick's plans, so he went racing in her with a variety of combinations of 1,250 c.c., 1,500 c.c. (TF engine), blown and unblown - not without success (notably in the 1954 *Daily Express* International Sports Car Race at Goodwood).

I was not the first to compete with the car after Dick Jacobs passed her on. More than one of the intervening owners used her in competition, and at some point she acquired an MGA grille which did not enhance her good looks! She was still wearing that grille when we bought her.

I met Dick Jacobs only once (although I had corresponded with him when I first acquired the car) and that was at a Brands Hatch M.G. Meeting when, as a special feature, a number of historic M.G.s with their original drivers were brought back together. Dick drove the car round for a few laps, which brought back many memories for him - not the least being that the wipers left the screen at speed and would wipe the air on either side of the car (I cured this by reversing the direction of travel of one wiper compared to the other so that the wind forces cancelled out). Only two things did not meet with his approval - the colour (Ferrari Red) and the loss of her original registration number. We cannot do much about the number (I wrote to the previous owner several times to see if he would be prepared to transfer the number back, but he would only do so if I could get him his initials ("SAW") with the number "1", and there was not much chance of that!), but we intend to restore the colour to British Racing Green, as it was when the car was in Dick's hands.

I hope the above is of interest as also may be the enclosed picture of the Dick Jacobs in one of the M.G. races at Brands (*photo reproduced on p.4 - Ed.*). We look to be ahead of a pack of blown T-Types, but in reality I think we were about to be lapped. Well, we didn't do it for the money!

I would be interested to learn if our old YB saloon ("RKE192") survived. We sold her to a chap called David Fitt who used to race a Riley and was going to restore her to provide a car he could take his family out in. He owned a garage in Norfolk, I seem to recall. Unfortunately, we lost touch.

David Rouse,
Great Maplestead, Essex.

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