

The Classic 'Y'



Issue No.197 April 2007



Most of this issue explains the story behind the creation of the above "special".



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LETTERS

Dear John,

Perhaps I can add a few more bits of information (*see Don's letter in the last issue - JGL*). I bought my first "YA" in 1960 and the next in 1983, but didn't keep that long. I bought this last one (Y/6409) in November 2006.

I joined the Manchester Historic Vehicle Club about four years ago but without an eligible car. I'd had a Mercedes 280ce, a '38 Minx and a '55 Minx Convertible. When I thought about a "YA" again, I realised that was the one. What had I been waiting for? I think I would have preferred a Y/T, but I could have waited a lot longer as I'd only ever seen two. None for sale anywhere, but then I saw an ad for one in pieces in Northern Ireland. Everything had been restored but needed collecting, assembling and painting. The pictures of it looked good, but with an asking price of £12,000 I left it.

I don't have any details of "KVM358", nor even the registration number of my second "YA".

I have had some replies to the letters I sent (re Y/6409), to the names in the papers which came with the car. The one before the Southport owner was a Mr. Neville Wells in Kent, who bought it from a garage forecourt in 1971; he paid £50 for it (that's fifty!). Mr. Wells did some restoration, including respraying it red from its original green. He kept it for about 20 years before selling it to someone in Southport in 1991-92; so it hadn't been laid-up there as I had thought, and was only there a year or so. It became green again during the restoration done by Sam Crutchley. I would like to fill in from '51 to '71, but there's probably not much chance of that now.

Don Fry,
[REDACTED] Manchester.

Hi John,

A brief history of "FDW693", a 1949 "YA" Saloon (Y/3540, *first registered 10th October 1949 - JGL*). Purchased off Percy Clarke and found outside an old isolation hospital about 10 miles away from home, having been put outside when the hospital buildings were required for a turkey rearing house (**photo 1 shows condition**). On getting it home it was given a good pressure-wash and did not look too bad, so I started a "nut and bolt" restoration after starting the engine (**photo 2**). Lifting the body off with a J.C.B. digger (**photo 3**), it was found to be in unrepairable condition as all the boot floor, inner sills, etc. were beyond repair. Never mind, still had the engine and chassis etc., all in good condition. So started on them, stripping down so I could send them away to be shot-blasted (**photo 4**).

The engine was a factory-reconditioned unit so no work was required on that. The gearbox, back axle, steering, etc. were all refurbished awaiting return of the chassis. When the chassis returned from shot-blasting I repainted all parts. Refurbished and refitted, it looked very good. I was then left with a rolling chassis with no body.

cont'd...

The project got left for a while as I was very busy developing my fish-farm business. One day I took a look at the "YA" and, searching for some means of moving live fish around (from hatching and on the farm), I decided to put a fibreglass tank on the back. I constructed a wagon body to hold the tank (photo 5). It did this job for several years, until retired two years ago.

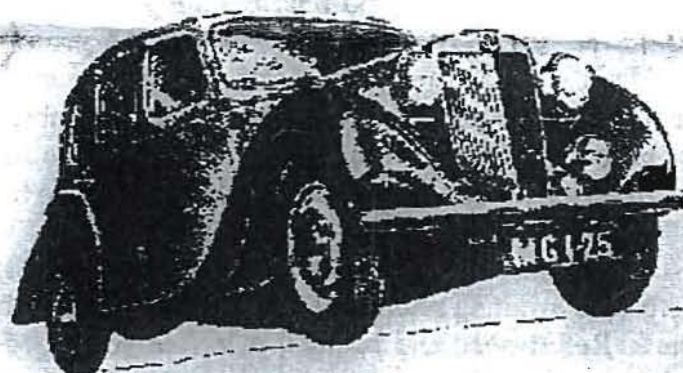
Having saved the bonnet, front inner valances, etc. I decided to rebuild. Having no body left I had to design an open-top two-seat tourer. Welding square-section metal to form a frame-work, this was clad with 1.5mm aluminium sheets and the floor was formed with aluminium chequer plate (photo 6). The "YA" bonnet and radiator grille were used in the rebuild (photo 8 & cover photo). The hardest part was forming the rear bulkhead with the rear "dash". As I had purchased an M.G. Midget which was an M.O.T. failure, many parts were taken off this.

The next step was to construct two front mudguards, which were formed from 2mm aluminium cut to shape and ribbed to give strength. The car was then taken for a pre-M.O.T. check. No problems were found and an M.O.T. certificate was obtained (many sections deleted). On the road at last...

Next problem was the windscreen. After having some ridiculous prices quoted, I found a firm in Gloucester who would make the frame and screen for a very reasonable price if I sent a pattern (photo 9). As you can see, "FDW693" has had a very chequered life and has come back for more work every time, being very reliable. I am now looking for my next project; if you know of anything please let me know.

Gordon Talbot,
[REDACTED], Cumberland.

Gordon is another "Y" Type enthusiast whom I have not heard from for about 20 years - why are they all coming back now (see the last few issues for further examples)? No matter, I am very grateful for the text and photos (not to mention the loyalty), which will keep TCY going to perhaps next April (Issue No.203). In 1987, Gordon purchased YB/1524 from me and, in the next issue, I will include a couple of photos of it from the days of Gordon's tenure of ownership and make some comments on how it has fared since he himself sold it - JGL.





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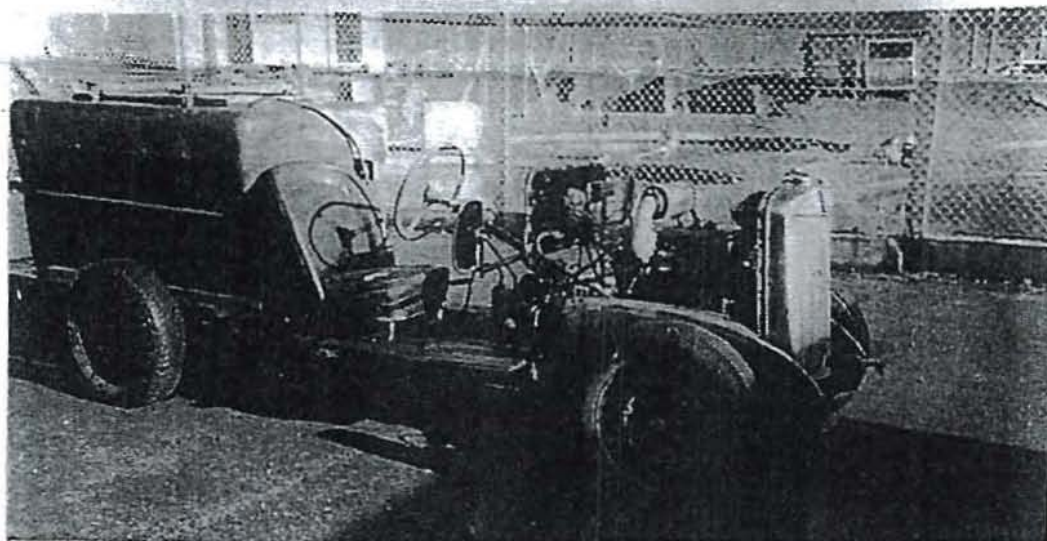
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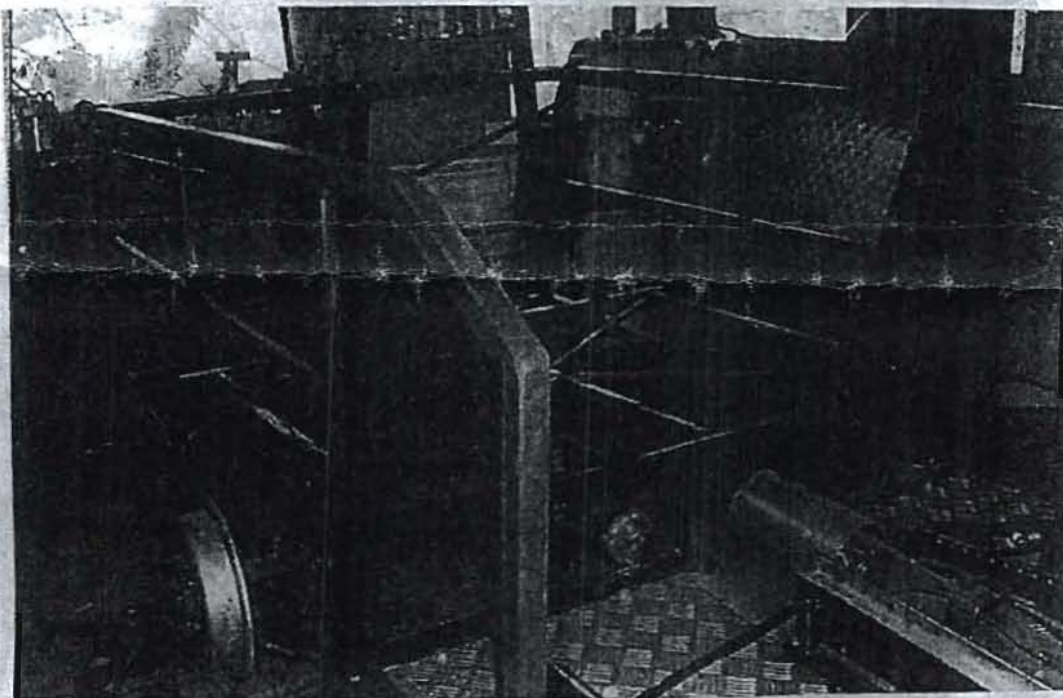
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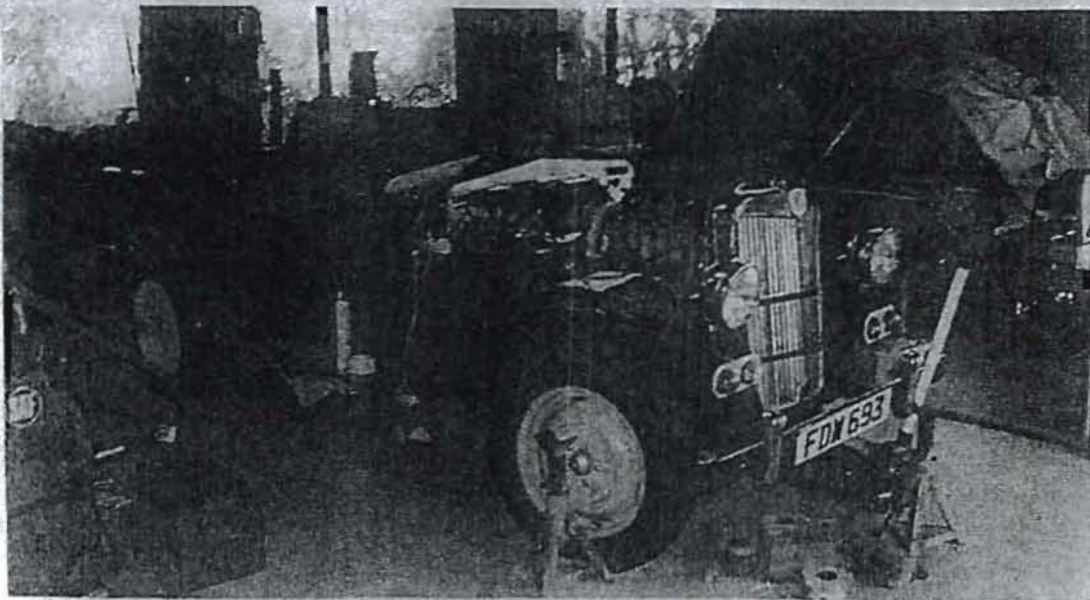
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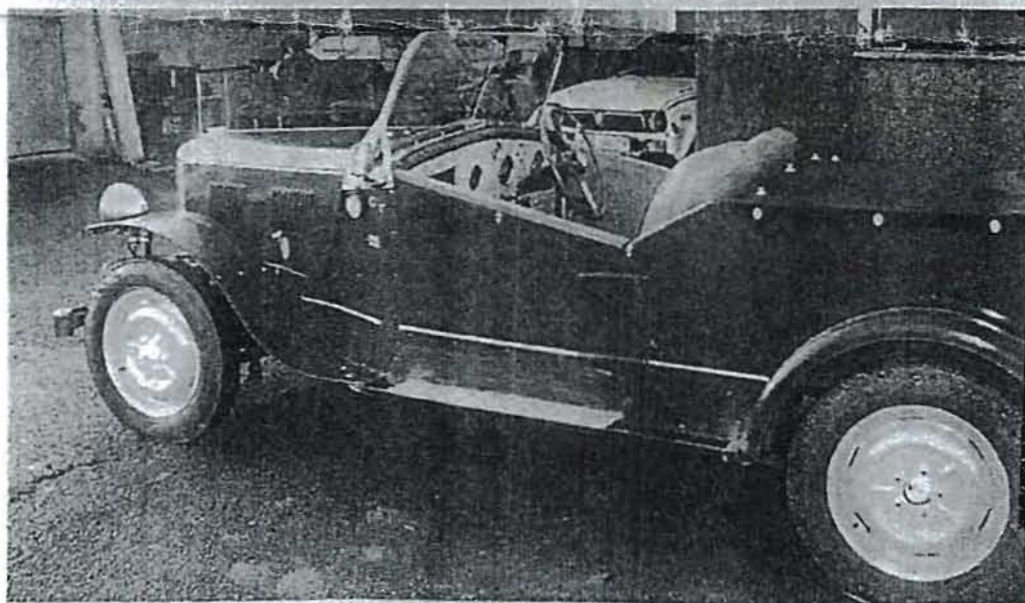
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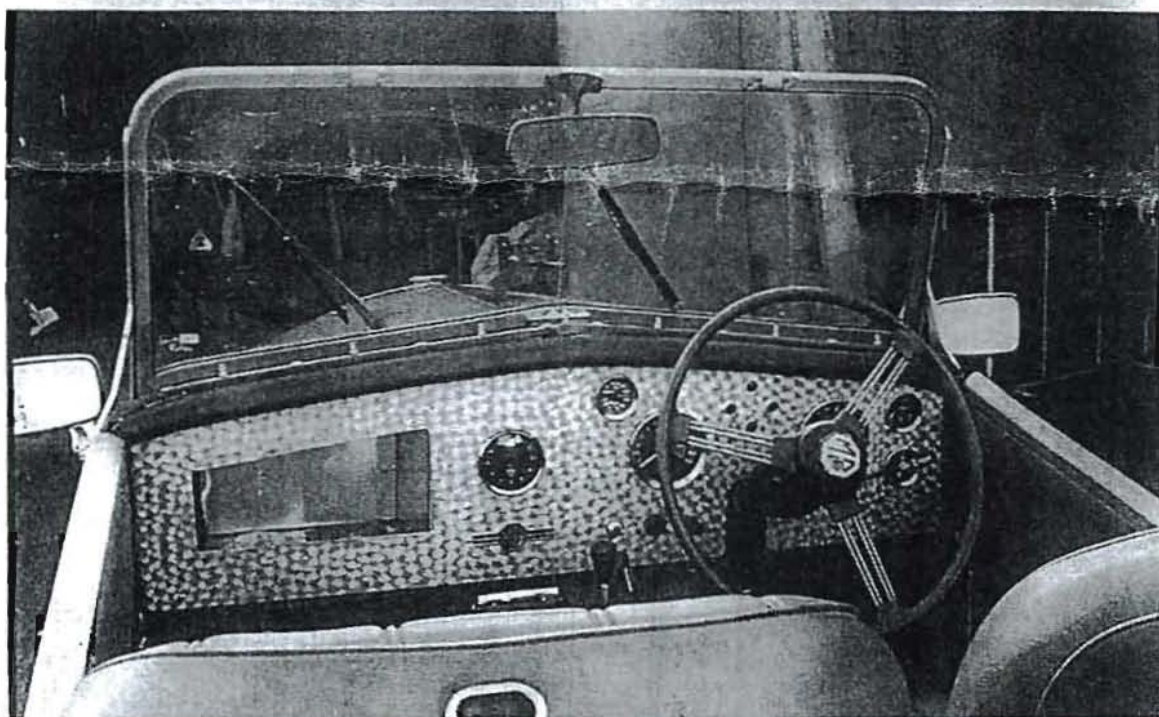
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