



THE CLASSIC 'Y'

The Magazine of the M.G. Y-Type Register.
Volume IV. No.38.

March 1981.

EDITORIAL:

Some of you may have seen mention of the Y-Type Register both in 'Practical Classics' and 'Thoroughbred & Classic Cars' for March. I am delighted to say that the response to this publicity has been magnificent and as a result we have gained many new members, have discovered many previously unheard of cars and have acquired much new material to publish in 'The Classic Y'.

This month's issue sees the great 'battery box and colours' debate in full flow. This is just the sort of interchange of ideas we need to get to the bottom of some of the long-standing queries concerning the cars we love.

In past years we have always tried to hold some sort of 'rally' in the summer months. It is true that attendance has sometimes been disappointing but nevertheless I always like to specify a date and location as somewhere where we can perhaps get together and show off our cars if the mood takes us. This year two prospective locations have emerged. One of our members, Graham Eaton, is involved in organising a school summer fair to be held on Saturday 27th June. It is hoped to include a historic/classic vehicle line-up and it would be nice if one or two Y-Types could attend. The fair is to be held near Doncaster, Yorkshire. Secondly, the Y-Type Register has been invited to attend the 2nd Annual Vintage, Veteran & Classic Car Rally at St. James Church, Maghull, Liverpool, to be held either on Saturday 11th or 18th July. I shall try to attend this rally myself and again, it would be good to be represented by an example of our beloved Y-Type. If you are interested in attending either of these events then please contact me as soon as possible.

Some really good news I received recently is that the people who make 'Handy' copper brake pipe sets can now supply ready made-up sets for YA's and YB's. The YA set will be available shortly at around £20 and the YB set is out now, price £15.99. Enquiries should be addressed to: Mr. Ray F. Smith, Automec Equipment & Parts Ltd., Arden House, West Street, Leighton Buzzard, Bedfordshire, LU7.7DD who may be able to arrange a discount for Register members.

Lastly, in 'Popular Motoring' for March, on page 13, there is a half-page article about a very forlorn Y-Type !

6th March 1981.

MEMBERS' INFORMATION EXCHANGE

Stephen Davis: I should like to obtain a restorable or restored dashboard/instrument panel and some of the special conversion rims for converting the 8" headlamp shells to take 7" reflector units. If anyone can provide me with either of these items please write to: [REDACTED] [REDACTED]

Going on to those dreaded battery boxes (I know, but I think I might have found the answer), while reading through a book of old M.G. road tests I came across an 'Autocar' test of the M.G. YT (October 8th 1948). I found the following paragraph of great interest:

'The battery box on the engine bulkhead has been moved to a central position and the engine oil pump has been modified to clear the steering column'. (Because of left-hand drive).

I feel that all Y-Type bodies from this point on would have had the new bulkhead pressing. A time-lag in the change-over and the using up of old bodies could account for the '49 YA (Y 2598 - Ed) with the off-set box. We may never know for sure when the change took place but this seems logical.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Dear John,

I'm enclosing a copy of a photo from an article by Dick Knudsen a couple of years ago, showing the prototype YT and evidence of extensive cutting and welding to move the battery box from left to centre. (The photo will be published in next month's magazine if it can be reproduced to an acceptable standard - Ed). If some YA's were being built with central battery boxes at that time, all this effort to move one from the left would surely have been unnecessary.

Did all YT's have centrally placed boxes or just the LHD examples? Either way, bulkheads with both battery box locations would have been coming down the line more or less side by side from chassis number 1922 (supposedly the first production YT?) on until whenever the left-side location was phased out. Perhaps some of the central battery boxes during this period found their way onto saloons? Were any saloons actually built with LHD? And, if so, where were they sent? If not, perhaps the left-side location was dropped just for the sake of standardisation with the tourer.

So much for boxes - back to the colour question! Regarding Stephen Davis' suggestion of a grey/black duo-tone, the black-and-white photos of the road test car allocated to 'The Autocar' in their 9th May 1947 issue also look much different (more contrast between body and wings) than other black-and-white photos of duo-tone cars in the issues of 15th August and 5th December of the same year, as well as the 4th August 1950 article. Perhaps it is the same car as pictured in Jonathan Wood's book. Could it be that this was a colour combination used for an early production car, a late pre-production prototype or a 'special' that went out for the initial road tests by the weeklies, and was mentioned in some of the advance publicity releases, but that was modified, at least as regards body colour, as production got underway or early in production? Let me add a few more sticks to this fire:

cont'd overleaf....

1. Is the Y-Type duo-green the same as that used for SA's, VA's and WA's, for which modern colour formulas have been published ? It looks about the same in black-and-white photos.
2. Are any original colour photos known other than the one on page 713 of the August 15th, 1947 'Autocar' ? It is a very pretty picture, of a duo-green car, but taken from directly in front and down low so not much can be deduced regarding the body colour.
3. Would a black-and-white photo of Colin Dye's metallic duo-green car look like those early photos of duo-green cars ?

Apologies for all the questions. There are still plenty of people around with memories of these cars when new, and various sales records or makers records etc and this sort of thing could be documented a lot more easily now than after another thirty years or so.

I recall seeing a YA road test, with photos and mention of the colours (definitely duo-tone, but that's all I remember) in a non-motoring English magazine. I think it was called 'Country Life', probably late 1947 or 1948. I haven't been able to track it down over here - perhaps you have access to it.

Tom Bowman.

Having read the above I think we are now in a position to piece together a definitive (?) account of why and how the battery box location changes were carried out. First of all, it will be apparent from the photograph to appear in next month's issue that when the YT was introduced (at chassis number 1922) a great deal of work was done to transfer the battery box location from the left side of the bulkhead to a central position. Why ? Because YT's were to be produced in RHD and LHD versions and it would be impossible to fit the steering column etc in the LHD position with the battery box in its original position - it would be in the way ! To introduce the change of location on the production line a modified bulkhead (firewall) pressing had to be introduced. This new pressing was fitted to all YT's. However, there was probably a fair stock of 'left-hand side battery box' pressings on hand and so the YA (which was never (?) produced in LHD form) kept using these until supplies ran out at Y4459. Henceforward production standardised on the central location. The switch-over couldn't have been for the sake of owner convenience as anyone with a 'central position' car will tell you ! That's my story anyway - anyone come up with anything better ?

Colin Dye's Y5460 is not two-tone green, by the way (sorry, I misled you !)

J.G.Lawson.

IMPORTANT LATE NEWS: S.U. Petrol Pumps suitable for Y-Types are available from Burrell Services, Greencroft Garage, The Greencroft, Salisbury, Wiltshire, SP1 1JF at £10.95 incl postage until 31st March and £14.95 thereafter. Tel: 0722-21777/8.



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