

THE CLASSIC 'Y'

TENTH ANNIVERSARY YEAR

1978 - 1988



The Newsletter of the M.G. 'Y' Type Register.
Volume 11, No. 86, April 1988.

EDITORIAL

Thanks to everyone who sent in details of the 'body codes' on their cars. The additional information I now have adds a little to what I knew when I wrote the article which appeared in the February issue.

Now I have another interesting little puzzle which I hope you'll help me with. Some 'Y' Types were fitted with ammeters calibrated '+20/-20' amps and others had '+30/-30' ammeters. I have an idea that the 30amp variety replaced the earlier 20amp type and if I had to stick my neck out I'd say the change happened around about Y7045 (September 1951). What I'd like you to do is, when you next have reason to write to me (for instance at subscription renewal time) just jot down in your letter whether your car has a '20amp' or a '30amp' ammeter and then I'll be able to see if my theory is right or not.

Now a request to overseas readers. It would assist me greatly if, when making subscription etc payments, you would pay either by International Money Order or by Sterling cheque or by using a bank which has reciprocal negotiating arrangements with a U.K.-based bank and which nominates a U.K address of a U.K bank at which the cheque is payable.

Several members in the Melbourne area are thinking of forming an Australian Chapter of the Register. If any Australian owners are interested in learning more, would they please contact Mr. M. H. Fry at [redacted] [redacted] Victoria [redacted] (Tel: [redacted]).

25th March 1988.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

30/4 to 2/5	National Classic Motor Show (1/5 Round 1 Benson & Hedges Concours)	N.E.C. Birmingham.
2/5	Cheam Charity Transport Spectacular & Fair	Cheam Park, Cheam, Surrey.
12/5 to 15/5	Almere Steam Festival	Almere-Haven, Holland.
14/5 & 15/5	MGOC Scottish National Event	Doune Motor Museum, Perthshire.
15/5	5th Regency Run	London (Battersea Pk; dep 10am) to Brighton.
30/5	Veteran, Vintage & Classic Car Rally	Pontefract Race Course, W. Yorkshire.
4/6 & 5/6	Cheshire Autojumble & Classic Car Spectacular	Tatton Park, Knutsford, Cheshire.
4/6 & 5/6	M.G. '88.	Donington Park, E. Midlands.
5/6	Round 2 Benson & Hedges Concours	Ripley Castle, Nr. Harrogate, Yorkshire.
12/6	Brighton & Hove Motor Club Concours d'Élégance	Madeira Drive, Brighton.
26/6	4th Great British Picnic	Old Warden Aerodrome, Nr. Biggleswade, Bedfordshire.
10/7	English National Final Benson & Hedges Concours	Beaulieu, Hampshire.
17/7	Uxbridge Autoshow	Show Ground, Park Road, Uxbridge.
24/7	Round 4 Benson & Hedges Concours	Callander Park, Falkirk.
13/8	Classic Car Action Day	Castle Coombe Circuit, Nr. Chippenham, Wiltshire.
20/8 (noon) to 21/8	Veteran, Vintage & Classic Show	Hickstead Showground, Sussex.
21/8	Round 5 Benson & Hedges Concours	Cardiff Castle.
17/9 & 18/9	South West Motor Show	The Royal Bath & West Showground, Shepton Mallet, Somerset.
4, 5, 6/11	Classic Car Show	Hotel Metropole, Brighton.

CARS FOR SALE:

- 615 "YB. New sills (complete) fitted, all panels repaired and ready for painting. Five new tyres. £1,250 ono. Contact: Tony Brier [REDACTED], W. Yorkshire [REDACTED] Tel: [REDACTED] (works hours)".
- 809 "1953 YB. For restoration or spares. Complete car. £750. Tel: [REDACTED] (w) or [REDACTED] (h)."
- 128 "YA Saloon 1949. Registration 'UMG71'. Black. On the road. MoT to 1989, plus some spares. £1,950. Tel: [REDACTED]."
- 775 "1948 M.G. YA Saloon. Partly stripped for restoration with many new parts. All complete with running engine and original handbook and log book. £850 ono. Tel: [REDACTED] (Suffolk)."
- 29 "1953 YB, Registration 'TPB387'. Extensively rebuilt over last 3 years including complete retrim. Used as daily transport through '87. Domestic difficulties force sale. Offers over £3,000 for quick sale. Tel: [REDACTED] asking for Trevor Wilks."

PARTS FOR SALE:

- "M.G. YA chassis; superb condition; dry stored over 30 years. Tel: [REDACTED] (Essex)."
- "TC headlights £85 pair; TD headlights chromed £70 pair; painted shells £45 all excellent; Morris 10M block £20; 10M gearbox £50; 'T' radiator cap £12; TD/TF/MGA clutch plate £13; Many spares M.G. 'Y' Types. Tel: [REDACTED] (Wilts)."
- "Chrome surround, M.G. badge and grille for 'Y' saloon. Offers. Tel: [REDACTED] (Kent)."

PARTS WANTED

- TD, TF or Y steering rack. Contact: Paul Butler, [REDACTED], [REDACTED], Worcestershire. Tel: [REDACTED].
- One original-type YB over-rider. Contact: Miles Harris, [REDACTED], [REDACTED], Co. Antrim, Northern Ireland, [REDACTED].
- Complete front seat with beige leather and/or front seat beige leather only - original. Contact: David Kvapil, [REDACTED] Lincoln, Nebraska, [REDACTED] U.S.A. Tel: [REDACTED].

MEMBERS' COLUMN

Trevor Austin:

I have a good garage friend in Sutton who restores Morris Eights and Minors and who has a clever technique of cutting back a new high gloss finish so that it looks more authentic and less 'over-the top'. If any members in the South of England need sympathy and practical help, his name, address and telephone number are as follows: John Duggan of [REDACTED], Surrey [REDACTED]. Tel: [REDACTED]

and for our Australian readers...

Lawrie Horner:

The only library copy of the 1978 edition of Philip H. Smith's book, "Tuning & Maintenance of M.G. Cars" here is with the Western Australian Library Board, and may be borrowed free anywhere in Australia through an inter-library loan. I mention this because my local library Interlibrary Loans Officer knew neither fact! A hard back edition is fairly easily available at specialist shops for approximately \$20 (\$19.95 at my local car book shop).

Secondly, parts. The only good outlet for 'Y's that I can find is D & D. Balingall, [REDACTED] Victoria, [REDACTED] ph. [REDACTED]. Don is a specialist mechanic, and Dianne has set up and computerised and runs the shop. They are Australian reps for Moss Motors and have a good Moss Motors catalogue with diagrams for \$5, plus their price list, of course.

Mel Fry

A tip to members regarding the support brackets for rear wings. I have seen two 'Y' Types recently without the rear wing support brackets fitted; both had cracked paintwork where the wing bolts on to the body, caused by the wing constantly moving.

I have had discussions with Colin Lloyd, Rod Charles and others regarding getting an Australian Chapter underway. I am therefore giving you my Melbourne telephone number as a contact point for any interested Australian 'Y' Type owners. It is [REDACTED].

REGISTER NEWS

Recent Discoveries

Register Number 554

Chassis Number	Y3462
Engine Number	SC/X13208
Licence Plate	ZE5572
Body Number	n/k
Sub-Type	YA
Year of Manuf'	49
Owner's Name	McKeown O
Owner Number	901
Car Location	Co.Dublin Eire
Exterior Colour	Red
Interior Colour	B

Register Number 188

Chassis Number	Y4302
Engine Number	SC/X16531
Licence Plate	XMG100
Body Number	5368/
Sub-Type	YA
Year of Manuf'	50
Owner's Name	Horner L
Owner Number	899
Car Location	Victoria AUS
Exterior Colour	Green/White
Interior Colour	-

Register Number 29

Chassis Number	YB1362
Engine Number	SC2/18240
Licence Plate	TPB387
Body Number	6960/1166
Sub-Type	YB
Year of Manuf'	53
Owner's Name	Wilks TR
Owner Number	727
Car Location	W. Midlands ENG
Exterior Colour	Black
Interior Colour	N

Register Number 463

Chassis Number	YB1540
Engine Number	SC2/18442
Licence Plate	MDG982
Body Number	n/k
Sub-Type	YB
Year of Manuf'	53
Owner's Name	Lovatt D
Owner Number	904
Car Location	Staffordshire ENG
Exterior Colour	BRG
Interior Colour	G

THE AUTOCAR, 27 JANUARY 1956

Proud Owners

Another Eligible M.G. Having read of the merits of the 1½-litre Riley and M.G. Magnette, so well described by their proud owners, I am tempted to put forward a claim on behalf of the 1½-litre M.G. model Y Saloon; I am a very satisfied owner of this model.

There can be few cars of comparable price and size offering so many refinements as standard fittings. The car's appearance is neat and businesslike and free from uncalculated chromium decorations. On opening the boot (the lid of which opens downwards to take extra luggage) a really useful amount of space free of spare wheel and tools is revealed. These are below in a separate locker.

The radiator is still blessed by a convenient, external filler

cap, and the car is fitted with hydraulic jacking, which is an invaluable asset. A thoughtful maker has also fitted a sunshine roof as standard. Inside, the comfort of driver and passengers is catered for with a telescopic steering column, a rear window blind controlled by the driver, and a central folding armrest for rear seat passengers. There are no fewer than four ashtrays to meet the smokers' needs.

The roof light switch is over the driver's door, and the door cappings and facia are of polished wood; instruments are well lit and do not reflect on the windscreen at night. The driver, however, can see at night the red lenses of his side lights. Twin sun visors and screen wipers are further items of equipment, and the windscreen will wind open wide for fog or summer driving. Hand straps and fitted pile carpets are added comforts.

Maintenance of this car is easy: the greasing and oiling points are few, and the engine is very accessible. The centrally hinged bonnet can be removed when carrying out a top overhaul. However, no car is perfect, and two criticisms can be made: why, for instance, should one have to dismantle both exhaust and clutch assemblies, merely to drop the sump to clean the oil filter? And again, why have the manufacturers used sponge rubber in the locker lid channels which, owing to their sloping position, trap rain water causing rust formation? Fortunately, these faults only recur at fairly long intervals, but are not in keeping with the otherwise excellent little car.

With a maximum speed of a little under 75 m.p.h. the 1½-litre M.G. cannot perhaps be called a fast car, but owing to its liveliness and good handling, creditable averages can be put up in comfort.

By a stroke of luck my first experience of the car came when I was invited to drive a friend's 1½-litre M.G. for a few miles. I was immediately pleased by its excellent rack-and-pinion steering, combined with an exceptionally good driving position and a splendid gear box with a good sturdy central lever.

These points made me decide that when the opportunity occurred, I would get this model; and as it turned out, I had not long to wait.

On one rainy December evening, I went to Oxford to collect it. The body was finished in light green with dark green wings, and cream coloured upholstery. Now, with over 52,000 miles behind it, I have never regretted my choice. The steering is still just as accurate as new; the general handling and brakes are as good as ever.

At the recent Silverstone meeting of the M.G. car club, there was a concours d'élegance contest; among the entrants were some really beautifully turned out examples of the 1½ which were a real credit to their owners.

After careful study of 1956 models of comparable size, I could find nothing to tempt me to part with my present car. Unless I win a really fat cheque on the football pools, M.G. will stay with me for many miles yet.

I should perhaps make it clear that I have no connection with M.G.s, other than as a satisfied owner.

Witney, Oxfordshire.

A. T. R. BINNINGTON.

Another Bouquet for the M.G.

Ideal Specification. I would like to endorse everything mentioned by Mr. A. T. R. Binnington in his letter on the 1½-litre M.G. (January 27). I also am a satisfied owner of a "Duo" green "Y" saloon. Having owned several cars and driven many more I can appreciate a good motor car. There is no need to repeat the points already praised, but I will add that whilst I have known more powerful brakes I have never known a vehicle that maintained such a true course when braking hard under adverse conditions. Similarly, the general handling and feel under the worst winter conditions is a delight. When driving some cars one has to put up with many petty irritations: with the "1½", however, a feeling of pleasure and satisfaction is derived.

In my opinion, the only car that could replace this model is one built to the following formula: Take an M.G.A. with its wide splayed box section side members and braced scuttle bridge as a basis for the chassis, use full instrumentation including rev. counter and water temperature gauge, front end styling as on M.G.A., rear end and saloon top to be similar to the Aston-Martin or A.C. Aceca. To give purity of line two doors would probably have to be used, but these could be wide opening and of light construction, giving easy access to seating accommodation comparable to the "Y" saloon. All those essentials (such as a sturdy central gear lever) would be fitted. The weight should not exceed 19 cwt. Then with a twin-carburettor 1½-litre push-rod o.h.v. engine, giving 68-70

b.h.p., we could expect maximum speed to be in the region of 90 m.p.h.

For the long purse a special equipment model would be available with twin O.H.C. head giving in standard trim 82-85 b.h.p. Disc brakes, k.o. hub caps and wire wheels would complete a potent and pretty small sporting carriage; the dream of many enthusiasts requiring just that little more seating capacity.

A. V. MERRY

[Other correspondents who have written in similar appreciative terms of the 1½ M.G. are thanked for their letters.—Ed.]

THE AUTOCAR, 27 APRIL 1956

Proud Owners

Support for the M.G. 1½ Litre. With interest and satisfaction I read the eulogy of the M.G. 1½-litre saloon (*The Autocar*, January 27), and I concur with the views which Mr. Binnington expresses, even on the two unfavourable points.

On the question of performance, however, it should be mentioned that stage 1 tuning, and the fitting of twin carburettors, is comparatively inexpensive and of great benefit; at least, this has been my experience.

There is another point your correspondent might have mentioned: the car has a robust chassis and is not a tin box on wheels!

Bramhall, Cheshire.

ERIC H. DOBSON.

[We thank the many readers who wrote confirming Mr. Binnington's praise of this car.—Ed.]

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OVERSEAS ENCOUNTER

by L. A. Ayton

HOW TO HAVE AN ACCIDENT



The M.G. after its mishap (top), which was serious enough to require a new chassis frame; and after repair in Bulle, as good as new.

BETTY and I were motoring gently after a shower, on our way from Fribourg to Geneva and France. Three days of rain in the mountains had evaporated our enthusiasm for Switzerland as quickly as our francs, and we were heading south in search of sunshine on the Côte d'Azur. Michael, aged eight, was in the back of the M.G., intent on collecting Swiss engine numbers from the railway near by, and we had not long passed through a little Swiss market town, Bulle, looking very pleasant in spite of the wetness.

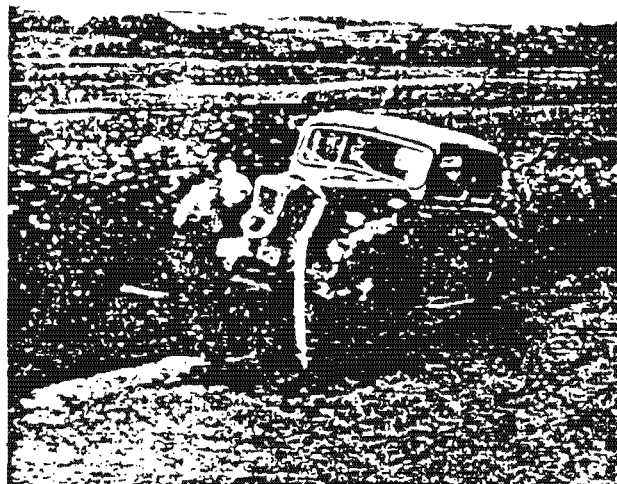
Then things happened. My chain of thoughts ran:

What's he doing; he's going to hit us; he's hit us. "He" was a large pre-war Chevrolet with Swiss plates which suddenly appeared down-hill on a bend in a four-wheel skid, sliding crabwise at us. I tried to take to the hills, but got only as far as the hedge when the "Chev" arrived. To our fascinated horror it seemed to take hours to reach us, but it did, and the driver and I were eventually about four feet apart, gazing balefully at each other across mangled machinery and serenaded by his horn, which had jammed.

We all got out rather slowly, but despite the mess in front the coachwork was still sound and no glass was broken—thank you, Mr. Triplex—except the driving mirror. Betty had banged it with her head. We had minor bruises and cuts, but fortunately nothing serious. Michael's first reaction was to grab one of the many strawberries scattered all over the road, which had been shot out of the other car.

Then the fun began. First on the scene was a Citroën hire car, returning to a garage. The driver was a most capable Frenchman who helped us to separate ourselves and get the Chevrolet out of the middle of the road. While we were doing this another large car appeared quickly round the same bend, braked at the same spot and skidded into the hedge in front of us.

No one took much notice of him. We'd got our own party on and, after all, he hadn't been invited to join, so we left him to it as there was no apparent damage to his car. Then a Morris with G.B. plates and a kindly crew



(IF YOU MUST) WHEN ABROAD

stopped, and Betty said she was never so glad to hear English spoken. They offered her comfort in the shape of tea, and as she and Michael seemed all right I went back to Bulle in another Citroën which offered help, to fix up with the police and the garage.

This second Citroën had a French owner on his holidays, accompanied by a very lovely lady. We stopped at the first Hôtel de Ville we saw and presented ourselves to a large gendarme. Although the crash was off his beat, he took down all particulars and promised to do the necessary telephoning. Then he took me aside and asked if my French friend was involved in the accident. I confirmed that he was not, so with cheerful handshakes all round he was allowed to depart. As he drove off the gendarme dug me in the ribs with his elbow, pointed to the lovely blonde, and chuckled, "I'd like to have an accident with her." Privately, I agreed, but—not a word to Betty about this (thank you again, Mr. Triplex).

This particular Hôtel de Ville most conveniently incorporated a café, where my gendarme friend pushed a couple of stiff prune juices into me and insisted on getting someone to bathe my knee while we waited for the breakdown van.

Robert, the hire car driver, turned up first with the Citroën, so we went back to the accident. The family seemed to be all right, and the local gendarme, ever larger, was in charge, surrounded by quite a crowd. By now the strawberries had been pretty thoroughly trampled and must have been a horrifying sight to passers-by seeing the crumpled cars. Although I had missed some of the party, I soon gathered that the other driver had either admitted being to blame or that the weight of evidence was conclusively in my favour, for all seemed to be going well.

"Non Comprong—Anglais!"

To my mind there are two ways of dealing with such a situation. If one's French is not too good, I think it is best to remain aloof—distant but friendly. An occasional coarse expletive is permissible, to hint at the fires behind that icy exterior, but nothing more. The rest will soon find someone who can explain the situation in English.

On the other hand, if one's French works reasonably, it is much more fun to join in. Nobody listens to you, but they are quite obviously delighted to have you there. I did so and then came my interrogation by the genial gendarme. Passports, carnet, international licence, insurance and other papers were produced, all in order, and particulars were noted on a long accident report form.

The proceedings were interrupted several times by passing locals, all of whom the gendarme seemed to know and who came across to shake him by the hand, and by cars and coaches with British, French, Swiss, Danish, Swedish and Dutch plates stopping to offer assistance. Only two cars with G.B. plates passed without stopping, the occupants obviously considering that the whole business of

OVERSEAS ENCOUNTER

continued

having an accident in foreign parts was rank bad form, and, anyway, they hadn't been introduced.

After quite a long time we neared the end of the form without incident, until there remained only three questions.

"What was your father's Christian name, M'sieur?" "James," I replied. "And your mother's?" "Mary." "And, now, M'sieur, what was the before-marriage name of your mother?"

The sheer unexpectedness and apparent irrelevance of this question left me dumb for a moment. Then I remembered, and told him. It didn't register. I spelled it, B-E-D-F-O-R-D. A delighted smile appeared. "Bedford, the same as the truck," he chortled. The audience was equally pleased. This marvellous Englishman, whose mother's name before marriage was the same as the truck, was obviously without blame.

No Gnashing

From then on I could do no wrong. The contrite gentleman who had biffed us said, "It is so difficult to understand the English. Your car is accidented, your journey is terminated, yet you smile and do not rage." I asked him what else there was to do in the circumstances, but he couldn't say. Eventually we went back in the Citroen to Bulle, leaving the car to be towed in, and installed ourselves at the excellent Hôtel des Alpes, where M. Gaillard, the cheerful *patron*, restored our faith with good wine, good food and comfortable rooms clean as a whistle.

Next day was fine, so I went to find the M.G. at the Garage Moderne; Betty set out to look for a cup of tea, and Michael found himself a girl friend in the *patron*'s young daughter, and also some new engines at the railway station opposite.

No doubt about it, the car was gravely accidented. The problem of spares came up, but when I said that I knew Heinz Keller, the M.G. distributor in Zurich, and a well-known trials driver, the effect in the garage was electrifying—something like walking into a small garage in England and saying that one was a personal friend of Henry Ford.

We telephoned Zurich and I told Mr. Keller what had happened, and then my garage and his spares department

got together. With an English parts list we sorted out the spares in both French and German to make sure.

Next morning, Thursday, a very helpful insurance inspector from the other owner's side came along, and really went to town on the broken bits. Anything damaged he condemned with the enthusiasm of a R.E.M.E. officer who thinks Ordnance have plenty of spares, and, among other parts, we eventually ordered a new chassis, left-hand front suspension, steering mechanism, a radiator and shell, a wing, a wheel and so on. These were sent by express, a few parts were flown out from England by Nuffield Exports, and the organization and co-operation everywhere were so wonderful that it all left me a little breathless.

Escape to Nice

By the Saturday we had had enough of Bulle, which is a nice little town with very nice people—but little with which to entertain the visiting foreigner. We hired a baby Renault for a week and set out for Nice and sunshine, but before departing I asked the garage when the M.G. would be ready, as I had to leave Switzerland the following week-end to get back to Dunkirk.

They said it would be ready on the following Saturday. I must have looked a bit doubtful, for they quickly added, "Of course it will be ready. We have promised."

Our trip with the Renault was grand but uneventful, and inspired a high regard for this sturdy little car. When we got back to the Hôtel des Alpes in Bulle on the following Saturday evening, one of the garage executives was there to meet us. He wanted to know if we'd had a good time and good weather, and how the Renault was. I interrupted to know how the M.G. was. "It is ready, of course. We promised."

And so it was. The painting had been finished that afternoon, and matched perfectly. The car looked like new, and much cleaner than a fortnight earlier. Everything worked as before, apart from some stiffness in the new steering, and we were lost in admiration at the workmanship and speed of the Swiss mechanics. After all the kindness we had received we thought very highly of Bulle and its inhabitants, but we were quite relieved to get the car back into France next day in one piece.

The moral of this story, therefore, is that if you must have an accident abroad, have it in Switzerland, where the garages are so good and the insurance companies so helpful. Above all, don't forget your mother's before-marriage name, even if you cannot be the son of a truck.

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