

# THE CLASSIC 'Y'

TENTH ANNIVERSARY YEAR

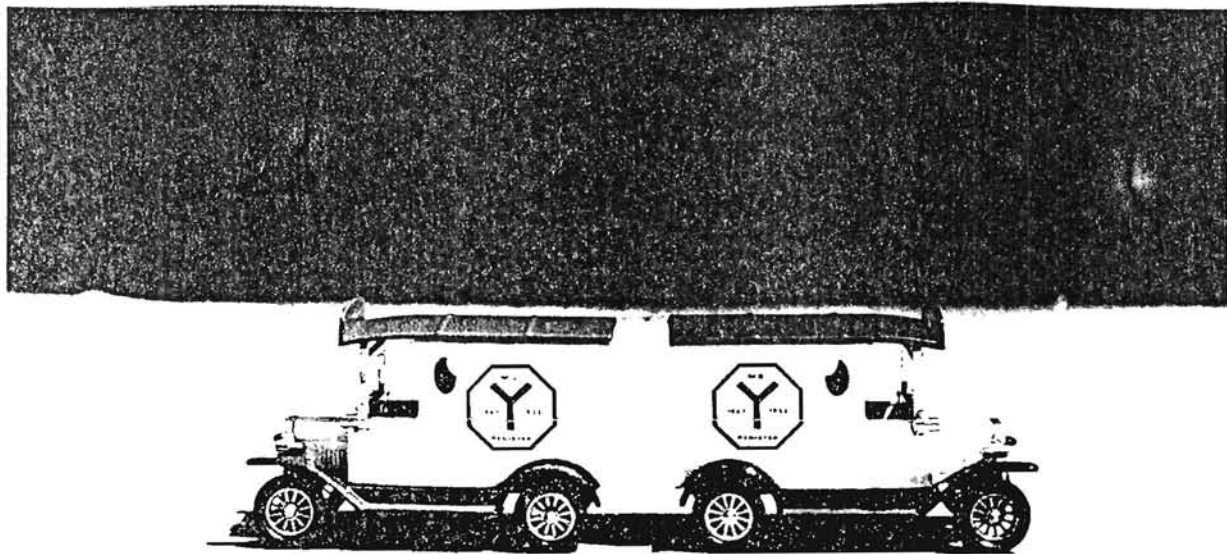
1978 - 1988



The Newsletter of the M.G. 'Y' Type Register.

Volume 11. No. 88.

August 1988.



These are the 'Tenth Anniversary' Limited Edition model vans which have been available to members since last Christmas at £4.50 (incl. U.K. postage). There are now only a few of these left so please order yours soon to avoid disappointment!

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## Register Number 708

Chassis Number Y4807  
Engine Number SC/14541  
Licence Plate CWG371  
Body Number n/k  
Sub-Type YA  
Year of Manuf' 50  
Owner's Name Tidy C  
Owner Number 917  
Car Location Sussex ENG  
Exterior Colour Green  
Interior Colour N

## Register Number 971

Chassis Number Y6554  
Engine Number n/k  
Licence Plate FRV272  
Body Number 5226/5169  
Sub-Type YA  
Year of Manuf' 51  
Owner's Name Fuller KA  
Owner Number 909  
Car Location Hampshire ENG  
Exterior Colour t/t Brown?  
Interior Colour N

## CARS FOR SALE:

981. "1951 'Y' Type saloon. For restoration. Already in state of partial strip down. Unable to complete due to job. Original documents. Reg. UMG397. £600 ono. Tel: [REDACTED] (Devon)."
834. "M.G. YA rolling chassis, good condition £85. Tel: [REDACTED] (Wilts)."
808. "1½ Litre 'Y' Saloon. 1947. Stored ten years. Two previous owners. Easy restoration. Runs well. Bargain £1,950. Tel: [REDACTED] or [REDACTED]."
720. "YB. Black. All painted. New tyres, new chrome. Restored engine. Needs fitting up. £1,550. Tel: [REDACTED] (Sussex)."
769. "M.G. YA, 1951. M.O.T. Feb '89. A good example, however allowing room for further improvement. Offers around £2,150. Tel: Huddersfield [REDACTED]."

## PARTS FOR SALE:

"YA bonnet £5; Front wings £25; YA & YB rear axle £60; New 'Y' wiring loom £20; Tel: [REDACTED] (Wilts)."

"M.G. YA/B radiator plus rad shell and grille slats v.g.c. £85 ovno. Tel: [REDACTED] (Lancs)."

"Jackall pump £18; reservoir £18; jacks £5; windscreen £5; petrol tank £15; horns £8; wiper motor and rack £25; workshop manual £8. Tel: [REDACTED] (Wilts)."

"YA radiator shell and radiator, windscreen and frame, plus oddments. XPJM engine block, cylinder head with valves, con-rods and pistons. Tel: [REDACTED]."

## CARS WANTED

"M.G. series YA/YB in good condition with current M.O.T. Tel: [REDACTED] or write with details to: T. Spence, [REDACTED] Aberdeen [REDACTED]."

## PARTS WANTED

Jackall System parts. Contact: Mr. Mitchel Britt, [REDACTED], North Carolina, [REDACTED], U.S.A.

'YA' hubcaps (plain); battery box lid; 'YA' wheel nuts; Jackall operating handle; FT57 fog lamp. Contact: Dr. J. Hodson [REDACTED], Bedfordshire, [REDACTED].

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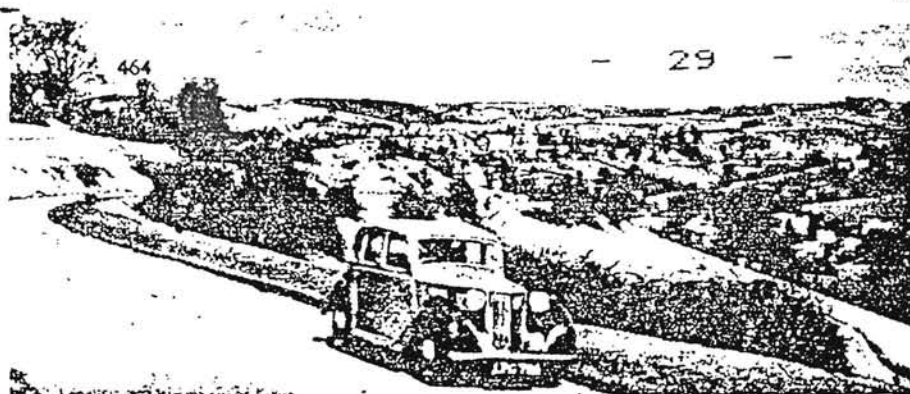
Pages 29 & 30 feature another of our 'Autocar' touring articles by Michael Brown (reproduced by permission of 'Autocar'). David Mullen, who found this article, contacted the present Rector at Woodchester (Rev. J. Cull) and learned that, sadly, the mosaic is still not on permanent display to the public despite there having been negotiations with the Department of the Environment. The 'pavement' was last uncovered in 1973. The Rev. Woolcott, who features in the story, was Rector at Woodchester between 1941 and 1956 and passed away a couple of years ago.

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**LATE NEWS! :** Long-time supporter of the Register, David Mullen, has volunteered to act as a spares co-ordinator specialising in reasonably priced second-hand spares. If any members of the Register have any spares to sell, they should send a list, together with the (reasonable) prices they require to David at: [REDACTED] Liverpool [REDACTED]. Likewise, if any member requires particular spares, he can he should, from now on, write to David and *not* to the magazine editor/registrar. If a reply is expected, a stamped self-addressed envelope should be enclosed.

## FORTHCOMING EVENTS

27/8 & 28/8	M.G.O.C. Ayrshire Regional Event	Montgreenan, Ayrshire.
29/8	19th Merton Concours	Morden Park, Morden, Surrey.
27, 28, 29/8	M.G.O.C. Stoneleigh Event	NAC Showground, Stoneleigh, Nr. Coventry.
29/8	Town & Country Motoring Festival	NAC Showground, Stoneleigh, Nr. Coventry.
3/9 & 4/9	Scottish National Classic & Vintage Car Show	Edinburgh.
4/9	M.G.O.C. North Staffs & East Cheshire Event	Gawsworth Hall, Nr. Macclesfield, Cheshire.
4/9	Rufforth Park Autojumble	Rufforth Park, Wetherby Road, Rufforth, York.
10/9 & 11/9	Autojumble & Automart	National Motor Museum, Beaulieu, Hants.
17/9 & 18/9	South West Motor Show	The Royal Bath & West Showground, Shepton Mallet, Somerset.
1/10 & 2/10	Malvern Motoring Event	Malvern, Worcestershire.
2/10	Grand London Autojumble	Kempton Park.
9/10	The Brooklands Tea Party	Brooklands, Weybridge, Surrey.
9/10	Rufforth Park Autojumble	Rufforth Park, Wetherby Road, Rufforth, York.
9 & 10/10	National Automobile Restoration Show	Royal Showground, Stoneleigh, Nr. Coventry.
4, 5, 6/11	Classic Car Show	Hotel Metropole, Brighton.
27/11	Rufforth Park Autojumble	Rufforth Park, Wetherby Road, Rufforth, York.
8/1/89	Rufforth Park Autojumble	Rufforth Park, Wetherby Road, Rufforth, York.
19/2	Rufforth Park Autojumble	Rufforth Park, Wetherby Road, Rufforth, York.
2/4	Rufforth Park Autojumble	Rufforth Park, Wetherby Road, Rufforth, York.



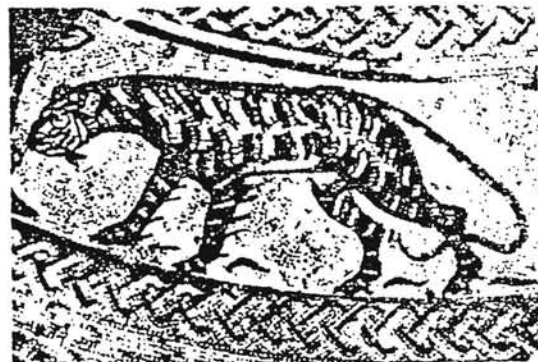
Outskirts of Stroud from the road up to Minchinhampton Common.

THE AUTOCAR,

## A BURIED TREASURE

by Michael Brown

THE WOODCHESTER PAVEMENT IS TO BE DISPLAYED FOR THE FESTIVAL



**S**TROUD, a busy Gloucestershire industrial town, disguises its industry by straggling pleasantly over the western face of the Cotswolds; from Minchinhampton Common—a summit of short turf and whatever wind is blowing, and magnificently spacious—it presents a study in human activity. If you stand up there looking north towards Gloucester, Woodchester lies below on your left hand.

We dropped out of the wind's buffetings by descending one of the steep lanes to A46; turned left through Nailsworth and left again towards Tetbury, in order to sample the surroundings, and reversed our tracks high above the lake at Balls Green.

It is splendid country, hilly and wooded. The cottages are grey, and if they lack the yellowing of the stone elsewhere in the Cotswolds they are still a mightily refreshing change from home counties red brick (which is none the less likeable). Before we reached Stroud we diverted to the left for Woodchester, along a narrow lane in which the 1½-litre M.G. fits to a nicety (overall width 4ft 11in—bless you, Abingdon). The problem of parking outside the Rectory called for some judgment, and your correspondent—to borrow that felicitous expression from Printing House Square—faced the dilemma of the Rectory door, for a card pinned thereto read "Back shortly—Rector." Was the Rector out, or had he returned and forgotten to take the card down?

### Things Long Ago

My guess proved correct, and the Reverend H. D. Woolcott took me into a sunny south room, where, inside five minutes, we were back across the centuries. But wait; come with us another couple of hundred yards down the road from the Rectory, into the old churchyard.

It is a sad little square of rough and yellow turf. Ancient tombstones throw sharp shadows when the sun beatifies the soil; two Scots pines and some columnar yews are there to grieve with the winds of winter. Fragments of the old church remain, one a Norman arch of perfection in a semi-circle, the other graced with a reddish brick amongst the stone that immediately strikes the eye as outlandish. So it should; it is 1,800 years old and is the key to the rough

square shape that is imprinted on the turf of the churchyard. Two feet under that turf lies what has been described by antiquarians as probably the finest Roman tessellated pavement in the world.

One is conscious of shame that such a treasure should lie buried, and the fact that it is being opened up for Festival year—the first time since 1935—adds to the feeling. As I studied the beautiful engravings in the volume by the original excavator, Samuel Lysons (1796), I thought of the South Bank Festival site with its Skylon and coloured balls, and they seemed suddenly tawdry by comparison with the Roman half-inch *tesserae* buried below the Gloucestershire soil. It is disgraceful that such a work should not be permanently displayed. Money flows like water on foolhardy projects these days. How much would it cost to reconstruct the covered hall of the Woodchester villa, of which the pavement was the floor, and to maintain it for permanent exhibition? Is not this something for the Office of Works, or the National Trust?

The great square of nearly fifty feet has not survived undamaged. Whereas the poor were content to lie shallowly, the rich in past centuries insisted that their family corpses should rest more deeply, and there are holes where the gravediggers plunged through the pagan beauty. Yet a wealth of detail remains, as the photographs show. The border is a wide labyrinth, fret-edged with a key pattern and plaited braidwork (I quote A. A. Laporte Payne, M.A.), within which are twenty-four compartments about the centre space. The central square, except for the spandrels at the corners, is occupied by a series of concentric circles, forming the principal design. The outer circle is of Vitruvian scroll, proceeding from a mask of Pan. The middle circle contains various beasts (originally twelve), of which the lion, tigress, stag, leopard, bear, gryphon, horse, boar and lioness have been identified. The elephant has been destroyed. Birds and a fox are depicted in the inner zone—peacock, dove, duck, hen and cock pheasant. The cock pheasant is shown scratching his head, and the porch of the Rectory is floored by a facsimile of this section. And very beautiful it is, too.

The central design was an octagonal compartment, the south side of which was open to admit the central figure,

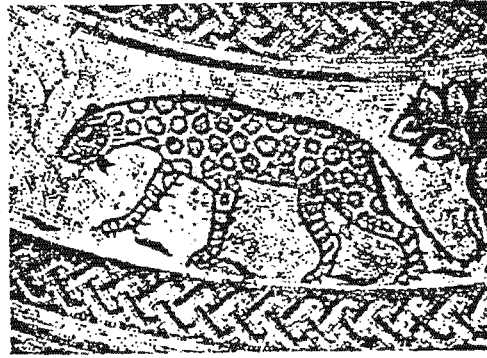
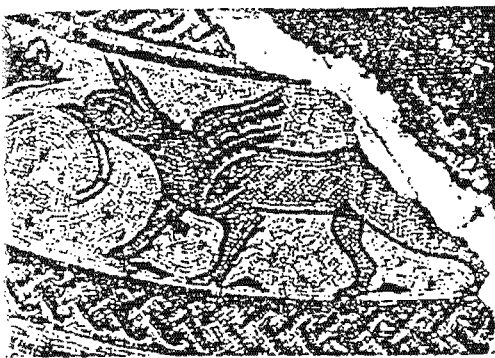
Orpheus, playing the lyre. The legend came originally from Greece, and was much favoured by artists for mosaics, especially in Britain, perhaps, says Laporte Payne, because the design introduced strange beasts and a form of nature worship.

What are the constructional details of this work, no doubt done by British slaves, in those far days, for the British citizens of Rome who were almost undoubtedly the owners of the villa? There were a million and a half *tesserae*, about half an inch square, of local stone and fine brick laid in a rough state and then highly polished. The cubes were set in hard cement laid upon a coarser *nucleus* eight inches thick. Underneath is a substratum of gravel, three feet in depth, upon a foot of rubble. Several flues, large enough for a man to crawl through, crossed under the pavement and communicated with box tiles placed in the walls.

There are other, coarser, mosaics remaining of the villa,



Pavement detail. Note the loving cup (left), reclining figure, Vitruvian scroll and the feet of the gryphon.



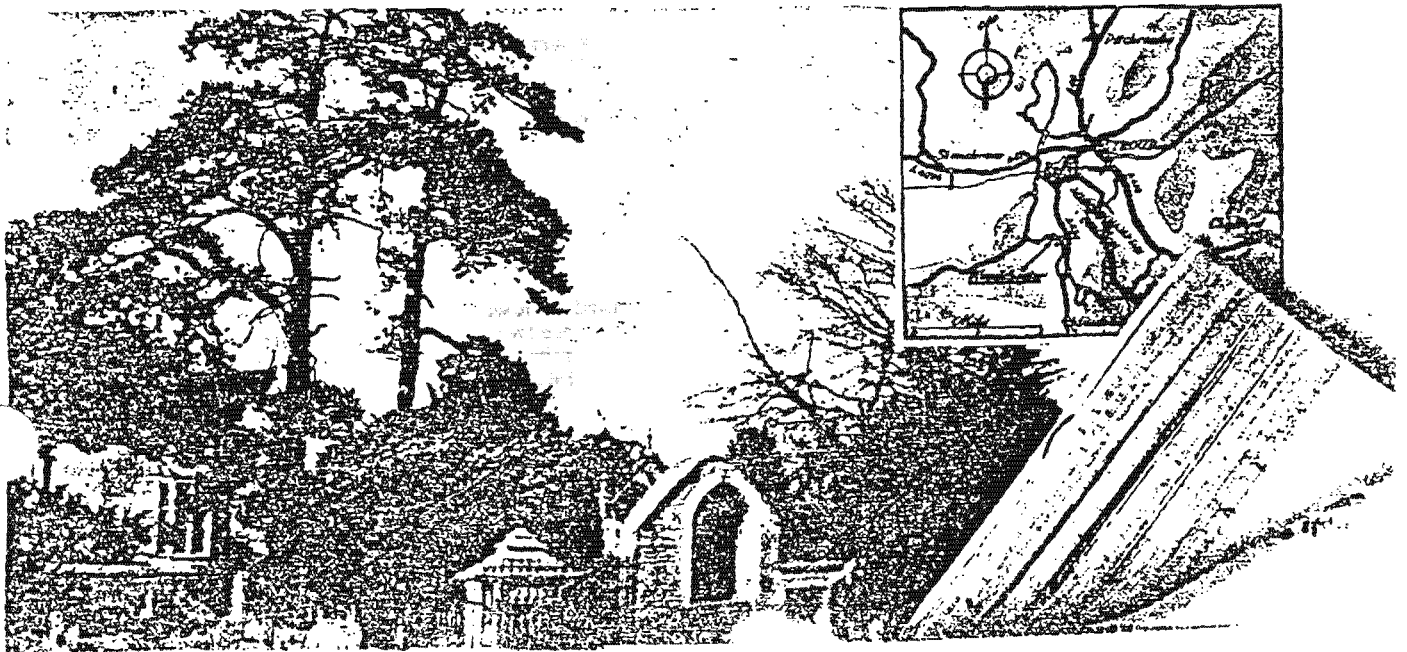
Animals in mosaic: Stag, tigress, gryphon, leopard; also the cock pheasant, scratching its head.

which was enormous, much greater than that at Chedworth, and, of course, much of interest has been found at various times. A particularly beautiful statue of the goddess Luna, with a sacrificial bull at her feet, is in the British Museum, as is a part of a group of Cupid and Psyche. But the pavement itself is the attraction this Festival year, and as a result of the keenness and enthusiasm of Mr. Woolcott—a young ex-R.A.F. chaplain—there is no doubt that visitors to Woodchester are going to find that the most has been made of the display. As a measure of British culture, not yet submerged in the tangential splashing of the Later Distortionists and Cacophonists, it may be recorded that, in 1935, 30,000 visitors came in five weeks.

The opening ceremony will be performed by the Duke of Beaufort and the Lord Bishop of Gloucester at 3 p.m. on July 10. The pavement will be on view until August 18,

daily from 10 a.m. until 8 p.m., and on Sundays 2 p.m. until six. Opening day will cost 2s 6d, other days 1s (school-children 6d); there will be refreshments. All proceeds will go to the church funds.

Why, asks the puzzled observer, not leave the pavement exposed after August 18? The answer is a simple one. Unless properly protected, the frost would speedily disintegrate it. So as the Festival visitors depart the kindly soil of England must go back over this treasure of Rome until a new generation returns to the ancestral respect of earlier centuries and evaluates it properly. Decline and fall? There is a lesson to be learned for modern civilizations in the history of Rome. It is a pity that the pavement cannot serve as a permanent reminder to statesmen to turn up Gibbon's work. It might be more instructive than *The Age of Elegance*.



The Regency Run, now in its fifth year, is organised by two dedicated enthusiasts, David Diplock and Geoffrey Radford, and attracts nearly three hundred assorted M.G.s which assemble in Battersea Park, London and wend their way to Brighton on the south coast where they are displayed on the promenade.

It isn't a race or a rally and there are no concours awards or driving tests, yet the Run probably brings more M.G.s together than any other event and allows them to run on public roads. One of the issues which will have to be addressed next year is the extremely heavy modern traffic at the southern end of the route which is entirely on main roads.

This may not bother the later models, but earlier M.G.s tend to get very hot under the collar when stuck in traffic jams on a hot day as it was this year. The smell of hot oil may bring forth 'Bisto Kids' sniffs but it can also be a worry, especially if frying clutch linings are also in the air.

There is usually a good display of 'Y' Types and this year I spotted twelve. The four 'YA's were: John Lunn's black/green 'LLN993' from Dartford, which is a nicely presented car; Mr. Appleford's maroon/beige 'LXC946' which has a very nicely restored interior thanks to Mrs. Appleford's skills; a newcomer was 'MGT129' which Mr. Pelham of East Grinstead has restored from a wreck and which is now pristine in deep maroon (he has a most interesting photographic record of his restoration and is about to start on the interior); and lastly my 'YA', 'UMG360', made up the quartet and had an unusual bit of trouble when I pulled the starter after a half-way halt and the bowden cable broke. Fortunately the 'Y' can be started on the solenoid.

Six YEs is a good turn-out. Chris Cridland's well known maroon/red model totally restored by him and his son, Colin, has original upholstery and now has a new number plate, 'YMG21'. They drove from Leicester starting at 5 a.m. and were going back the same day. 'FKM320' was entered by Martin Constant from Crayford and his enthusiastic son had produced an excellent shine on the dark green paintwork. Paul Davies has a black/green car, 'YMG184', in very nice order, which he drove from Pinner with one stop traced to a loose plug lead.

'UMG624' is a grey car with red upholstery which Mr. Morriss drove from Brentwood and another South London car was Mr. Birks' black/beige 'GFE299'. Mr. Hamilton of Waltham Abbey has an interesting two-tone brown/beige car, '1951MG', which makes one wonder why M.G.s were not a bit more adventurous with their factory options.

At the end of the line-up was one of the few 'YT' tourers in the United Kingdom, Ian Pattenden's immaculate black/green 'NLU41'. Finally, spotted among the cars in Marine Drive but not in the run was 'LBY840', a maroon/red YB.

A glorious day, lots of 'Y' friends, lunch on the beach and an amusing commentary through the loudspeaker. It would be nice if some more 'Y's could make the Run next year; no date yet, but probably around mid-May.

Checking the compression in each cylinder can give a good idea of what is going on inside an engine without dismantling. A compression test measures the capability of each piston to compress the fuel/air mixture to a specified pressure in its cylinder. Low compression or variation of pressure between the cylinders indicates internal trouble, such as worn or stuck piston rings or poor sealing between the valves and their seats.

To ensure proper compression pressure, each cylinder must be completely sealed off by the piston rings, valve face and seat, spark plug, and cylinder head gasket. If there is a leak at any one of these points there will be a loss of compression and the power output of the engine drops, resulting in poor acceleration and drivability.

Before a compression test is made, engine oil should be at the correct level, the battery must be fully charged to keep the engine turning over during the test, dirt and carbon should be cleaned away from around the spark plugs, and the engine should be at normal operating temperatures. The ignition should be disabled by *earthing* the King lead from the H.T. coil, and the throttle valve held fully open during the test. All spark plugs should be removed and pistons noted as a possible help in engine fault diagnosis.

The compression gauge should be tightly connected to the spark plug hole of number one cylinder. If the 'push-in' type of compression gauge is used it must be tightly and squarely held against the spark plug port. The engine should now be cranked over four or five compression strokes by the starter motor. On the first compression stroke the pressure reading should be about 75% of the total reading and should rise on each succeeding compression stroke. This same procedure is carried out on all cylinders, making a note of the maximum pressure on each cylinder.

Each manufacturer has its specification figure for a particular engine. These should be stated in two ways. First, there is a minimum compression figure and only a certain variation is allowed. For example, if the minimum compression is 125 p.s.i. and the variation limit is 30 p.s.i., the acceptable compression range in each cylinder is 125 to 155 p.s.i.

A second method of interpreting compression results used by manufacturers is to compare the cylinder with the lowest reading to the one with the highest reading. The cylinder with the lowest reading must be within 75% of the reading from the cylinder with the highest indication. For example: high reading is 140 p.s.i. and the lowest reading 105 p.s.i. = 75%.

A low gauge reading on the first compression stroke and a gradual building up of pressure with each following stroke (but not up to specification) indicates worn, stuck, or scored piston rings. If the first reading is low and each following stroke has little build-up, the valves can be burned or sticking. If one or more cylinders are low in comparison to others, insert a few drops of motor engine oil in the spark plug hole, wait a minute, and test again. If the pressure improves after adding the oil there might be worn pistons, worn rings or worn cylinders. If the compression does not improve, there may be sticking of burned valves or a 'blown' cylinder head gasket. The presence of water in the crankcase oil is also an indication of

a blown cylinder head gasket. Higher than normal readings usually indicate a carbon build-up in the combustion chamber and on the piston crown necessitating a decoke. From my personal experience I have found that following formula gives a compression figure which, when read on all cylinders, indicates that a top-overhaul is due:

$$(\text{Compression Ratio} + 1) \times 15$$