

THE CLASSIC 'Y'



TENTH ANNIVERSARY YEAR

1978 - 1988



The Newsletter of the M.G. 'Y' Type Register.
Volume 11. No.90. December 1988.

EDITORIAL

This December newsletter is coming to you a couple of weeks earlier than usual because I can now reveal that my book on the 'Y' Type entitled, "M.G. 'Y' Type Saloons & Tourers" is due to be published by Motor Racing Publications Ltd in time for Christmas! The publishers have come up with an offer whereby readers of the newsletter can purchase copies of the book at a discount on cover price if their orders are received by MRP before Christmas. Here's what the publishers say:

"I can now confirm that the book will be priced at £14.95, will be casebound, and have over 120 pages and approximately 100 pictures. In addition to your text and comprehensive Appendix data it will include considerable magazine reprint material and the lubrication charts, making it, in other words, by far the most comprehensive book ever to be published on an M.G. saloon or tourer, and of course the only one on the 'Y' Type.

Publication is scheduled for mid-December, and normally we have to charge £2.00 for postage and packing on top of the book price. However, any member of The M.G. 'Y' Type Register ordering a copy of the book before Christmas need only pay £14.00 inclusive of P&P (in other words, a saving of almost £3.00).

Cheques or Postal Orders should be made out to: MRP Performance Bookshop and addressed to: Unit 6, The Pilton Estate, 46 Pitlake, Croydon, CR0.3RY. Alternatively, any member able to quote a current Access or Visa Card number may order by telephone on 01-681-2255 between 9.00am and 5.30pm Mondays to Fridays."

Now I don't know exactly where that leaves overseas members and readers of this newsletter as obviously you will not receive this newsletter and be able to respond to the above offer before Christmas. Furthermore, I don't know what arrangements the publishers have for taking into account in their offer the cost of overseas postage. They do, however, have sole distributors for the U.S.A. at: Motorbooks International, Osceola, Wisconsin, 54020, U.S.A. I would suggest, therefore, that if our overseas members want any more information they contact the publishers at either of the above addresses.

It was the intention to make this offer in the October newsletter but problems with the typesetters amongst other things caused some delay.

This month we welcome Jerry Keller who is to take over the organisation of the Eastern United States Chapter with effect from 1st January 1989. Jerry has some interesting ideas which I hope will breath new life into the Register's branch in the U.S.A.

I recently heard from a Mr. M.A. Rodriguez in Toronto, Canada who apparently owns a YB located in Colombia, South America! How it got out there I do not know; hopefully I'll find out more eventually. And member Habibur Rahman from Bangladesh was recently in Bangkok, Thailand where he saw two 'YA's which are owned by a lady! These cars are the first we've found in Colombia or Thailand although some members will know that Sidney J. Perelman who drove his YT from Paris to Peking in 1978 originally acquired the car in Bangkok in 1949 (it's all in *THE BOOK!*).

This is the last newsletter of this, our tenth anniversary year. Looking back it's been quite a significant year what with the establishment of an 'Australian Chapter', the emergence of new hope for the Eastern United States Chapter, the appointment of David Mullen to look after the second-hand spares scene and finally, with the publication of the first ever book solely devoted to the 'Y' Type M.G. In closing, then, as well as wishing all readers and their families an enjoyable Christmas and a Happy New Year, I'd also like to thank all our members, past and present, for their support and their loyalty throughout the last ten years.

19th November 1988.

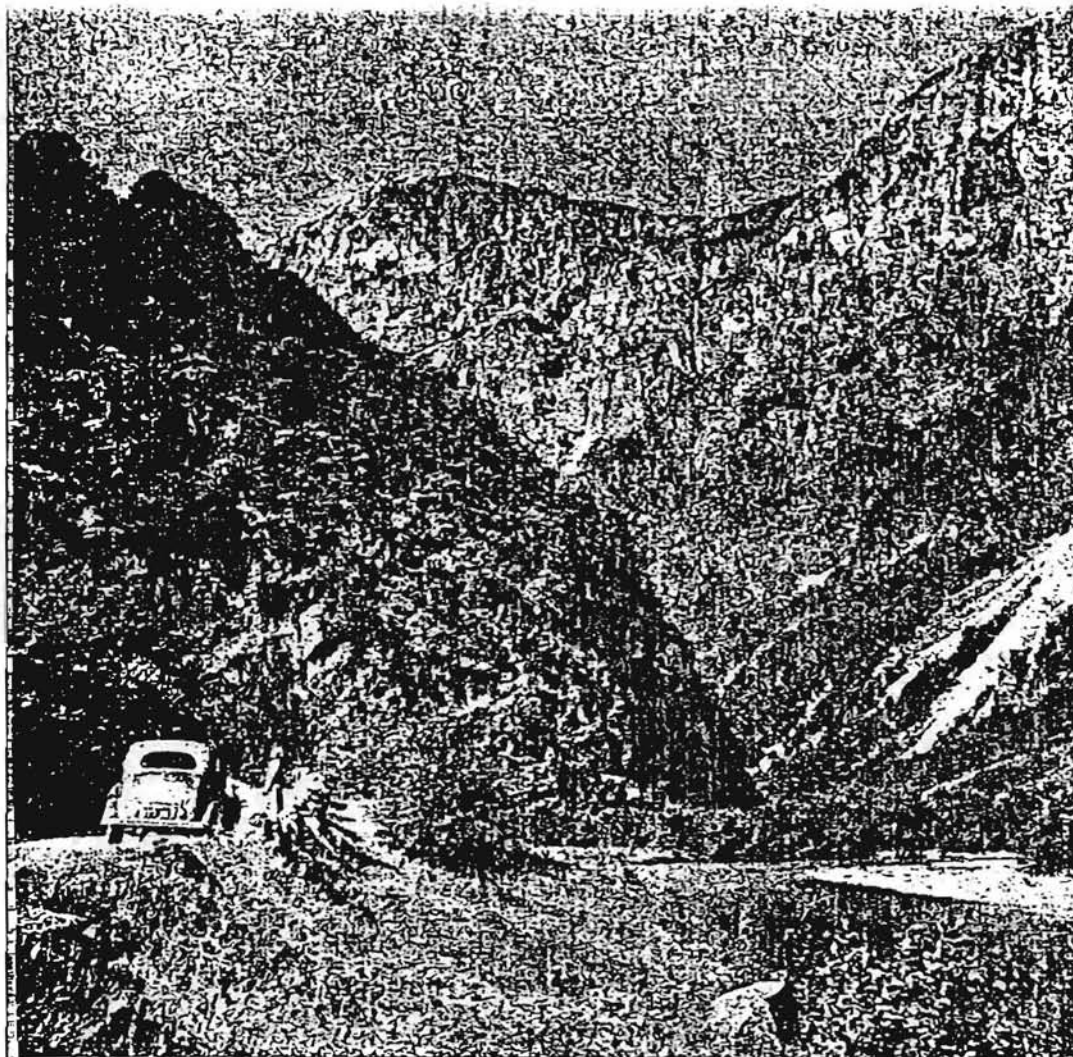
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On the way through the Stalheim gorge, the road running alongside the river. The climb up the cliff side comes later!

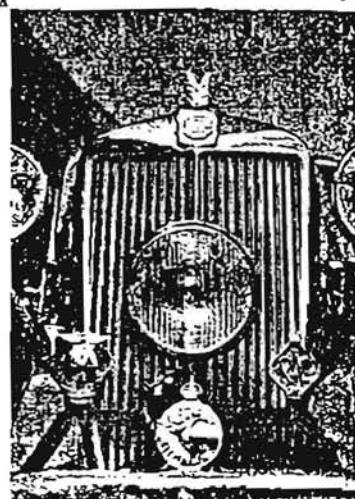


The 1½-litre M.G. now carries a Norwegian reindeer badge in the place of honour between the A.A. and R.A.C. emblems. The butterfly on the radiator cap is a Lalique glass mascot.

NORWEGIAN VENTURE

A 1½-LITRE M.G. IN THE LAND OF THE CHRISTMAS TREE

by "Longships"



NORWAY is not for the speed enthusiast or those who enjoy covering long distances in the day—neither the roads nor the terrain permit such indulgences. But for an exhilarating holiday spent amidst the grandest scenery—from snow-clad mountains to peaceful land-locked fjords—Norway cannot be surpassed. That it is exhilarating is amply proved by the high-spirited hand-waves one receives from other cars, particularly those bearing a G.B. plate, and it was evident that if we found Norway an "adventure," so also did they.

Too few British cars are to be seen at present, but the number is increasing yearly. The visitor from these islands will find, moreover, that he is given an exceptionally friendly welcome, which in turn engenders a warm personal regard for one's Norwegian hosts, whose way of life is so akin to our own.

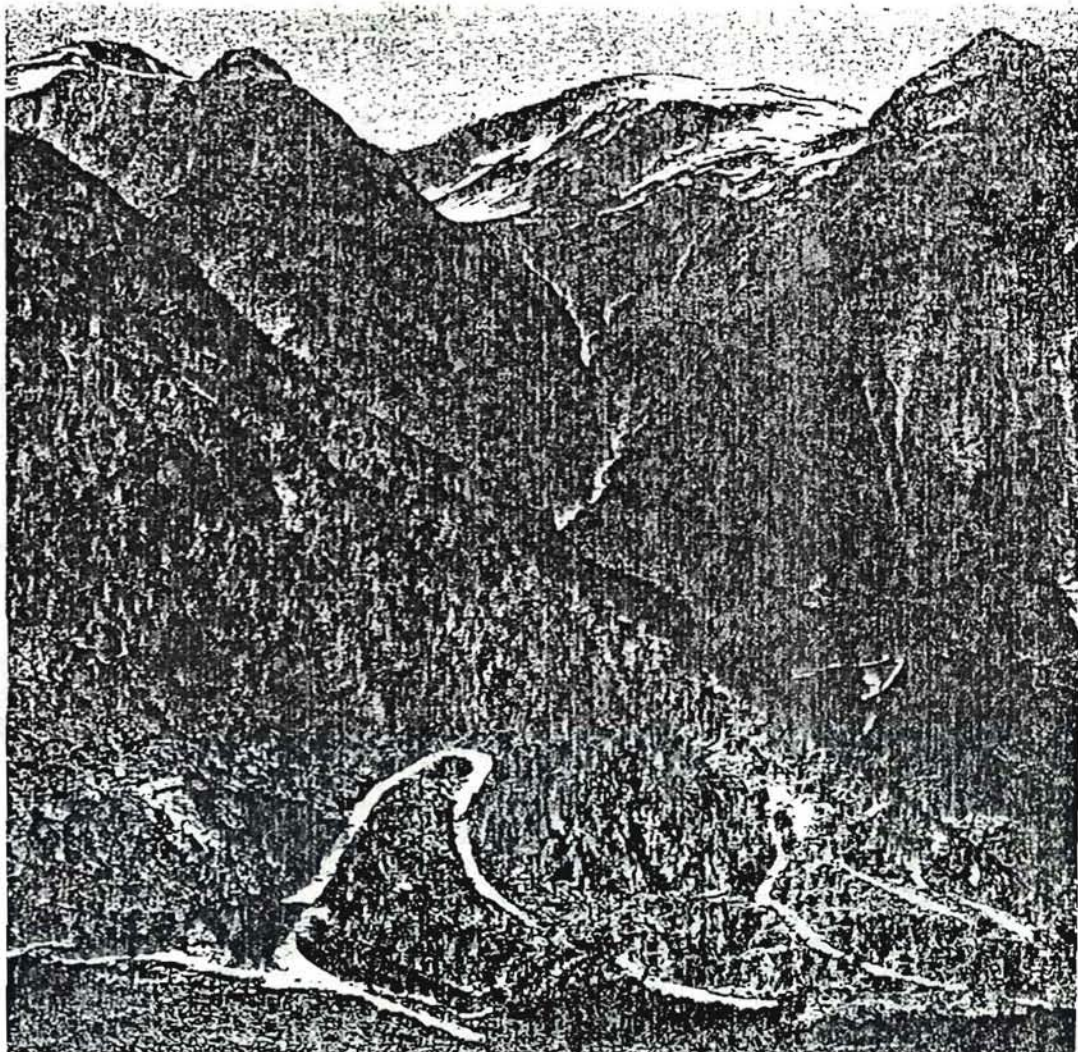
Norway is a mountainous country and care in driving,

therefore, is essential, particularly so in view of the narrowness of the roads combined with frequent bends and, in general, a poor surface. At the same time touring in Norway is perfectly safe, and well within the capabilities of even the smallest car.

Bergen is the usual port of entry from Britain; the North Sea crossing from Newcastle takes about 20 hours. The city, both the old and the new, we found fascinating, and although it is reputed to be always raining (the inhabitants, so it is said, are born with umbrellas!) such is not our impression of Bergen, for during our visit the sun shone with a warmth and brilliance equal to the Mediterranean—though far more bracing.

Clearing the Customs, our M.G. 1½-litre proceeded along the Tyskebryggen, or German Quay, past the picturesque timber-built houses which still remain from the days when the Hanseatic League reigned supreme in the city, and

From the plateau beyond
in towards Balestrand, with
Jostedal glacier visible across
the valley



Below: A view that is expressive of
all that the imagination pictures
concerning Norway. Sheer cliffs
rising from still fjords. This
tremendous bluff towers above the
Naerøysfjord

thence through modern Bergen into the open country
beyond.

Norheimsund, or Hardangerfjord, a run of about 60 miles,
was our first day's objective, and it proved a good introduc-
tion to Norwegian road conditions and scenery, including
as it did the noted Tokagjel gorge, where the narrow, wind-
ing road clings—somewhat precariously, we thought—to the
rocky face of the mountain. The most hazardous looking
sections, however, have now been superseded by three

lengthy tunnels, where surfacing of the roadway was still
in progress in the beams of lorries' head lights.

At Norheimsund we awoke to find the early sun glinting
on the calm waters of the fjord, the distant mountains softly
outlined through the summer haze—an idyllic scene. Later,
after an appetizing Norwegian breakfast, we continued along
the fjord and over the mountain beyond Granvin to reach
the homely little ferry at Ulvik, where one drives on, facing
outboard, and from the front seats of the car can enjoy in
complete comfort the hour's run down the fjord to Brimnes.

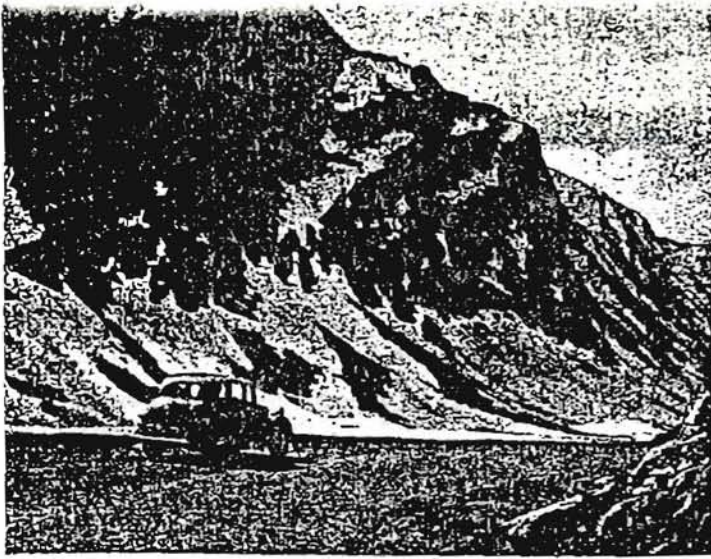
Here the mountains close in so much that we wondered
that there could be any outlet for a road. But there was,
and soon, skirting the lakeside by Eidfjord, we commenced
the long and steep climb upwards through the famous
Måbødalen, the road twisting and turning continuously for
some 11 miles, reaching a height of 3,700 feet. The 14-litre
took it comfortably, mostly in second gear, and it was
pleasing to find that the engine temperature did not rise
above 75 deg C, normal running being 68-70 degrees.

Unfortunately cloud and mist gave little opportunity for
observing the scenery towards the top, but one glimpse we
had, looking back down the gorge, gave a vivid impression
of the height we had reached. Later, during the descent
to Geilo, with the sun again shining, the road crossed a
wide mountain torrent, the roaring mass of rushing white
water, flecked with patches of pale glacier green, presenting
a spectacle to which only an artist could do justice; it was
typical of Norway's rivers.

From Geilo, in brilliant sunshine, so warm that we were
glad to open wide all the windows of the car, we continued
down Hallingdal to Gol, where a road branches off to Helmes-
dal, rising through pine woods to the plateau and keeping
always by the river—peaceful in places but often foaming
down between the mountain lakes. Everywhere Nature looked
her loveliest, but even better lay ahead, as the road descended
between precipitous mountains to meet the sea again at
Laerdal, on Sognefjord.



NORWEGIAN VENTURE . . .



Up amongst the snow as the road approaches Djupvasshytta the M.G. pauses beside a partly frozen lake

We halted to enjoy the scene, and left the M.G. temporarily unattended. But she had been observed by other, inquisitive eyes, and on our return there we spied a baby elk with its little nose almost touching the car, wondering, no doubt, what sort of strange creature it had met. A picture was attempted, but with a few graceful leaps the elk was off, up the mountainside—we were too late! At Børgund, farther down the valley, there is to be seen the 12th-century wooden stave church, beautifully designed and ornamented—one of the few Norwegian churches belonging to this period that still remain.

From Laerdal the car ferry took us to Kaupanger, on the north shore of the fjord, and it was here that we met the little English family who, from the registration number of their Austin A.90, came to be known to us as the "Emu's." Thereafter we frequently met, the Austin being easily recognizable by the reindeer horns decorating its bonnet. A happy *rencontre*, enabling us to exchange notes—and of a musical nature, too, when Godfrey, the youngest "Emu," became the proud possessor of a pair of cow bells. We should not repeat this, but sad to relate, the cow bells subsequently became confiscated!

At Sogndal, beyond Kaupanger, the M.G. headed inland towards the Jutenheimen or "Home of the Giants," the road rising steeply on to the plateau amidst the wildest scenery,

frozen, snow-covered lakes being passed on either side. It is, in fact, the highest through mountain road in Northern Europe, reaching 4,690 feet. By a more gradual descent we came to Elvsaeter, where we found an hotel of which the interior decoration and furnishings were carried out in traditional Norwegian style. The very charming female staff were, in addition, dressed in national costume of elaborate and colourful design; altogether a very happy choice of an hotel.

Then came, perhaps the most memorable day of our Norwegian venture. Our road at first followed the river to Lom, where it met the main road to Geiranger, through Grotli. It is a fast road for Norway, but with a loose, stony surface, of which we were made all the more aware when an overtaking car threw up a stone that left a permanent mark on the M.G.'s rear door and wing, the impact being both unexpected and alarming.

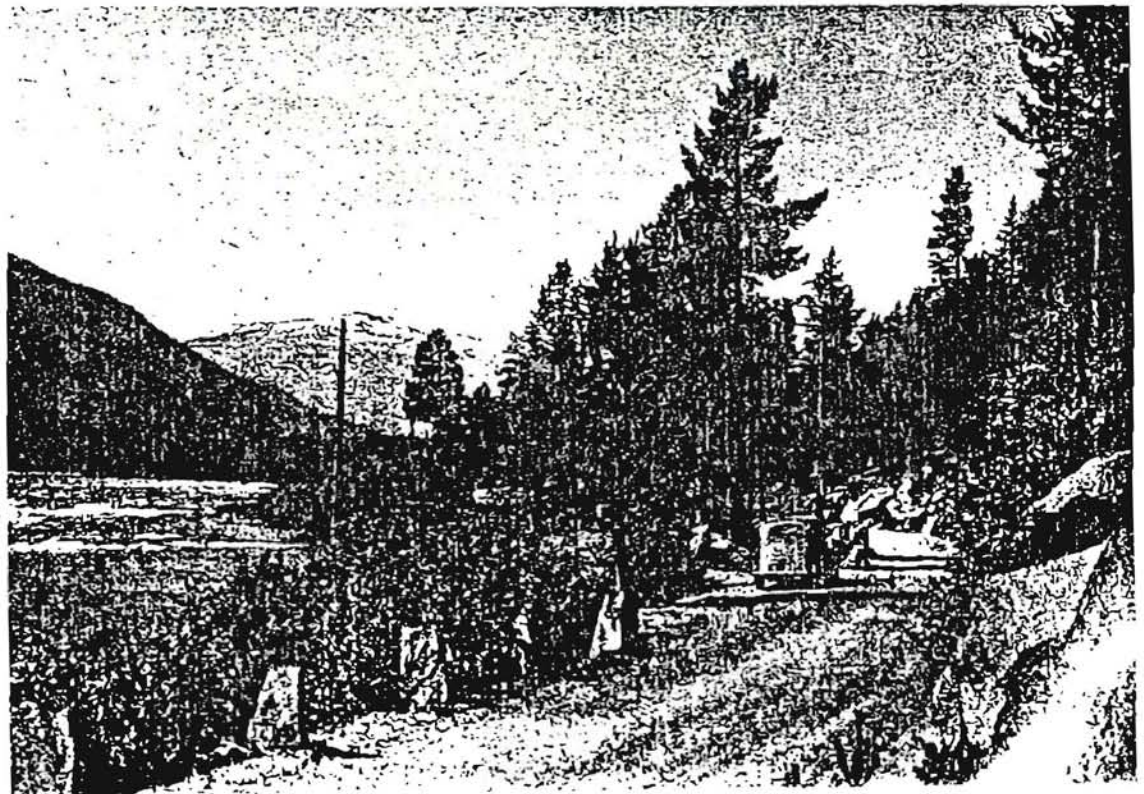
Beyond Grotli, past lakes still covered in ice-floes, we came to the remote hamlet of Djupvasshytta, whence a quite remarkable toll-road has been constructed to the very summit of Dalsnibba mountain, 5,400 feet. A charge of 5 kroner is made—it is worth it!

Going Up

There is nothing hazardous about the climb, but one does seem to be reaching heavenwards in remarkably quick time even though, for considerations of safety, in low gear. It would be a very *blasé* driver (or passenger) to whom the ascent failed to give a thrill. The view from the top, where there is ample room to turn (but no protective barrier!), is most impressive. All around are snow-clad peaks and ice-fields; some of these one actually looks down on, while far below a tiny white ribbon marks the road as it winds in almost incredible curves ultimately to reach sea level down at the fjord at Geiranger.

On very exceptional occasions the M.G. is allowed to fly her own particular little White Ensign, and Dalsnibba was, we felt, such an occasion, the Norwegian flag on its lofty staff, marking the summit, providing an appropriate background.

Returning to Grotli a rough and narrow road, with the snow piled high in places on either side, leads over the plateau to Videseter, where it descends steeply by many twists to the luxuriantly green valley at Hjelle, continuing

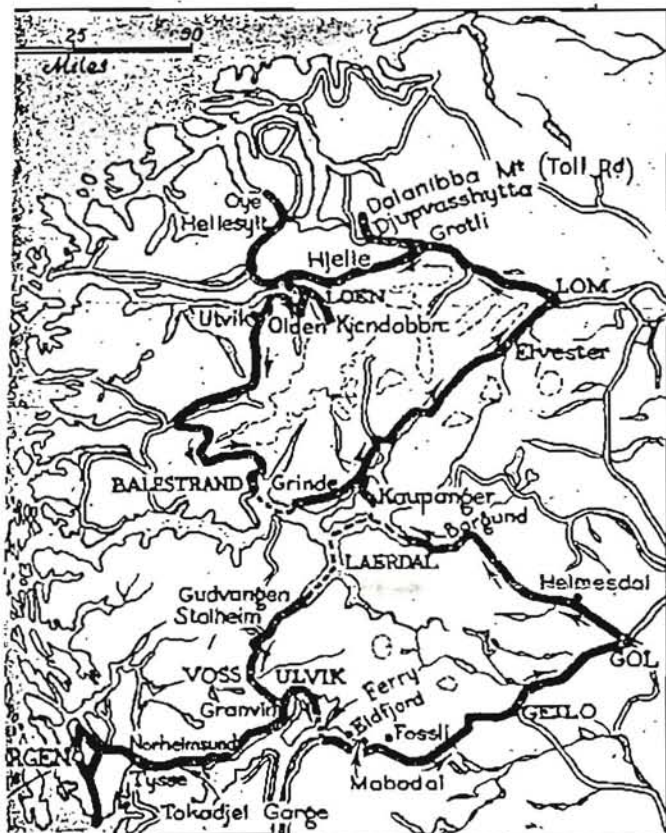


Down by the lakesides the scenery is friendly. This is the typical Norwegian road that runs through Helmesdal

thence by Stryn Lake to Loen, which is at the head of the Nordfjord.

At Loen we broke our journey for a few days, exploring Loen Lake and visiting the Kjenndalsbre, a spur of the great Jostedal icefield, the largest in Europe. The walk to the foot of the glacier, through a wild, boulder-strewn cleft in the mountains, with watercourses spanned only by a single insecure plank, repays one in full for the roughness of the going.

Another enjoyable day's run brought us to Hellesylt, on Geirangerfjord, past typical Norwegian turf-roofed farms where we watched the special breed of fjord ponies, fawn coloured with close-cropped manes, bringing in the harvest. There was, too, the remote but fascinating by-road through Norangsdalen to Oye, where sheer precipices of rock



dwarfed the car and Slogden mountain reared its pinnacled tip nearly 5,000 feet into the sky.

Leaving the Nordfjord behind, the M.G. made a fast climb up the many zig-zags over Utvikjelle, the surface being good and the road itself of unusual width. Thence we came to Jølstervaten and the picturesque village of Skei, its tall, spired church reflected in the quiet waters of the lake. Subsequently, as the miles went by, an increasing hunger marred our appreciation of the scenery until, reaching the summit of the pass over Rørvik mountain, we happily came upon a wayside café where our needs were most satisfyingly met.

There followed a long gradual climb to the shores of Lake Holm, remote but beautiful in its mountain setting. Then, with dramatic suddenness, a bend in the road brought into view a vista of majestic mountains, directly ahead, of such grandeur that we literally gasped at the surprise of it. Below us our road twisted and turned in tortuous curves 2,000 feet down into the valley, and so, almost breathless, we came to Balestrand, on the Sognefjord. There for the whole of one day we lazed in the sun by the fjord, our feet dangling in the warm, limpid blue water, the pine trees giving us shade. As the poet Omar might have said, it were heaven enough!

On the next stage of our journey the M.G. forsook dry land almost entirely, leaving Balestrand for an hour's run up the fjord to Grinde, after which a few miles of road

brought us again to Kaupanger, where we re-embarked for a further three hours' voyage to Gudvangen, at the head of Naerøysfjord. With precipitous mountains on either side and ever-changing views to be seen from the deck of the ferry, the passage up the narrow, winding fjord is one that leaves an indelible impression.

Gudvangen possesses a small but comfortable hotel, and from it, next morning, we set forth along by the river up the famous Stalheim gorge, wondering how the steep climb at the end, which makes the ascent of the Stalheim cliff, would suit the M.G.

It is steep, climbing in zig-zags to a height of 1,640 feet in exactly one mile, as recorded on the car's speedometer. The gradient is said to be 1 in 4, but on meeting the "Emu's" later on, at Voss, we were both agreed that it does not compare with Porlock, where the two acute bends really are steep. It would not be fair, or correct, to say that the M.G. laughed at Stalheim, but she was not in any way put out by it. The engine temperature rose to 84 deg C—a record! The view looking back down the gorge is world-famous, and certainly impressive. It came, we felt, as a fitting climax to our Norwegian holiday.

Two days later we were at sea on our way back to England, but firmly resolved that it should not be our last visit to a land where one sees Nature at first hand, and scenery such as we have not met with elsewhere in all our varied wanderings.

THE AUTOCAR, 8 MAY 1959

Reconditioned

Tribute to B.M.C. Distributor. Foot Mr. Preston (24 April). Last summer my six-year-old M.G. 1½-litre ran its bearings through lack of oil (loose sump nuts) whilst on holiday in Pembrokeshire. A telephone call to the Swansea distributors resulted in a reconditioned engine being delivered within four hours to Tenby, 60 miles away, and my car was on the road again the next day. This engine had the same fault as Mr. Preston's, and was immediately replaced free of all charge to myself by the distributors, C. K. Andrews, Ltd. This second replacement engine also gave the same trouble, and upon subsequent inspection by a works engineer, was removed, and yet another one fitted, again at no expense to myself. This third engine runs perfectly. There have been no arguments, and the work was carried out most expeditiously.

Mr. D'Aeth's experience (10 April) and my own seem to show that B.M.C. and its distributors, at least, have developed a lively sense of service to the customer. I should perhaps add that I did not purchase this or in fact any other car from these B.M.C. dealers, but, in view of the foregoing, will undoubtedly do so one day.

Swansea, Glamorgan.

T. W. STONE.

This is another annual event in the M.G. calendar and its location in Beaulieu should attract "Y" type owners in the south of England. Not only is the venue attractive with the adjacent museum and abbey on hand but the Club combines the concours with a light-hearted gymkhana which several "Y" types have entered in previous years and have won prizes.

This year, unfortunately, the "Y" type class was well down and consisted of just two cars, Mr. Brooks' familiar YMG 5 and Martin Constant's equally well-known PKM 320. Both cars are green with green interiors and the difference in shades illustrates the problems of matching the original shires green. John Lunn and I were asked to judge the "Y" type class and felt YMG 5 was the winner although PKM 320 has some good original features.

The car park had three "Y" types. UMG 879 is a maroon YB with good bodywork following a major repair to the rear end after an accident. The Salisbury based owner was cautiously contemplating the costs of restoring the beige interior. Like many "Y" types his car was prone to overheating but in this case it seems more than likely that part of the trouble was the angle of the radiator slats which, following a repair job, seemed to be at the wrong angle thus virtually blanking off the radiator core.

JBP 183 is the early YA seen at Brooklands this year and is a car that works hard for its living. The third "Y" was Ian Pattenden's beautiful and rare "YT" tourer in black with green interior which was much admired in the sunshine.

It is to be hoped that more "Y" types will feel encouraged to enter this event next year. Not only will they meet fellow enthusiasts but the larger the entry the larger the number of prizes - and cars do not necessarily have to be totally immaculate to do well. A word of warning is that driving to Beaulieu on an August Sunday can be tedious and it is wise to avoid the motorway and its jams. Lymington is another hold-up especially in the afternoon and my route goes through Winchester on the way south and Southampton on the way north. Both were pleasantly traffic free.

Trevor Austin.

CARS WANTED:

Mr. I. P. Davidson of [REDACTED] is keen to purchase a YB.

BOOK REVIEW

"The Cars of B.M.C."

by Graham Robson

The first thing which struck me about this book was its price, near enough £25. Now I will probably be accused of living in the past (and I would venture to suggest that there is much to be recommended in that) but I regard £25 as being somewhat beyond my reach when it comes to books (I was lent the copy which I am reviewing here).

Having said the above, I quite realise how the inclusion of only a small number of colour photos greatly increases the cover price of a book, as indeed does the expected level of sales. It is perhaps the case that only by setting relatively high cover prices to ensure that they recoup their outlay (and, of course, make a profit!) have publishers been able to bring us a never-ending stream of 'minority' transport subjects in recent years.

So, on to the content. One would hope and even expect that the 'Y' Type would be covered in a book with the above title for B.M.C. was formed early in 1952 when the YB was about to be launched. The YB (only) is indeed covered but it was with disappointment that I discovered as I read the one page devoted to it that the same old inaccuracies and derisive opinions as one used to find in books and articles covering the 'Y' Type ten or more years ago have here again been trotted out without any effort to check up on the facts. The YB did not appear in the autumn of 1951 (a 'pretend' YB might have appeared at that year's motor show and the confusion has perhaps been sustained by the fact that the last batch of 'YA's were fitted with the first 'XPAG/SC2' engines, but the facts are that the first YBs were not delivered until well into 1952 and even then the first cars were not 'proper' YBs mechanically until finally the twin wind-tone horns appeared on YB0460). The first part of the fourth paragraph of the author's description does not really make any sense and seems to have suffered from an increasingly prevalent malady - word processor-itis; or maybe it was the subject of a re-write by the publishers! The remark that the YB had 'no particular export market appeal' is nonsense, given the export record of the 'YA'; the fact is that B.M.C. took a specific decision not to offer the YB for export. The closing derisive remarks of the author concerning the YB's 'datedness' were, I submit, his own personal opinions and were entirely unnecessary. A simple remark to the effect that fickle fashion dictated a change of style and method of construction would have been adequate.

The book does have its good points and in the introduction the author does shed a little more light for us on the mysterious disappearance of the factory production records in the late sixties. He also reveals the precise location of the Muffield Metal Products plant in Birmingham where the 'Y' Type bodies were constructed. If you like other 'B.M.C.' cars besides the 'Y' Type then this book would be a useful reference source to acquire. It is not a definitive work (but then such a work would be of vast proportions) and there are other inaccuracies besides those relating to the 'Y' Type. Perhaps it would better to refer to a copy in your local library as and when you need to (our city library has two copies - one for lending and one for reference purposes).

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John G. Lawson