

## THE CLASSIC 'Y'

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The Newsletter of the M.G. 'Y' Type Register.  
Volume 16. No.117. June 1993.

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### EDITORIAL

In this issue you'll find an article on checking the timing of your XPAG. This first appeared in "Trillium News" (the magazine of the Ontario Chapter of the N.E.M.G.T.R.) for November 1992 and I felt it was very important to include it as, over the years, I have had one or two members contact me with apparently insoluble timing/performance problems following an engine rebuild. I now see that the cause may well have been the ambiguous photograph referred to in this article. That photograph, by the way, is on page C-20 of the YB Workshop Manual.

Also in this newsletter, Sherlock Holmes, having tired of solving the more insignificant of crimes, such as murder, espionage etc., turns his attention to the second of his famous "Y" Type series of cases (the first of which, "The Case of the Bubbling Y", appeared in "The Classic Y" of December 1991). David "Conan Doyle" Mullen acts as medium....

For some years now I have been aware of some FX4 Taxis driving around in a shade of dark green which I imagine is very like the "Y" Type Shires Green of old. However, until just recently I have not been able to shed much more light on the subject (standing on a street corner in Liverpool taking photos of taxis is not to be recommended, I can assure you!). A few weeks ago, though, I obtained a sales brochure for the FX4 (now lamentably fitted with a Nissan engine and called the "Fairway Driver" (!)). The green colour in question is called "Sherwood Green" and the taxi's manufacturers are: London Taxis International, Holyhead Road, Coventry, CV5.8JJ. (Tel: 0203-595001). I leave it to interested "Y" Type owners to pursue the matter further.

## Register Movements

1140. A "NEW DISCOVERY". 1950 YA. Y5102. Original engine was SC/14811. Current engine is "Morris Motors Replacement", SC/B84250. Registered "ORA35" on 17th May 1950. Body number 3897/3877. This is a maroon car with a maroon interior (white piping) and it has been owned by Mr. John Morgan of Dunfermline, Scotland, since 23rd March this year. This Y has had five previous owners, for the following lengths of time each: 1 year, 4 years, 15 years, 7 years and 17 years. For the last twelve years it has been partly dismantled in a lock-up garage - it is now being restored.

## SPARES FOR SALE:

Peter Woods, of "Rare Spares", Westwood Portway Road, Twyford, Bicester, near Buckingham, MK18.4EB (Tel: 029-673-0310), has many "Y" Type parts for sale.

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## CHECKING THE TIMING OF YOUR NEWLY REDONE MG ENGINE

by Charles Bledsoe

On Page A. 15 of *THE MG MIDGET (SERIES TD) AND (SERIES TF) WORKSHOP MANUAL* there is a great picture of the engine with the timing chain freshly installed. As shown in this picture the small wheel is on the crankshaft and the large gear is on the cam. This may be tough to remember but since the cam operates at half of the speed of the crank and the ratio of the size of one gear to the other determines the relative speed of each, it shouldn't be too hard.

As for photographic excellence the picture speaks for itself, however editorially there is something amiss. The reason that this is a screwed-up illustration is that most people have the engine turned opposite from what is shown. In other words, "Shorter portion of the chain to the left," really means to the right in most garages.

What does a mistake at this juncture mean? It means that the valve timing of the car is off by about 12 degrees. I haven't figured whether the timing is leading or lagging but you'll be able to, if this is your problem. By the way, and this is truly bad news, with the engine assembled in the incorrect manner, it WILL OPERATE, just not very well.

In many cases the whole thing is stuffed back into the chassis, all sheet metal applied and then it is discovered that the car is not performing as expected. It will have less power than it should and may well run hot. This will initiate the hunt for the cause of the poor running.

After the carburetors have been demolished and skillfully redone at some enormous cost, the ignition system completely replaced, a garden water hose cut up to 'tune' something and a whole lot of nights spent in the garage cussing the dumb English, and a lot of salesmen, someone tells you about the "upside-down engine" in the book.

With this new information,

you soon wish they had put a detailed timing wheel on the front of the crankshaft so that you could tell exactly when valve number one is starting to open.

We are finally at the reason for all this palaver - all this is about a detailed timing wheel that is free to one and all. Just copy the figure at a local copier centre and then stick your crank through the centre of the timing wheel. After that rotate the engine until the valves for number one cylinder are closed and the timing mark is lined up with the notch on the crank pulley (i.e. TDC number one firing stroke).

(If you wonder what some of the technical details in this writeup are all about, by the time you get to reading this for seriousness you'll have discovered the real reason for all these things and where they are).

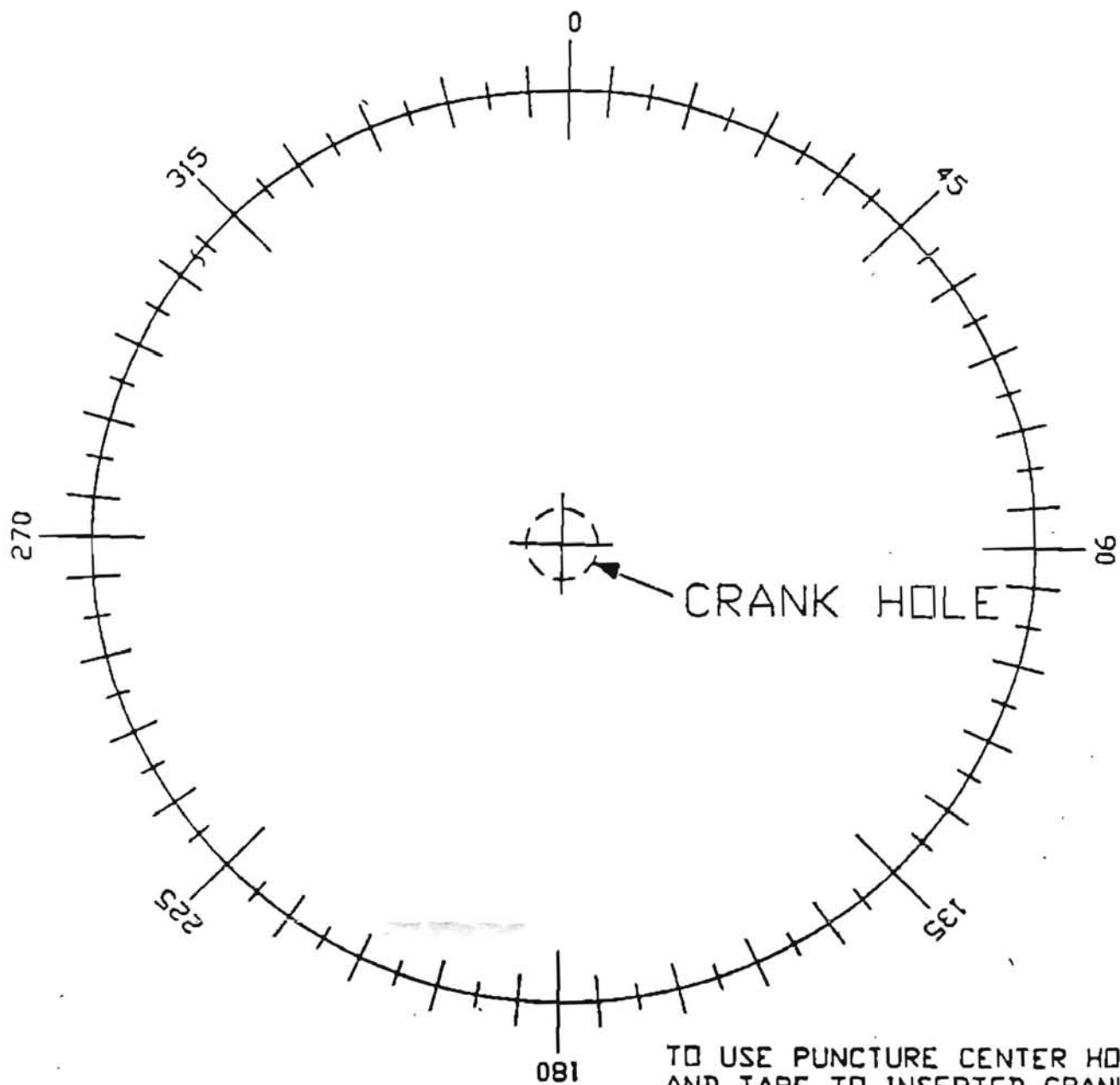
After the engine is lined up on 'zero', set the timing wheel to 'zero' as shown in the picture. As can be seen, I used an old coat hanger after a little modification or two. With this in place, rotate the engine to where the first cylinder is 11 degrees before top dead centre (noted on page 5 of the workshop manual), (one rotation less 11 degrees) and see if the inlet valve is starting to open. If the chain is wrong, this action will be off by about 12 degrees, an event that is easy to spot with your neat timing wheel.

If the timing is off, disconnect the battery and remove the radiator... into the night.



(Original editor's note: the photo referred to in the shop manual pictures the engine right side up with the crankshaft at the bottom. The confusion arises when timing chain and sprockets are installed with the engine upside-down on a workbench resting on the cylinder head surface which puts the crankshaft on top. In any case, Charles point is correctly taken - it is easy to make a mistake in the valve timing by getting the long and short sides of the timing chain wrong way around. If you are assembling your engine upside-down, it may prove helpful to turn the book upside-down also. Be advised - use the little grey cells and proceed with care.)

# TIMING WHEEL



FOR MG T SERIES VEHICLES

## THE CASE OF THE RATTLING YA

"That chap's in trouble", said Holmes, peering out of the window overlooking Baker Street.

"Trouble, Holmes?", muttered Watson.

"Mark my words, he'll be over here in a minute", Holmes continued.

Sure enough, in just two ticks of an S.U. pump, the door bell rang.

"Let him in then, Watson".

The door opened to reveal an eager young man, shirt sleeves to the elbow and traces of oil around the fingers and palms.

"I see you are having problems with your 1949 YA, still in its original two-tone green paintwork and with only one previous owner from new, the car having spent most of its life in and around Berkshire."

"Good Grief! But how....?", said the young man, his oily hand now lifted to his forehead in surprise.

"The trouble is with your oil pressure", Holmes continued. "I could hear the rattle from my window. I take it this started after you fitted the YB oil pump?"

Our friend was by now totally amazed at Holmes' insight.

Pray tell us Holmes how you could possibly....", said Watson.

"Elementary, my dear fellow! Our friend's car stopped close enough to my window overlooking Baker Street to see from the sixteen-inch wheels and rear wings that the car was obviously a YA. The open bonnet side clearly revealed the YB oil pump and filter assembly which is not at all like the vertical canister filter system of the YA. The 'JB' registration letters indicated it was first registered in Berkshire, this particular registration being a 1949 issue. I pride myself on knowing every colour scheme which left Abingdon and that two-tone green paintwork is most definitely original. As for the number of previous owners, the car in question already appears in my authoritative list of surviving "Y" Types published only a few years ago. If my memory serves me correctly, it was owned by a doctor with a small practice in Newbury. It was still in his hands when I first spotted it on the old B.4000 less than three years ago."

"Hmmm", mused Watson. "But the oil pressure - surely the rattle could have been caused by any number of things."

"Really Watson, your lack of faith in me does you no credit at all. Let's listen to our young friend's version and we'll see who's right."

"It's just as you said, Mr.Holmes. I first spotted the car outside a rather nice residence in Abingdon. The car looked beautiful - it was love at first sight. I enquired at the house and was met by an elderly lady who told me that her late husband, a retired G.P., had owned the car from new. Well, Mr.Holmes, the dear lady warmed to me and I bought the car there and then. I was, of course, delighted with my purchase, and it seemed free of any real faults except that the oil pressure seemed low - about 30 to 40 psi - when I should have seen 50 psi. in top gear. Well, I wasted no time and telephoned Lestrade of the R.A.C. He arrived within the hour and advised me to change the oil as it was probably past its best. He further advised that I convert the separate YA oil pump and filter assembly to the later one-piece YB unit. I did as he suggested, finishing it off only yesterday. You can imagine my horror on starting the car to find that the oil pressure gauge wouldn't move above 5 psi! I turned the engine off and retired for the night. I rose early in the morning and tried again - I was convinced that once I'd driven the car, the oil pump would prime itself and the oil pressure would be restored. I only live but two blocks away, so I ventured down Baker Street barely getting out of second gear. When I heard the rattling from the engine I stopped straight away. I peered under the bonnet hoping that I could spot the reason for my misfortune. It was then that I realised that I had stopped opposite the apartments of the foremost "Y" Type enthusiast in England. I was about to explain my predicament to you when, to my amazement, you deduced it exactly."

"See Watson, just as I said", Holmes enthused. "By jove it was lucky you stopped when you did. A few more miles, and..... Lestrade of the R.A.C. is, of course, an admirable fellow, but he's no authority on XPAG engines."

Holmes reached for his YA Workshop Manual, quickly turning to the section regarding the oil pump. Replacing the YA Manual with one hand, he deftly withdrew the YB Manual with the other.

"Just as I thought, Watson. Replacing the YA oil pump assembly with the later YB type is, of course, straightforward, but it is vital to refer to the manuals. You must not only block off the spare oil hole left when the YA pump is removed, but you must also remove the oil pressure by-pass valve situated in the



block. The YB oil pump has its own oil pressure by-pass valve, and if the YA one is not removed from the block, the symptoms our friend has described appear. I've known owners of "T" and "Y" Types reduced to tears by the whole process. The solution is of course simple, and our young friend has not done too much damage, for the old XPAG is a hardy unit."

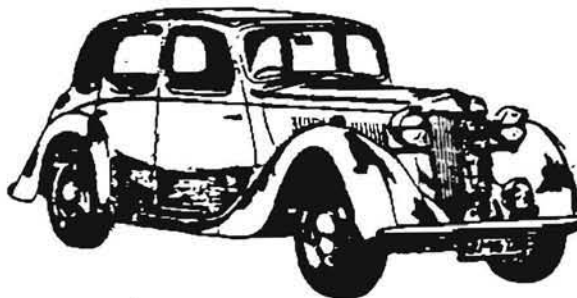
Within the hour Holmes had removed the pump and, with a suitable 8 mm. stud and distance piece, also removed the old by-pass valve from the block. The engine fired instantly after refitting the YB pump and the oil pressure quickly rose to a healthy 50 psi.

"By jove, Holmes, another case solved!"

"Hmmm", said Holmes, "a simple case of deduction really, but the Case of the Three Ys, now there's a story you must relate one day Watson."

"Quite, Holmes, quite...."

*David Hullen.*





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1947 M.G. TC 2-seater, 14,000 miles, 5715.

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1946, October, M.G. TC, oversize tyres, whitewall (replaced), superior condition, 5890. Liberty 3354.  
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588-2431

1949 November, M.G. TC, 5,000 miles, red, as new, new. Graham Fine, 33 Gt. Portland St. Langham 2439, 1994.  
587-0522

1949 December, M.G. TC, red, 1,400 miles, lovely condition, 5775. Mow 1408, after 7 p.m.  
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1948 Export model TC M.G., green, 18,500 miles, owner-driven, excellent condition, 5760. Tredre, 6 Blenheim Rd., Rugby.  
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1949 September, M.G. 1½-litre saloon, 8,000 miles, one owner, price £1,215. Baynes, Haslemere. Phone 1734.  
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1949 December, TC MIDGET, 8,000 miles, black, as new, 5813. Richards and Brown, 2 Ringers Rd., Bromley, Kent. Rav 5479.  
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**GORDON CARS (LONDON), LTD.** 1950 M.G. 1½-litre saloon, green. Below.

**GORDON CARS (LONDON), LTD.** 1949 M.G. TC 2-seater, 14,000 miles, 587-184

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**CAMDEN MOTORS, M.G. MIDGET** roadster, 1949, fitted heater, chromium luggage rack, Fris coil, pass light, dual mechanism, etc., etc., in immaculate low-mileage car, 5815.

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**ROWLAND SMITHS**

**ROWLAND SMITHS, the M.G. buyers,** Hampstead 6041 (Hampstead Tube) Ham 6041, 222-783

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222-143

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