

THE CLASSIC 'Y'

The Newsletter of the M.G. 'Y' Type Register,
Volume 17, No. 125, October 1994.

EDITORIAL

IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT

Well, at last it's happened! After nearly 17 years, I have finally run out of interesting and relevant material to publish in "The Classic Y". You will no doubt have noticed over the past few issues a decline in the relevance of the content to "Y" Types, much of the material used often being reprints of American articles appertaining, in the first instance, to "T" Types. I have therefore decided that henceforward "The Classic Y" will become an irregular periodical (if that is not a contradiction in terms). Each issue will be prepared and sent out only when there is sufficient material of the usual standard to fill eight pages. This will mean that Issue No. 126 will almost certainly not be published before Christmas (the December issue usually goes out on 20th of that month). But don't worry if quite some time elapses before you receive your next issue of the newsletter; your subscription will entitle you to six issues (as before), and when the last newsletter of your subscription is issued, you will receive a renewal reminder with it.

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FAMOUS 'Y' TYPE OWNERS

No. 3 in a Series of 4.

SIDNEY, J. PERELMAN

writer and humorist.

Perhaps the most famous, and certainly the most extensive user of a "Y" Type of those personalities in our series so far. (*) Sidney Perelman is perhaps best well known for his scripts for the film "Around the World in Eighty Days" and for the Marx Brothers. In addition, he had many anthologies and humorous newspaper and magazine articles published.

Perelman bought his black Y/T (with red interior) in Bangkok in 1949, incidentally at the same time as he acquired his beloved mynah bird "Tong Cha". Henceforward, both the car and the bird would be lavishly cared for, becoming Perelman's two favourite possessions. The Y/T was shipped to London immediately after purchase so that its owner and his family could undertake a tour of Britain and Europe in it.

From London, the Perelmans journeyed to Liverpool via Bath, having some difficulty in adapting to driving on the left side of the road. While the family flew to Dublin, the Y/T was left for a service in Liverpool and, much to Sid's horror, while he was away, the agents fitted the optional chromed grab handles to the dashboard. On his return he immediately removed them, but was inconsolable when confronted with the holes that now disfigured the dash of his cherished Y/T. Arriving at Abingdon via Chester and Oxford, the dashboard and speedometer were soon replaced and Perelman was happy again.

Next on the agenda was a tour taking in Denmark, Germany, the Netherlands, Belgium and France, before the car was shipped to New York. The Y/T was now placed in storage in Erwinna, Pennsylvania, close to the family's home, and was tended to regularly by a caring mechanic.

The next major adventure for the Y/T would be its Paris - Peking trip in 1978, but before this, Perelman had also owned a black four-door 1965 Rover.

The Paris to Peking trip was intended to be the catalyst for a series of articles Perelman would write for "The Sunday Times", describing in his own inimitable fashion the adventures which would be sure to befall him en route. Initially, back-up from a Land Rover carrying spares was suggested, but Harold Evans of "The Sunday Times" talked Perelman out of this, saying that this would compromise the sense of adventure and achievement. So, on 2nd September 1978, Sid, plus his friend Eric Lister and M.G. enthusiast Syd Beer, set off for China with the Y/T towing a small trailer which had been loaded with supplies and spares for the trip. Apparently, this trailer had been fashioned out of a cut-down "Y" Type chassis and possibly also had "Y" Type wheels. Perelman was 74 at the start of the trip and, in reality, much of the driving across Europe and Asia was done by Lister and Beer.

The three passed through France, Germany, Austria, Italy, Yugoslavia, Bulgaria and Turkey, before arriving in Iran (amongst the civil disturbances) fifteen days later. Afghanistan, Pakistan and India were next. Before the epic drive ground to a halt in Bombay. No passable land route onwards could be found, due to flooding, so the car was flown to Hong Kong (by this time, all its M.C. badges had been stolen by souvenir hunters along the way). Perelman waited alone for permission to be granted for him to enter China (at this time no foreign national had driven into China for many years). When approval finally came, he made the journey to Peking without his beloved Y/T; and two days after completing his journey he became ill with bronchitis.

The Chinese authorities eventually relented and agreed to the car being shipped to Peking but, in the event, no doubt weakened by the journey and his illness, Perelman chose instead to send the Y/T back to the States. Even then, things did not go smoothly. The car's first port of call was Southampton, where it encountered a strike and could not be off-loaded. It ended up in Hamburg, before being shipped in error to Baltimore instead of to its home in Philadelphia. Eventually, the Y/T arrived back in Erwinna. Total mileage since new before the Paris - Peking trip was undertaken has been variously reported as 19,300 and 29,000. The only mechanical problems suffered on its epic journey were windscreen wiper failure (on the drive down from London to Dover) and petrol pump failure.

Alas, Sidney Perelman never properly recovered from the rigours of his final near circumnavigation of the world. He died of a heart attack on 17th October 1979 and the Y/T was disposed of along with the rest of his estate. It was sold by the Vintage Car Store of Nyack, New York, to Thomas W. Barrett III of Scottsdale, Arizona for \$10,000. Where is it now, I wonder? And what was its chassis number etc.?

Sources: "The Sunday Times", "Safety Fast!", "S.J. Perelman - a life" by Dorothy Herrmann (via member Mike Silk), the late F. Wilson McComb.

* RECAP:

Gene Tierney - TCY 83

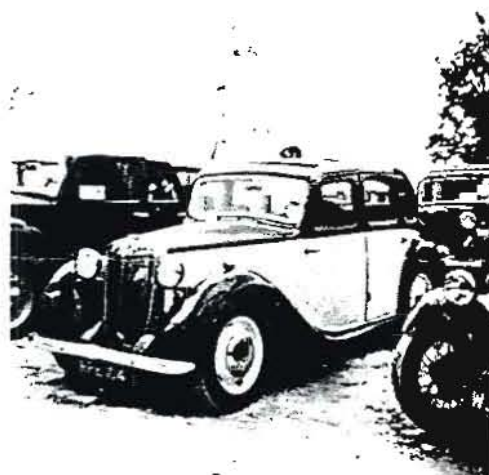
Sir Gordon Richards - TCY 95

John Lawson.

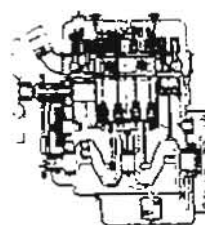
The last part of our look at existing "Y" types....

1953

YB0930	Colorado	USA
YB0944	Georgia	USA
YB0952	Louisiana	USA
YB0953	Surrey	England
YB0958	Nottinghamshire	England
YB0963	Tyne & Wear	England
YB0970	W. Midlands	England
YB0991	Yorkshire	England
YB0992	Warwickshire	England
YB0999	S. Carolina	USA
YB1030	Kilmarnock	Scotland
YB1033	S. A.	Australia
YB1039	Virginia	USA
YB1041	Co. Antrim	NI
YB1042	M. Glamorgan	Wales
YB1045	Surrey	England
YB1050	Northamptonshire	England
YB1051	Warwickshire	England
YB1054	Kent	England
YB1060	Surrey	England
YB1061	Texas	USA
YB1063	Avon	England
YB1084	Sussex	England
YB1094	Cheshire	England
YB1099	New York	USA
YB1100	Shropshire	England
YB1101	Tyne & Wear	England
YB1117	Oxfordshire	England
YB1127	London	England
YB1141	Dyfed	Wales
YB1146	Middlesex	England
YB1148	Worcestershire	England
YB1154	New Jersey	USA
YB1169	Staffordshire	England
YB1170	Devon	England
YB1172	Cumbria	England
YB1178	E. Lothian	Scotland
YB1179	W. Australia	Australia
YB1184	Co. Durham	England
YB1189	?	England
YB1204	Devon	England
YB1206	California	USA
YB1214	Essex	England
YB1216	Staffordshire	England
YB1240	Surrey	England
YB1241	NSW	Australia
YB1245	Nottinghamshire	England
YB1248	Caithness	Scotland
YB1257	Lancashire	England
YB1262	Middlesex	England
YB1267	Sussex	England
YB1275	New Jersey	USA
YB1277	Cleveland	England
YB1283	Essex	England
YB1296	Stirlingshire	Scotland
YB1300	London	England
YB1307	California	USA



"HMO909", Len Shaw's works 1953 R.A.C. Rally car.



an original export to Australia (one of three YB:



YB1329	?	England
YB1327	Avon	England
YB1340	Ontario	Canada
YB1342	Cornwall	England
YB1351	Merseyside	Scotland
YB1352	Nottinghamshire	England
YB1371	Surrey	England
YB1375	St. Hartogenbosch	Neth
YB1385	Co. Antrim	N. Ireland
YB1393	Yorkshire	England
YB1395	Surrey	England
YB1397	E. Sussex	England
YB1401	Hannover	Germany
YB1405	Lancashire	England
YB1411	Suffolk	England
YB1431	Aberdeen	Scotland
YB1434	Hertfordshire	England
YB1436	Hampshire	England
YB1438	Jersey	C. I.
YB1470	E. Lothian	Scotland
YB1473	Essex	England
YB1477	Yorkshire	England
YB1493	Staffordshire	England
YB1496	Cheshire	England
YB1499	Surrey	England
YB1506	Lancashire	England
YB1507	W. Australia	Australia
YB1508	Ohio	USA
YB1512	New Jersey	USA
YB1516	?	England?
YB1520	S. Carolina	USA
YB1524	Cumtria	England
YB1528	Warwickshire	England
YB1533	Surrey	England
YB1535	Virginia	USA
YB1540	Staffordshire	England
YB1544	Yorkshire	England
YB1547	Staffordshire	England
YB1551	?	England

a CKD car, originally exported to Eire.



fitted with special fixed head coupé bodywork, for Dick Jacobs.





Stepping stones at Dovedale.



TEN years have rolled by since I last filled my tank with unrationed petrol and sallied forth in search of adventure, air and sunshine. The return of the life-giving fluid prompted me to set the radiator of my M.G. with a zest in the direction of the romantic and mysterious backbone of England, the playground of teeming cities, to renew my acquaintance with the lovely scenery.

First of all, it is no earthly good setting out on an itinerary of this kind without a prescribed route and the one I outline will keep you from taking the wrong road which may finish up in some far-from-pleasant manufacturing outlier, so tear it out and keep it for reference.

Thirteen miles west of Derby is Ashbourne, whither Thorpe and Ilam, on the threshold of Dovedale, are easily accessible. At Thorpe "The Peveril of the Peak" Hotel, in its own gardens, stands in a beautiful position. It is a joy to look at the noble outline of Thorpe Cloud from here. About two miles away stands the Izaak Walton Hotel at the entrance to Dovedale and close to Ilam. Close by is a spacious car park where everyone visiting Dovedale is obliged to leave his car.

There is nothing like Dovedale in the whole of England. An idyllic footpath winds up the vale for eight miles, disclosing lovely views of a deep valley bounded by limestone crags, ivy-covered and fantastic, and echoing the music of the crystal-clear River Dove as it leaps over small weirs and rapids.

In adjoining Beresford Dale come Izaak Walton to do some trout fishing, as recalled in the famous lines by John Drinkwater in his poem *Pike Pool*. It ends with

Rejoicing in restored petrol, JOHN PENN blazes the trail for readers over some delightful motor runs. His first tour takes him through the Derbyshire Dales

"We've given the world the slip to-day, For the Mayfly's on Pike Pool." But why fish for trout in Pike Pool? I doubt if there would be any trout if the pool were named after that voracious fish. Therefore, to dispel this anomaly, the pike refers to a tall column of limestone rising from the water: close by stands Charles Cotton's fishing cottage.

Before proceeding I must give a word of warning about hotels. Small hotels such as at Ilam are often full, and sailing there on the off chance for accommodation is usually unsatisfactory, so it is therefore advisable to book in advance. Matlock and Buxton are far bigger centres and here it is usually possible to find suitable accommodation without booking, except in the school holiday season.

Thor's Cave

Leaving Dovedale, my favourite route is to follow the signposts to Wetton, where a turn to the left leads to a Peakland wonder, Thor's Cave, perched high above the Manifold, a tickle stream which flows above ground and then disappears into underground channels through "swallets." The climb up to the cave itself may be a good adventure, but if the river is in one of its wet moods some difficulty may be experienced in getting across.

Through Hartington and Youlgreave to Rowsley, I always like to visit the Peacock Inn with its luxuriously furnished interior and good food. Here I can find peace, if I

wish, by indulging in some quiet fishing in the River Derwent in surroundings within sight of famous Haddon Hall.

Beautiful glimpses of the River Wye on the way to Bakewell make me pause on the Buxton side of the town to admire the lovely pack-horse bridge. At Ashford, a road through the village climbs all the way to Headstone Head, where one of Peakland's classic views is to be admired.

This is of Monsal Dale, where the railway is carried high above the River Wye by lofty arches. From Headstone Head this viaduct appears dwarfed by its surroundings. It is a place well worth visiting except on Saturdays and Sundays, when it swarms with people. From here a road plunges down into the dale and climbs a steep hill to Litton. On this section a sharp elbow reveals a truly remarkable view of Miller's Dale and about a mile farther up the road a gate on the left gives access to Litton Slack, a famous test hill with a maximum gradient of 1 in 3 leading down into Miller's Dale. Here the smooth hydraulic brakes of the M.G. were very reassuring, and the hand brake amply strong enough to hold the car on the steepest gradient without having to put it in bottom gear as an extra precaution.

Litton Slack is no hill for the novice. A steady head for altitude (there is only a one-foot-wide verge) and a good car are essential. The view is quite spectacular and from the elbow the drop is almost frightening, the houses in Miller's Dale

appearing like a scene in Lilliput. If you do not wish to descend, it is possible to reverse before the elbow and return, thus saving driving down a dangerous section. Either way it is quite convenient to reach Tideswell and Lane Head, whither a road leads across the moors to Castleton with glorious views before the descent to this small town right in the heart of caveland.

First of all there is a remarkable vista of the Peak Castle perched at the top of its cliff directly above the Peak Cavern, from which issues the Peakshole Water. Here in Norman times, no doubt, several people were sent to their doom by being hurled over the fearful precipice. The Peak Cavern has an entrance arch of 120 ft. wide and 42 ft. high, the largest in Britain. In the Middle Ages it was used as a rope factory, and the cavern extends over 2,300 ft. into the limestone. In places, rushing cataracts may be heard, but these have never been discovered.

Speedwell Mine

At the foot of the Winnats Pass, said to be a gigantic cavern that has lost its roof, is the Speedwell Mine, where after a steep descent the visitor boards a boat and is propelled along a tunnel 750 yds. long by the boatman pushing with his hands against the ceiling of the tunnel. This leads to an enormous cavern having a height of 450 ft. and filled by the fearful sound of thundering water.

At the summit of the Winnats Pass, a stiff climb for a car, Mam Tor, "The Shivering Mountain," comes into view. The huge gap torn out of its face is due to subsidence, and the main road which winds round at its base is always under repair for this reason. Close to this point is the Blue John Mine. This cavern, glittering with semi-precious stones, was explored by Lord Mulgrave with a party of miners who penetrated these subterranean fastnesses for a distance of three miles, discovering chamber after chamber of exotic crystals.

Farther down the road towards Castleton is Treak Hill cave with more wonderful things to see by floodlight.

The Reservoirs

It would be a pity to leave this remarkable country without seeing a little of man's work as well. If the road be taken through Castleton to Hope and Bamford, the famous Ladybower Reservoir comes into view, a beautiful lake winding along a deep valley. The dam is a triumph of British engineering. Higher up the valley is the famous Derwent Reservoir, and this dam is even more spectacular because it is not grass covered.

In this district there are therefore seven or eight miles of superb motoring with views reminiscent of Lakeland; a truly noble piece of scenery so close to Sheffield.

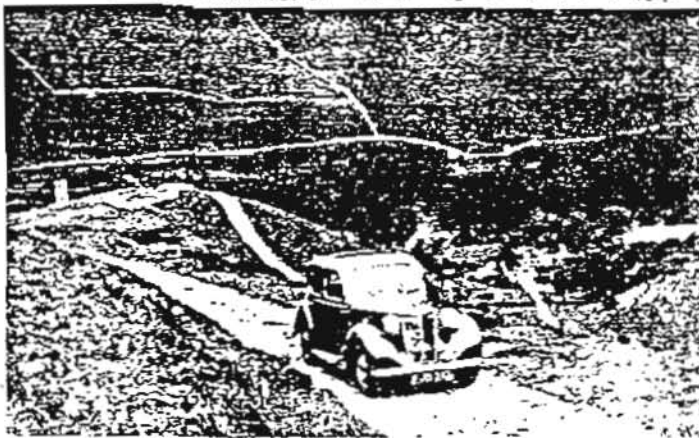
THOR'S CAVE, near Tideswell, makes a spectacular climb seen from the road that leads down to Aulton Mill. The climb to the cave is good fun, but watch the water!



The lofty limestone cliffs in MILLER'S DALE are the most imposing in Peakland. The road follows the River Wye close to the cliffs.



The M.G. saloon was put through its paces on LITTON SLACK, which has a gradient in places of one in three. The view is spectacular and the drop, in places, is frightening.



The end of the trip. The car is parked by the peaceful waters of the Derwent Reservoir at the end of a stretch of truly delightful motoring.



Register News

Whilst on holiday in the Republic of Ireland, member Mike Silk (he owns a Y/T!) came across two "Y" Types. One was just an engineless rolling chassis, with the registration number "IO7218", but the other is an exhibit in the Kilgarvan Motor Museum, Co. Kerry. This latter is the dark red Y2133 (now allocated Register No. 1150). It has engine number 50/K12054.

Just a thought....

Next time you see an Austin-Healey 100-Six or 3000, have a look at its steering wheel and centre boss. The wheel itself seems to be the same as that used on our cars, the M.G. TD and TF; and the horn and indicator switch in the centre looks very similar too. I'm not sure if the indicator switch has a clockwork timer in it as ours does, but the whole unit looks like a very good substitute for someone who can't at present find the, very rare, "real thing" for his "Y" Type restoration.

JGL.

And finally....

The article "Peak of Perfection", in this issue, first appeared, I believe, in "Motoring" magazine. I think I am right in saying that this was a Nuffield house magazine.

