



Y-Type Newsletter

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*The Y Register
committee would
like to wish all
members a very
Merry Christmas
and a breakdown
free New Year.*

Overnight Stage

A Traveller on the First Car Sleeper Ltd. to Scotland Gives
His Views on this New British Railways Service

Before we owned a car our journeys to Scotland were made overnight by train. We have vivid recollections of those arrivals at Perth about 6 a.m. where, having previously completed our ablutions with somewhat less thoroughness and steadiness than in our home bathroom, we watched the railway staff shunting a "diner" on the train. We used to consider our holiday as really beginning at this stage of the journey for we would be on our way to Wester Ross or Sutherland to walk and climb once again amongst those hills of some-times Alpine grandeur and occasionally fantastic shape: the mighty Liathach and its neighbours round Loch Torridon, Beinn Eighe, Slioch, the bristling porcupine Stac Polly, Sulven and others. Round the coast there would also be those wonderful bays of crystal clear water and dazzlingly white sands, and cliffs where we would put in some hours of watching sea birds as a change from warblers in the Surrey woods.

However, impairment of wind and limb does eventually creep upon us, we cannot continue to do all we did and easy ways are sought for doing hard things. That is one reason why, for our holiday this year, we paid British Railways their reasonable charge for Conveying us and our car from King's Cross to Perth and back. It is in this latter town that these notes are being somewhat scappily strung together on Monday, June 20, at the completion of the first run of the season for this new venture. The other reason is the saving of time and the expenses, material and otherwise, of four days' travel by road. With my own leave just officially

beginning, we are already 450 miles from home.

My own attention to this scheme was first drawn by the reference to it in the February 2 issue of *The Motor*. I immediately repaired to the nearest travel agency, made further inquiries—particularly regarding the method of securing the cars in transit—and booked a reservation. I was told it was all a new idea and that, as such, it would possibly have its birth pangs. I thought this fair enough provided the pangs did not necessitate my taking the car, on return home, to a panel beater. Preliminaries settled, we awaited the day of departure.

Loading Up

Of the journey itself, what is there to tell? Loading times at King's Cross were staggered through the after-noon of the day of departure, our own time being 3.15. The covered vans for the cars were those normally used for export vehicles and held two apiece. Cars were driven on by their drivers or, if desired, by a railway employee, and as the van floor was practically level with the platform this presented no difficulty. Securing was by means of transverse chock bars and leather straps, none of which gear touched the bodywork. We stayed around awhile to watch cars arriving at, roughly, 15-minute intervals. We had wondered if we might expect to see this scheme being taken advantage of by decrepit old cars incapable of making the trip under their own steam, each complete with ball of string and adhesive tape, but I noted a

Cresta, a new Wyvern, a Bentley aged three and a new Magnette. There were 20 cars all told in 10 vans, and six coaches, including the sleepers, for passengers. One car was from Cornwall and later in the season, I was told, there would be one from France. There were Press photographers and a TV camera to record the loading. Interest and enthusiasm ran high, and the only factor not in keeping with the spirit of the event was the weather, which would have done credit to November's worst. For this inaugural occasion, however, we were given a good tea "on the house" at the Great Northern Hotel and the time of waiting soon passed. The train started on time.

The packed supper advertised included some excellent ham, a hard-boiled egg, small salad and a flask of coffee (really hot) per person, all in a metal container.

All the rolling stock was extremely clean and appeared to have been recently painted and the interior woodwork varnished. Hot water in the wash basins was scalding night and morning. We were 20 minutes late at Perth, but all the cars were unloaded in an hour. The breakfast included with the supper for a charge of 8s. 6d., was served in the station refreshment room. It was spoilt by not being really hot.

On giving details of this scheme to a friend a few days ago she asked, "Where's the catch?" I've been pondering that point: it all seems almost too good to last. ■

H.D.Y.

Article originally from 1955 'The Motor' kindly sent in by Keith Herkes.

The Enigma Run

The Enigma Run, an evocative sounding name for a new run organised by Brian Rainbow as part of the Arden M.G. Club's calendar of events for the year. 'Enigma' refers to the code used by the Germans during World War 2 and Bletchley Park, near Milton Keynes is where the equipment was developed to break this system and the Japanese codes and ciphers.

Brian had sorted out a fantastic 75 mile run from Stratford on Avon to Bletchley Park which followed B and C roads with short distances along the odd A road acting as a link. The run started next to Stratford Leisure Centre and drew some 38 participants from an F type 4 seater through to several MG's. The sight of so many M.G.s must have brought tears to the eyes of a party of Japanese tourists who had cameras and camcorders whirring into action as they took home with some extensive footage of heritage England. Will Shakespeare coming a very poor second or thirty ninth!

I was very impressed with Brian's organisation and following registration each crew was given a rally board and an excellently

prepared Road Book. This well crafted document included instructions following the Tulip system together with a comprehensive set of maps. Brian had arranged a time table of departures organised by year of manufacture. There were just two "Y"s – Richard Dick's immaculate YB and my YA. Somehow, Jo and I managed to take the wrong turn just after crossing the River Avon. This was only a slight blip. However, we compounded our error by then missing the next turn and driving straight on. This was not a problem although it meant that less than 5 miles after the start we were leading the run.

After this we stuck with the book, enjoyed a leisurely coffee opposite Farnborough Hall and were impressed by the concern expressed by

fellow travellers as to our welfare. We stopped again close to Fawsley for another coffee and chat and I compared notes with Richard on progress. We were almost exactly half way round the route at this point. We made Bletchley Park around 1.00 p.m and found we were part of a Classic Car show. An event that had been organised as part of the centre's annual programme. There were several wonderful cars present including an original 1964 E Type FHC.

Bletchley Park is well worth a visit and is open every other weekend on Saturday's and Sunday's. Further details can be obtained from **The Bletchley Park Trust, Bletchley, Milton Keynes MK3 6EF Tel: 01908 640404.**

Jerry Birkbeck ■

The Angel's Share^{*}

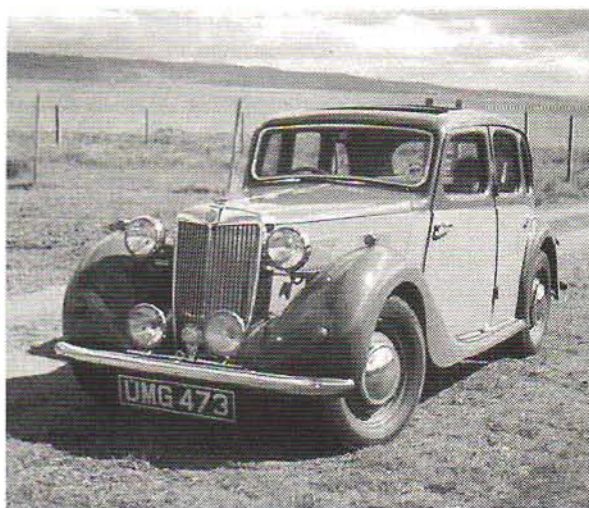
Ever wondered where the oil goes when neither the garage floor nor the inside of the bonnet show extensive black marks? Well the answer may be similar to a phenomenon seen frequently in parts of Scotland...

Having collected my rebuilt 1951 YA (rebuilt due to a sheared crankshaft wrecking the engine while returning from the Register's Gold Cup Run in March!) on a Thursday evening in May, we packed and set off on the following Saturday for a 1,000 mile round trip to two of the Hebridean islands, Islay and Jura. The "we" comprised wife, 12 years old daughter, luggage for a self catering holiday and yours truly, plus selected tools and fluids for any post-rebuild fettling.

The car behaved admirably for the entire journey. with the exception of some oil leakage from not quite tightened banjo union on the filter and a total loss of headlights on the drive back from an evenings whisky nosing/Ceilidh! (Honestly it was the lights not the driver!) This last incident proved to be no more than a dropped out grub screw from the main switch – readily rectified in the clear light of day.

Islay is an outstanding place to visit, with its plentiful distilleries, wildlife, walks and extremely hospitable residents. We visited only four of the distilleries (must return for the other three!) and as "Friends of Laphroaig" my wife and I collected our annual rent in the form of miniatures paid by the distillery to its "landlords". Though relatively flat, Islay does boast enough winding, single

track and interestingly surfaced roads to provide a thorough vehicular test, along with passenger tolerance testing in some stages!



Crossing the Sound by the small open ferry to Feolin on Jura immediately challenges you a little more. The Paps of Jura are well known to the mountain runners of this world and Jura's only road (The Long Road) travels around these from the south west to its most northerly tip. A special pleasure was taken in using the old fashioned courtesies of passenger (wife mostly) having to get out to open the several gates on the road,

and to close them after sedate progress through .. in brilliant sunshine! The return ferry crossing was, to say the least, a little choppy .. with us picking seaweed off the roof and windows over the next 24 hours!

As a "running in" jaunt the trip was maybe more adventurous than some, but the scenery, fun and excitement of the hill down to Port Askraig in the rain moved it high on to the "must return" list in the Coulson household. And finally, no trip would be worth it without some new transport related discovery and on this one we were amazed to be accosted by the Manager of the Lagavulin distillery near Port Ellen and invited around the back..! Not for an extra dram, but to see the resting remains of what we now believe is a 1934 Armstrong Siddeley straight 6 Tourer!! Apparently he is still deciding on what to do with it, and I can think of no

better place to take your time in making up your mind! ■

Andrew Coulson

**The Angel's Share is that portion of a cask of whisky which evaporates during maturation. Up to 20% "disappears" during 10 years in a cask. Sounds like some engines I know...*

Surfing the Web for a YT and then another

by David Pelham

There is undoubtedly a significant contrast between the technology of the 40s and 50s, the era of 'Y' Types, and the technology that enables us to 'Surf the Web'. The Internet has made the world a much smaller place and as a consequence enabled many M.G. enthusiasts around the world to communicate with each other on a scale not dreamt of when our cars were coming off the production line.

It was just before Christmas last year that I was scanning the M.G. Classifieds on the net in the USA and came upon an advertisement that said 'M.G. YT For Sale' the advert continued 'very rare not many about'. This was very true, only 877 made and all but three for export. An E-mail address was given so I sent a message off to register interest. It was a couple of days later that I received a reply together with some scanned JPEGs (photographs) of the car. Yes it was definitely a YT! The owner intended to restore the car but now needed to vacate the garage. This was an opportunity not to be missed.

The car was sitting in a garage in Oklahoma City, the logistics of buying and bringing the car home seemed daunting. However, many others had bought T Types and MGAs back, so it couldn't be that difficult or could it? I called up 'Encarta' and looked up Oklahoma City. There it was slap-bang in the middle of the USA almost equidistant between the East and West Coasts. How would I get it on a ship back to the UK?

I started to make enquiries, Bryan Purves suggested that I contact Kingstown Shipping in Hull. They were extremely helpful after a ten minute conversation with Mark Cowley (coincidence the name) I was confident it could be done! There were the little problems of USA export documentation and UK import documentation. Kingstown had an agent in Houston, who could collect the car and ship it from Texas.

I spoke to the Customs & Excise at Southend who were also very helpful. They informed me that all imported cars are liable for import duty and VAT

The good news was that as the YT was manufactured in the UK there would not be any import duties to pay. A 'Statement of Origin' from Anders at British Motor Heritage was all that was necessary to satisfy the C&E. I was also informed that a special reduced rate of 2.5% VAT may be available for cars of 'historical interest'. Whilst we all know the YT clearly falls into this category I sent ten pages of supporting documentation with my BTI (Binding Tariff) application. A few days later I received confirmation the C&E had agreed, a saving of 15%, I could now complete my sums.

I HANDED OVER THE DEPOSIT AND I BECAME THE PROUD OWNER OF A YT.

It is well known that photographs can lie, the car looked great but I wasn't going to part with my cash until I had seen it in the flesh. I sent another E-mail to the vendor stating that I wanted to view the car. There were four or five other interested parties but the seller promised me first option. The others were quibbling over the price and apparently the owner wanted his original investment back.

It was time to return to the Internet to find the cheapest flight to Oklahoma. It soon became obvious that it would be better to take a flight to



Dallas and hire a car. A friend of mine informed me that he had a relation who lived just outside Dallas. This chap was apparently keen on old cars and he suggested that I should call in on him. The very next day I had a phone call to say I was expected to stay overnight in Dallas and don't worry about car hire as he was going with me.

The itinerary was simple: Friday – Fly to Dallas, Texas, Saturday – Drive to Oklahoma, view car. Sunday – Return Home.

I have always found people in the USA very friendly; this trip was no exception. I could write many pages about my stay but they would fill 'Safety Fast!'. We set off for Oklahoma at 4 O'clock in the morning, and arrived to view the car at 10 O'clock. I spent two hours looking over the car. There was some concern when I asked the vendor for a 'Torch'. Fortunately my colleague from Texas translated and said I wanted a 'Flashlight'. The vendor seemed happier that I wanted to look underneath the car and not set fire to it! It's true 'Two great nations separated by a common language'. Anyway I noted the dents in the Fenders, oops wings, but generally the car was original and a great find. We shook hands, I handed over the deposit and I became the proud owner of a YT. It was then that I found out that all car sales in the USA have to be notarised. It was almost lunchtime, where could we find a lawyer. Fortunately this did not prove to be a problem.

I left Texas on the Sunday and arrived at Gatwick on Monday morning, tired, but not jet-lagged as I was only away for three days. I telephoned Kingstown Shipping and confirmed that the sale had been completed. Mark said that all I had to do was sit back and wait for six weeks and it would be delivered to my door. It was.

Filled with confidence I have since purchased a second YT from South Africa. However, I did not go and view this one, just relied on the pictures over the Internet. I never met the vendor but so much E-mail passed between us it seems we are almost old friends. The C&E were again very helpful and Kingstown Shipping once again provided a first class service.

Beware if you spend a lot of time 'Surfing the Web' it can be very expensive. It's cost me quite a lot but I do have two 'YT's in the garage. ■

David Pelham.

Since this article was written David has acquired a third YT from Switzerland. It seems that there is a one man campaign to repatriate all 'YT's!

D.D.

