

Hopefully by now the Foot and Mouth epidemic has been defeated, this being written in early April just after the Register Spring Run was cancelled. No doubt other functions suffered similar fates. Dennis Doubtfire's Exmoor weekend is still on the cards at the time of writing, contact him for a very full weekend of the 10-13th August, at 01823 400164. Also to cheer us up, Paul Barrow has unearthed a good copy of a 1949 article on the 'Y' Types engineering specification. This was published in the *Automobile Engineer* in January 1949 and shows just how modern the car was under its 1930's styling. Paddy Willmer, the editor, hopes to run it as a feature.

With the new MG saloons being in almost every MG publication, I was a bit peeved to have my March issue of *Safety Fast!* pinched somewhere in the post. According to HQ at Kimber House, the nice photos on the front cover may have enticed the thief. I did smile when

I saw the cover, thinking to myself the comments made only a few years previously over there being no more saloon production for MG, and here we have not one, but three new MG sports saloons. They have awful model names, but still MGs. What was wrong with Magna, or Magnette, or even One & a Quarter Litre? Phillip Raby, editor of the *MG World* magazine had quite a lot of flack over his similar comments, (April/May issue.)

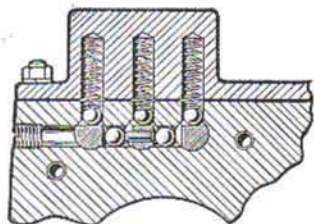
This centre-spread should include a bit of education of a 'Y' successor, a gearbox rebuild, and a search for a once famous car. Andrew Coulson tells us another story, and we look at where the body of the 'Y' came from. The next centre-spread is in the December issue of *Safety Fast!*, and the file is empty, so someone had better put pen to paper. Tell us your stories with photo's if possible. ■

NC

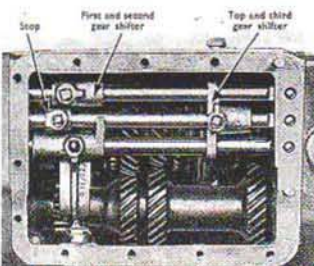
THE NUFFIELD GEARBOX IN A 'Y'

When I first drove my 1952 YB, the selection of the gears was difficult between 2nd and 3rd going up the box, and down from 4th to 3rd. Double-de-clutching did little to improve things, so in 1995 I took the gearbox out. I renewed the clutch and release bearing, riveting new linings to the clutch plate at a cost of just £10 myself, (purchased from Lancaster Classic Spares.) There was little wrong with the clutch, but as the gearbox was off I took the opportunity. With the top cover removed from the gearbox, I found I could have cured the selection problem without all the removal work. These strong Morris/Nuffield gearboxes suffer from a small fault, the square locking bolts that secure the selector forks to the selector rods, loosen off with age. This is because they are wire locked with copper-wire, which is weak in tension. I used soft-iron-wire as used on aircraft for locking items, to stop them from working loose with vibration. The diagram showing these locking-bolts is that of the version fitted to the Riley 2.6, but the design is virtually identical in all Morris, M.G, and Riley's 1935-1956. The bolts were loose enough to give quite a lot of lost motion in the gear selections, tightening them completely cured the fault, and the gearbox was refitted. As the propeller shaft was off, I fitted two new universal joints, and was then happy that the transmission was all in order.

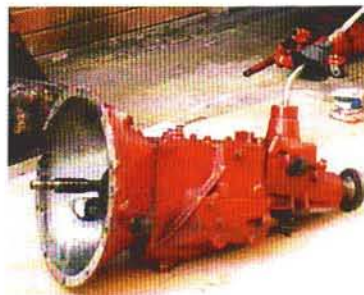
This was done at 51,000 miles back in 1995. By 2000 and 58,000 miles, the gearbox was becoming noisy. Part of this was noticed after in 1997 I renewed a lot of the rocker gear, timing chain, and rocker shaft. These worn items caused lots of noise, hiding other faults. Whilst the car has done 58,000 miles, the engine has not. The car was given an overhaul in 1983, (not a restoration,) and the original engine was seized up, having been stored since 1965. A gold-seal replacement engine was fitted, so its mileage is only about 20,000 odd. However, after 1983 I know the car had been used an awful lot of tiny short journeys, and was left standing for long times between, not a good recipe for long engine life. Rockers had hardly ever got any oil before the journey was over. I also suspect that the bearings in the gearbox has at some time been left dry, and had a tiny amount



The arrangement of the interlocking ball-bearings under the gearbox top cover, that prevent selecting more than one gear at a time. Those under the cover are obvious, but when the selector rods are removed those 'between' the rods can be missed.



The selector locking bolts mentioned in the text that work loose with use. This picture is of a Riley 2.6, that used the same gearbox as the Wolseley 4/44 with column gear change, but the design is identical though side on.



Re-assembled and ready to be refitted to the car. Note larger diameter of the first motion shaft, compared to the YA, TB and TC.



The square heads of the locking bolts on the selectors, are the same size as the standard BMC brake adjuster spanner. Lock them with soft-iron or steel wire.

of rust had formed on them. Cars that get little use can 'sweat' both outside and inside components, this can lead to problems if the surface is unprotected steel, it reverts back to nature. The noise from the gearbox I thought was bearing wear, and showed up as a 'zizzzz' from the gear lever at certain speeds; mostly 55mph. If the clutch was depressed with the car stationary, the noise stopped. So I took the decision to again pull out the gearbox, done from inside the car once the wooden floor is taken up.

Upon dismantling the very simply constructed gearbox, I found its innards in very good condition. But then I managed to remove the third-motion-shaft bearing and found it had play in it. When washed clean, it grated away like a well-worn bearing should. I fitted new bearings all round, including the lay-shaft needle rollers. New oil seals were also fitted, and were leather not rubber. I was pleased to find my wire locking was still sound on stripping, on the selector rods. The gearbox was re-assembled and refitted. If you are new to this, beware of the interlocking ball-bearings on the three selector rods, lose one and you can select two gears at once, and instant disaster, see diagram.) The gearbox follows standard in-line engineering practice and once the clutch plate has been centralised, is not difficult to fit, (just heavy.) From the photo's you will see I only needed to take out the front passenger seat to get good access.

Did it work? Yes, the 'zizzzz' has gone, but as usual curing one noise will reveal another. The rear axle has a very slight 'whine' and I hope this is not worn bearings on the crown and pinion. I suspect this whine has been there all along, just the noisy valve gear, then the gearbox noise drowning it. I may also be a little paranoid over noises in rear axles as I once had a Wolseley 4/44 axle one seize up on me, because I ignored its complaining of low oil. But in those far off days another rear axle was only £5 off a rusted out wreck in the local scrap yard. ■ NC

YA KSC171 WHERE ARE YOU NOW?

Thirty six years ago in 1965 a Mr. Derek Ringer wrote a letter to a young Paddy Willmer of the MGCC, offering his 1951 'Y' for sale. The letter is a piece of motoring history, and the original has come to light from the depths of the 'T' Register files:-

" After fourteen and a half years of ownership I must, very reluctantly, at last offer my exclusive 'Y' type MG saloon for sale. I felt this car must be sold to a genuine MG enthusiasts as it is probably THE best, least used and most modified example of this model in existence! Additional information, other than the brief details entered on enclosed original 'T' series register form, is as follows:- mileage 22,775, laid up for almost eight years, (in heated garage with a full preservation routine regularly carried out.) Used only as a second car during the past five years, one engineer owner, one driver, (I.A.M. member.) Never 'pranged' raced or rallied, all new tyres and tubes, 6-ply Goodyears costing over £45. Original tool kit complete with owners handbook plus workshop manual and spare parts list, (all heavily bound export editions.) New spares and special tools etc to the value of over £40. Complete history, all bills, etc. Extras and modifications cost well over £300, (brake mods alone cost around £60.) Whole the condition of the car is absolutely 'concourse', interior as new, the seats and mats having been protected since new. The engine compartment is immaculate with many parts either polished or chrome plated, etc. All body and chassis have been protected with underseal since new including inside the door panels, spare wheel compartment, boot, sliding roof, etc. The car has always been garaged overnight. It is now in the care of the B.M.C. Distributors, McHay's Garage, Kirkintilloch, Nr. Glasgow, phone Kirkintilloch 2371, (ask for Mr. John McHay jnr.) They can be contacted direct by interested parties, who can after seeing the car make offers, (it MUST be seen before any sensible offer can be made.) They, McHay's, are empowered to act on my behalf during my absence from the UK. I leave Portsmouth tomorrow and expect to be overseas for the next seven to eight months. Please note the change of my permanent home address."

Then there is the original 'T' Register form....

"Date Registered, 30.03.64 (with the MGCC.) Register No. 294
Name of Owner, Derek Ringer
Address of Owner, *****
MGCC Membership No. 0.6419 Centre, Unattached Overseas
Type of Car, 'Y' Saloon. Year of Manufacture, 1951
Chassis number, Y/6551, Engine Number, XPAG/SC/X16295
Registration Number, KSC171. Colour, Sun Bronze, (original.)"

On the reverse of the form is the following:-

" Note.

Many other detail mods have been carried out but they are too numerous to mention. The car is to be the subject on an article in ' *Safety First!* ' in the near future.

Modification:-

ENGINE; 9.1 to 1 compression ratio; TF valves, springs, inlet manifold and 1.5" SU carbs; TC exhaust manifold; TC/TD camshaft; polished and matched ports; fan blades removed; TD distributor and dynamo; 1.5" id exhaust system with Servis silencer; SU HP petrol pump rear mounted.

TRANSMISSION; Standard except for OS tyres, 16x5.50; mounted on ventilated disc wheels.

BRAKES; Alfin alloy drums, competition linings and Claydon Dewandre brake servo.

SUSPENSION; Mk2 TD front suspension supplementing adjustable friction dampers. Rear dampers reset by Girling, approx 25% heavier settings.

BODY; Standard except for the following external extra's; twin wing mirrors; badge bar; chrome windtone horns; long range headlamps; matched fog and pass lamps; reverse lamp; modified rear and brake lights; modified front number plate mounting, etc. Modified interior of the boot and spare wheel compartment; electric screen washers; TF rev counter, oil and water temperature gauges; full Redex system; controllable radiator blind; front and rear windscreen de-misters; thief proof switch; battery master switch, etc.

HISTORY; One owner since new, export model purchased in Malta in March 1951. Total miles 22,200, maintained as in new condition. All mods carried out by engineer owner. **D. Ringer.**

The car had been modified by Derek as his hobby, from 1952 to 1957. From mid-1957 till 1961 it was laid up and fully preserved. In 1965 the car was sold to the BMC agents, McKays Garage. It was again seen in 1970 in the Kirkintilloch area, and again in 1974 in Glasgow with accident damage.

The car has hardly been heard of since. It featured in the MGOC magazine in July 1996, but these were photos and details supplied by Derek Ringer not a current owner. Again John Lawson has been running an article on the same car in the recent issues of 'The Classic Y' newsletter. In June 1995 it was seen at Taylor Bros in Yorkshire, getting a full restoration, but the car was red and not the original sun-bronze. Derek, (now 79,) himself lost contact with the car in the 1970's in Glasgow. Where is it now? ■ **NC**

SUCCESSOR TO A 'Y' TYPE?

Though the 'Y' type MG was a good looking car in 1947, by 1953 it had lagged far behind in its styling. This was no surprise, as it was a 1930's style being produced two decades later, and like many other car manufacturers pre-war models had been continued. To replace the 'Y' type, MG again used the Nuffield Groups other marques, and the MG Magnette 'ZA' was the result. But it seems this was not quite as it was all planned out to be. Not that the 'Z' Magnettes were not superb cars, it is just that the merger of Austin and Morris overlapped the change-over period. The mechanics of the 'Y' were sound, its chassis base was now outdated by mono-constructed hulls, but the ifs suspension and tfs brakes were up to the minute in technology. The suspension design went on for another 40 odd years in fact on MG models, slightly modified.

After WW2 Gerald Palmer had designed and styled a series of cars to bring Morris, MG, and Wolseley into the 1950's. Two were small four cylinder saloons, The MG Magnette and Wolseley; and two were larger, a Riley Pathfinder and Wolseley 6/90. That destined to replace the 'Y' type was actually introduced as a Wolseley, as the MG version had to wait another year. The MG version of a very similar car to the 4/44, the 'Z' Magnette, was to be given the new 1500cc Austin engine and gearbox, BMC rear axle and larger brakes. This was said to be a last minute change due to the merger, hence availability of the Austin engines and running gear. The intention by the Nuffield Group prior to the merger was to have the twin carburettor version of the XPAG 1250cc engine in a ' MG Magnette', and with the TF out and about there was also a 1488cc, 62bhp, version of this Morris engine.

Instead of a twin carburettor XPAG in a Magnette, only the single carburettor version arrived. This model was to be called a Wolseley 4/44. The 4 was for four-cylinder, the 44 for the bhp, (which was 46, but 44 sounded better.) So, in 1952, the new Wolseley 4/44, using the 'Y's SC2 engine with a different sump casting, the same 'YB' gearbox but with a rear extension to permit a column gear change,



1952 MG YB with the SC/2 XPAG single carburettor engine, Nuffield hypoid rear axle, and modified Morris Ten/4 series 'M' gearbox.



1952 Wolseley 4/44 with MG 'YB' SC/2 engine using a different sump casting, Nuffield hypoid rear axle, and modified Morris Ten/4 series 'M' gearbox, but this time with column gear change. Body is chassis-less, looking like a tall MG 'ZA'.



The SC/2 engine, using the export oil-bath filter from the 'YB', but standard fitting to the 4/44

the same Nuffield split rear axle from the 'Y', brake drums and hubs in one piece, and an all one piece mono-constructed body, reached the show rooms. Whilst the 'Y' type had weighed in at 21cwt, the 4/44 was 22.5 cwt. So the mono-constructed car was heavier than the chassis based car it had been meant to replace. Mono-construction was supposed to give a lighter and stronger car by getting rid of the heavy chassis!

According to the Gerald Palmer himself, both the Wolseley and MG models were developed and styled side by side, the MG version was to have the twin SU version of the XPAG, (possibly the 1488cc TF engine?) The end result when the 4/44 and 'Z' Magnettes were compared, was that due to the modifications to the 'Z', very few panels were actually interchangeable as the MG sat a two full inches lower. The entire front end, including the front sub-frames, differed. Gerald says the availability of the BMC 'B' series delayed the MG. The 'Z' Magnette was the first car to use this 1489cc engine in 1953.

The 4/44 was no sports car, but it did have impeccable road manners. The well braced independent front suspension was unique to these Palmer cars, and the MG 'Y' front suspension was not used. But the excellent rack and pinion steering was used. The very well fitted out 4/44 could reach 70-72mph in favourable conditions, where the 'Y' was capable of 68-70, here the 4/44's much smoother body helped its top speed. Wheels were the same 15" but only had 4 studs, not the five of the 'Y'. The four-stud pattern was that of Austin, the now standard BMC wheel stud-spacing, which is why 1947 Austin A40/50/55/60 wheels will fit an MGA/B, Magnette Z and Farina. With a twin carburettor version of the XPAG, had the car been made, it would have given a better top speed, but the 4/44's hull was very heavy. With the modification that went into the MG Magnette 'Z', with its 1489cc BMC 'B' series, initially there was only 60bhp available, but that gave the "air-smooth" 'Z' a top speed of 80mph. The engine was soon modified to give 68bhp, increasing the top speed to 85mph. Later cars were said to reach 90 mph in ideal conditions. The 'Z' Magnette was the fastest production 1500cc saloon car for some years. Where as the XPAG was near the end of its development at 1488cc and 62 bhp, the Austin 'B' series was just beginning.

The 4/44 has the feeling, quality and air of the 'Y' type, the 'Z' is more frantic in its delivery. The 4/44 carried on until 1956, and over thirty thousand were made. Though the engines of the 'Y' and 4/44 are virtually identical, that in the 'Y' appears noisier on the move. This is because the engine in the 4/44 is well forward over the front axle line, with almost a foot between it and the dash. With the felt lining of the inner dash area, at idle the only indication the engine is running is the oil pressure gauge reading. The 4/44 was itself replaced with the 15/50 in late 1956, an identical body but using a single carburettor version of the 'ZB' 1489cc engine with first 50, then 55 bhp. Alas these early Nuffield designed monocoque hulls suffered terrible corrosion problems, there were far too many forward-facing overlapped, small pressings in the floor pan. The floor itself was flat, sitting below the sill, giving the car a very low roof line, but not permitting road water to drain out of the complex sills and floor box sections. Like Issigonis, Palmer was an excellent design engineer, but a lousy production engineer. Why anyone would want to give an MG a steering column gear change baffles many, but then in the early 1950's it was the thing to do. A bit like fitting a huge boot lifting handle to a GTI car of today, but calling it an aerofoil, (that cannot do anything other than collect dirt, as the aerodynamics do not really work until about 120 mph; in a country with a 70mph limit!) The column change did permit an extra front passenger, or so the adverts said. A male driver pulling on the umbrella handbrake from under the dash would have brought a few red faces if the central passenger was female.

To drive a 'Y' type today feels slow; to drive a Wolseley 4/44 today feels even slower, but a lot more quiet at speeds. Next time you see one at a rally, take a look at the car that was the spiritual offspring of your 'Y' type. The car that did replace the 'Y' was the 'ZA', a car initially intended to have Gerald Palmers twin-ohc engine.

Books worth reading for further information; Brooklands Books, "Y-Type and ZA-ZB Magnette" 01932 865051; TSB " Post War Wolseleys" 01473 270376; and "Auto-Architect," autobiography of Gerald Palmer by Magna Press. ■

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The interior of the 4/44 was very plush for its day, like the 'Y' series it used leather seats, wool carpets, and polished wooden trimmings. Floor is very low level with the bottom of the sills, but the car is heavier than a 'Y' Type.



ICUR2Y'S 4ME

Having enjoyed three crankshafts in a '51 YA between 1996 and 1999, the car was now proving too reliable for everyday adventures ... so I bought a '49 YT to rekindle the anticipatory spirit of not knowing what would/might be my next "Little job!"

In April 2000 I acquired one of David Pelham's three YTs which he had located via internet trawls. JSL 414, or more correctly OB 1948 as it was originally registered, is in fact YT/EXR/2425, a South African export which came off the production line around January 1949. The car has a vague history from "down South", but it is known to have spent most of its 50 years in South Africa in or around Bloemfontein. When purchased by me, it had acquired a UK plate - JSL 414 - from Brighton, and an October '99 MOT Certificate.

As anyone who has met either my wife or I will know, I like using as well as working on our MGs (Arlene has a BGT as well), with my preference for rallies, runs and circuit lappery over strictly concours events. The goal for our new Y Baby was therefore to get a few Y2K events under the bonnet and to put aside some Winter 00/01 time for bigger jobs. Work done to date has included bare metal strip down and respray to MG red (which was just one of the five colours discovered in various places on the car), undertaken by Brian Arkley in Hartlepool (a Y owner who rebuilt his from a basket case to Concours winner!). Dynamo rebuilds (including, luckily a spare CV45 I had picked up from a garage sale!), remove bent Jackall mounting bracket and fit a custom one; chase the electrical problems; replacement of leaking fuel tank and an interior clean which revealed recent use as a wedding car, as evidenced by the layers of confetti!

A little more history was provided during the rebuild of the speedometer and tacho (both of which had seized during my first 60 mph "test drive"!). Vintage Instruments in Tunbridge Wells returned the non-original dial faces which were both signed in the early 1950's

by staff at Richfield instruments. It would seem that within ten years of manufacture, the car had needed at least full instrument rebuilds!

The first outing of the re-painted, re-assembled car was at Ripon Old Cars Classic Car Gathering, where she completed the Y Register stand of 2 YA's, 2YB's and JSL! Rumour has it that this was the largest gathering of Y types north of Gaydon during 2000! So far no serious long distance events have been covered in the several hundred miles of use, mostly runs of 20-60 miles, but we did collect 2nd place in our local Summer Festival (St Wilfrid's parade) in Ripon and 2nd in class at Harrogate MGs Northern show. As an unexpected bonus, we claim to be the only YT featured in a non-motor paper during Y2K, with the local paper featuring the "behind car picnic & drinks" emerging from the boot of YT/EXR/2425 at a Millennium party on Ripon Racecourse! (Unless of course, you know different?)

And as for Winter jobs...A rewire is looming (sorry for the pun) and I suppose I should consider unleaded conversion, but even in the early November flooding in North Yorkshire an open tourer (with newly acquired MOT - straight pass!) can be fun to use. So maybe we'll wait a bit longer and just "See what happens next!".■

Andrew Coulson

Since Andrew wrote the above, it is with great sadness that we have to report the sudden and most tragic death of Odette Coulson the 14 year old daughter of Andrew and Arlene Coulson, MG enthusiasts from Ripon North Yorkshire on the 27th April 2001

Odette attended Ripon Grammar School; she was a talented musician and sang with Ripon Cathedral choir. Odette was seen at many MG Car Club events with her parents and will be sadly missed.

CLOSE RELATIONS TO A 'Y'.

The Body section of the 'Y' MG saloon looks as if it was styled for the car, but a little detective work soon shows that the Morris Cowley design office used a corporate part to suit. The Morris Eight series 'E' was the second chassis-less saloon car produced by Nuffield just before WW2. There are still a few 1939-40 Series 'E's about fitted with the previous Morris Eight side-valve 918cc engine. These had headlamps with lenses flush with the front wings, those after WW2 had them standing proud due to some lighting regulations. The photo of the series 'E' shows just how similar the 'Y' and it were. Another model, the Wolseley Eight, also shared the body, but this used the ohv version of the 918cc engine and few were built.

The body was virtually the same on the 'Y', but there are differences. Whilst the front door, rear windows, rear quarter-lights, and the sun-roof will fit a 'Y', that rear door shut line is CURVED where as the 'Y' is pointed. The sill area had its outer pressing altered to take the 'Y', running boards, where on the little Morris and Wolseley this sill was the main side member structure. A large box section ran across the car under the front edge of the rear seat, and the forward

edge of the rear springs bolted to this. As it was only 20swg steel, it rusted out and many Eights had rear springs come through the rear floor! The front end of the two 8HP cars had solid front axles with semi-elliptic cart-springs. The windscreen wound open just like on the 'Y', but the bonnet was a modern alligator type, being hinged at the rear edge. This bonnet was locked by using a coach key in two holes each side, just like the 'Y's spare wheel tray locks, and it was carried in the same pouch as the 'Y' on the nearside front footwell.

Obvious changes were the fuller 'bustle' of the 'Y's boot area, giving a much better sweep to the tail. Forward of the screen the 'Y' used Morris Ten/40 bonnet panels, and a special-to-type radiator grill. This made the car much longer than the 8HP cars. The Morris Eight series 'E' was made from 1938 to 1948, being replaced by the Issigonis designed Morris Minor using the same 918cc sv engine. By 1956 this had become the now famous Morris 1000. 120,000 'E' were built, a few more than there were 'Y's.■

NC

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