

At about ten thirty on Friday morning, the 13th August, I found myself filling the fuel tank of my YB at a filling station just outside Marston Moretaine near Bedford. I was on-route to meet up with another YB owner at the Black Cat round-a-bout on the A1. We were to then travel up to the Yorkshire Dales in convoy.

Y TYPE NEWSLETTER

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'Y' REGISTER 2004 YORKSHIRE WEEKEND.

As I mused over the forthcoming weekend the Y's tank did its usual trick of blowing back and soaking me with petrol. It has only done this to me every time I fill up to the top, over the last nine years, so my wife had no sympathy for the smelly spouse who grumpily got into the driver's seat. The Yorkshire Weekend of the Y Register is a very serious event in the register calendar. Entrants are selected from various parts of the UK to take part, and apart from actually completing the gruelling two day event, there is the concours judging after the last run. It is the winning of this concours that the whole event is about. Last year the event was held on Exmoor and there was no outright winner, so this year there was much more of an incentive. To be awarded the prize is a high spot in the Y Register calendar, and for a year the winner is held in high esteem.

By eleven my expert-map reading navigating spouse Janet and I met up with our co-travellers, where I noted young Keith Herkes filled his tank without any problems. Interestingly Keith and Rita's BRG YB is one chassis number from my own two-tone green car, 321 to 322. His had preceded mine down the Abingdon production lines back in 1952. With Keith in the lead, we set off north on the ancient Roman trunk-road that today we call the A1. How those marching Romans ever coped with the huge nose-to-tail juggernauts roaring past I will never know, even though we ran between fifty and fifty-five miles per hour, they were forever overtaking us. I noted Keith had not mentioned the concours, but I was wise to

his deception, I knew he was all out to win it as well. The run up to Catterick in Yorkshire was uneventful, and it was here we left the ever busy A1. For most of it we had been almost washed off the road by continuous heavy rain, and deluged in masses of spray from speeding heavy good vehicles. As I had covered some 220 miles I thought it prudent to fill the petrol tank ready for the weekends rally. I flashed Keith with my water filled headlamps, (one had enough in to keep a goldfish happy,) and we pulled into a small village filling station where they all spoke with an odd accent, or was it we who had the odd accents? We both filled up, and I laughed at Keith when he was caught out by his fuel tank blowing back. That was my mistake as mine followed suit a few seconds later much to the female till-operator amusement. She nearly fell off her stool laughing at us both soaked in petrol. From here we were to use 'Tulip Diagram' directions provided by the rally organiser, one Andrew Coulson ably assisted by Arlene, or was it Arlene who was in charge?

Once washed and smelling of cheap soap we set off to find the tiny hamlet of Reeth, set in the wilds of the Yorkshire Dales. Some seventeen miles later we entered a village set high one end of a valley, or is it a dale? Around a large village green were set ancient stone built houses, hotels, pubs and shops. Part of the green was cobbled with river stones, and this area was set outside our destination. There, already parked in a neat line, were five other Y types. Their drivers and navigators were milling about amongst the cars, when one Andrew

Coulson detached himself from the group and began wildly gesticulating with his arms, to direct us two to park on the end of the row of elderly MG saloons. It was about five-thirty in the afternoon that I lifted myself from my car and surveyed the other entrants. We were to be staying in 'The Kings Arms' hotel, a three storey granite building, built in 1747 and still retaining its ancient plumbing that only permitted one shower to operate at a time and creaking floor boards that would put any haunted castle to shame. How ever, first impressions are not always correct as the service and food were superb, they even had that nectar of the Gods, Guinness.

Dinner was at eight that evening, and I noted the other drivers like myself, were taking surreptitious glances at the competing cars, trying to put them in order of their chances of winning the concours. The competitors were:-

1) David and Barbara Hague, SOUTH COAST rep, (also known as Red Leader One as they were always first off the mark,) in YB '8077HP' fitted with twin carburetters,

2) Keith and Rita Herkes, SOUTH MIDLANDS, (in the only car that did not break down,) in YB 'KAX872', later found to be fitted with a high ratio rear axle,

3) Andrew and Katherine Moreland, WEST COUNTRY, (if he strips that petrol-pump down once more I will kill him,) in YA 'VMG662' fitted with twin carburetters and a Sierra five-speed gearbox,

4) Alan Chick and Mary Jackson, SOUTH WALES, (the car that eats fuel pumps for breakfast, and what a flirt Mary was, at 76 years old,) in 'HKG16', a tidy standard YA with a recently rebuilt engine,

5) Malcolm and Pat Hardy, LANCASHIRE, (who did twice the route mileage chasing up the tail-end-Charlie's,) in MGF 'M6PAH', Malcolm was a concours judge,

6) Jerry and Jo Birkbeck, SOUTH EAST, (if he lays back any further, he will fall over,) in TA 'DT8070', Jerry is the other concours judge and the TA has a later XPAG engine,

7) Neil and Janet Cairns, SOUTH BEDS, (the author of this article,) in YB '438LRM' and standard car with a driver who got oil on his trousers just sitting still, (the speedometer cable dripped on them.)

8) Andrew and Arlene Coulson, YORKSHIRE, (the organisers and planners of this superb weekend,) in YA 'UMG473' looking sparkling with its recent respray.

All corners of the country were represented, well nearly all anyway. After lots of chat about anything to-do with MGs the majority of the group had retired to bed by eleven thirty. The bars had shut anyway. Gerry Birkbeck had upheld an ancient family tradition, having broken down near York and arrived late. He blamed his spark plugs.



Andrew and Arlene's machine.



Keith Herkes climbing in low gear.

Saturday the 14th of August was in no way related to the Friday. It was glorious. We awoke to a massive blue sky and the sun shone all day. Breakfast was at eight thirty that morning, but many drivers had been out checking their cars before the meal. Sparks plugs were counted, oil levels replenished, (I put a litre into my sump, which promptly overflowed it by about a pint,) windscreens cleaned, and route cards perused. After breakfast Andrew did his best to try to get both drivers and navigators into their cars, but in this he failed until well past eleven o'clock. The run was timed to begin at ten! Red Leader was off like a rocket, a pair of eyes peering over the dash from the nearside passengers seat looking terrified

Around the dales we roared, up hill and down, along wide roads, narrow roads, roads that looked more like dirt tracks and through what I assumed were farm yards. Wheels spun and slipped on loose surfaces, stones flew, and gears graunched. Sheep who had been pre-warned of our run who took great care to look completely innocent, until we were only a few feet away when they would decide to then cross the road. Y brakes were sorely tested, and first gear cogs had a hell of a beating, clutches not faring much better. At intervals, where the lanes were narrowest, and usually on steep hills with high granite dry-stone walls each

side, a farmer with a Landrover had been secreted. His job was to appear just as one tried to double-de-clutch into first gear, causing the car to stop. Then there was the choice of trying to back down a precipice or to rip ones wings off on the Landrovers bumpers by going forwards. On one occasion reinforcements were called and more modern cars appeared behind the farmer, whilst more and more MGs pulled up behind. So, with the YB at forty-five degrees up on the verge whilst facing up a one-in-four hill we set off with a scream and judder from the clutch. The farmer just grinned, as the following MGs had to follow suit.

The first day included stops to get ones breath back, at places like Hawes, Hardraw Force waterfall (highest in England,) Askrigg where we all had our lunch in the Kings Arms, featured as the Drovers Arms in 'All Creatures Great and Small', Aysgarth, Middleham, Coverdale and Castle Bolton. It was not compulsory to stop at each location, only suggested. It was at the Kings Arms in Askrigg where Mary showed her true colours. Upon entering the village we had passed an elderly gent on his battery scooter, with a nameplate 'ELVIS' on the back. He was immediately christened Elvis. When Alan and Mary pulled up outside the pub, in full view of we crowd in the bar, she alighted from the YA to bump into Elvis on

his scooter. They chatted, and Elvis offered her a run on the electric machine. She accepted and was seen roaring up and down the High Street in it. Alan looked on pensively. By the time they all entered the pub, Mary had found a new friend in Elvis, who obviously though he was in with a chance. Mary is seventy six, Alan is seventy seven, and at a guess Elvis was heading for his eightieth birthday soon. Elvis appeared in the bar with a sherry for Mary, but had ignored Alan. She politely accepted the drink, which looked more like a half-pint that a short. It transpired she did not like sherry, pouring some of it into some unsuspecting drivers half-pint of ale, mine. Some one suggested getting a 'refund' from the bar for the sherry, but a local informed us that word did not exist in the Yorkshire dialect. Shades of 'Open All Hours'.

By six that evening everyone had returned to the hotel in Reeth. The locals and visiting tourists loved the line up of old MGs. One young lady took it upon herself to warn people off from touching them, much to Andrew Coulson's amusement. She had told him off as well for going to his own car. After a prolonged de-brief of the days events over an excellent dinner, a very tired set of drivers and navigators went off to bed.

As luck would have it, Sunday the 15th was another glorious day. I awake to look out at the sun rising over the hills opposite. My wife was none too pleased as she suggested a naked, bald-headed old white male seen full length at the window would scare the horses and any virgins left in the area. Today was the serious stuff. After breakfast we all set off on time, at ten. And again, in true Y Register tradition, we all went wrong at the fourth card instruction. Actually that is not quite correct, as Andrew and Katherine had taken the correct right turn by the church, (you could not actually see the church unless you were about ten feet up in the air, but that was a mere aside,) but as the rest of us tore past this junction, they relented and backed out to follow us. Malcolm and Pat in the MGF appeared and collected all the errant cars as a collie rounds up sheep, turning them around to then follow the route map correctly. Katherine wore a very righteous look as her navigating had proven to be spot on. I comment to my navigator as to why we had missed the turn, to only get a warning that I might get a thump on my sore leg unless I shut up. As I had been catapulted from my bicycle over a car roof via its windscreen only nine weeks earlier, breaking my hip and ribs, I took her warning seriously.

After a punishing climb out of the village up onto the moors on a cold engine, we grouped for a photo call. From this line up we were off for the run to the concours, the reason we were all there, all after the prize. Once again Red Leader was away in a cloud of dust, followed by the rest once it had settled. We crossed an unspoilt area of Yorkshire, the only inhabitants being sheep though they were just as stupid as the previous days lot. One hill took first gear, and ages to climb. Looking back one could see a little row of MGs growing their way up slowly all about a hundred yards apart. Once on the upper area of heather and neatly cut grass, (the Yorkshire tourist board employs sheep



Those who took part.

and rabbits to keep the road verges so tidily cut,) we approached a small ford. This particular water splash is the one used in the title run up of 'Heartbeat' where the nurses Landrover runs through it. But, contrary to all the expectations of the watching picnickers, each MG drove through the water very slowly. All will become apparent why soon. After everyone had stopped to photograph each other, I set off first up the very steep snakes-pass type road the other side. I

intended to photo the cars coming up it at a very sharp bend indeed. Keith and Rita were first to come up towards me, and I positioned myself for what might be the photo for the front cover of *Safety Fast!*. Just as Keith threw the YB into the bend and I pressed the shutter button, a damned four wheel drive thing turned across me, giving me a superb picture of a rear axle and exhaust pipe. The moment was lost. I swore.

The main stop of the day was at Barnard

Castle, along with the Bowes Museum and time for lunch. By three that afternoon we were to all arrive at Egglestone Abbey car park for the concours, apparently the only level bit of Yorkshire where exhaust pipes can be inspected. Now comes the reasons behind some of the odd behaviour of the weekend. Jerry and Malcolm had been selected as judges, and had donned dark glasses to camouflage their identity. Once the cars had all arrived at Egglestone, the judging began. Drivers and navigators looked on quietly, talking only in whispers. The categories are:-

Bodywork and Chrome.

Offside front hubcap in which the judges would most like to shave.
 Straightest chrome slates in radiator grill.
 Roof colour most closely matching the eye colour of the driver.
 Prettiest rear number plate.

Boot Compartment.

Most unexpected item in the boot at time of judging.
 Greatest use of boot space.
 Smoothest operating hinges to boot.
 Most closely matching lengths of the two boot-lid chains.

Interior.

Quietest operating offside front window winder.
 Most comfortable rear seat.
 Furrriest feeling headlining.
 Best view from the drivers seat, in the rear view mirror.

Engine Bay.

Cleanest plug leads.
 Fan belt tension most suiting the judges mood.
 Nicest smell from the air cleaner.
 Best sounding noise during start up of the engine.

Wheels and Wings.

Roundest near side rear wheel.
 Shiniest petrol cap.
 Most letters on near side front tyre wall.
 Whitest light from front side-lights.



Jerry and Malcolm carefully judge the cars.

Other Categories.

Dirtiest underside.

Most horizontal tail pipe when car parked on level ground.

Smallest area of oil dripped from the engine.

Largest area of oil dripped from the engine.

One and a half hours later the judges finished, but any decision was to be announced at that evenings dinner at eight.

Again by six all the cars had returned to Reeth and were parked in a neat line outside on the cobbled area. Again, tourists poured round them, and an American gent insisted he and I have our photo taken by his wife in front of my car. I wondered if it was for an identity fraud, but they seemed like a nice couple. Drivers and Navigators sat at a table sipping beer, discussing who might have won. All attended the dinner in their best bibs and tucker, and enjoyed a carvery put on by the hotel of beef, mutton and pork. Then the moment came, a solemn Jerry and Malcolm removed their dark glasses to reveal their identities, (as if we did not know.) Jerry was the spokesman, and related a tale of owners fitting new plug leads, being offered bribes and the like. Then he announced the winner.

It was my YB. I was so proud.

And in the immortal words of Arlene Coulson as the party broke up that evening for bed, "What a lot of trouble to go to just for a packet of crisps." But I knew the rest were jealous, one of them even stuck a pin in an effigy of me as on the way home in pouring rain, we had a puncture. A big thank you to

Arlene and Andrew for a superbly organised and fabulous weekend. Now for next year we might.....

This months competition concerns what advice Arlene Coulson is giving Jo Birkbeck about map reading? There will be a small prize for the best caption. ●

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GRAHAM BUSHNELL'S Y TYPE SALOON.

I brought my YA in November 2003 but it needed some work for our rally on April 18th, the Spring Run.

The driver's door window glass would not close. After removing the handles and door trim panel I found the glass channel, which is fixed by rubber to the bottom of the glass and clipped to the winding cable, to be rotten. I had a spare channel from a 1970 Morris 1300 door glass, and so I got a friend to weld the cable clamps from the old YA channel onto the 1300 one using the back of the lower channel in which the winder arm operates, (I could have used nuts and bolts.) With the window glass in its sliding channel I put the new fixing channel in the door with the rubber in place and forced in the glass. A little washing up liquid helps this process and with the glass pushed up into the top of the door frame the channel can be given a few taps from below via a block of wood. The cable can then be re-clamped to the new channel. Sketches and marks on the cable help to get the original position. The pulleys and cable can be lubricated with the door panel off and some washing up liquid helps the glass slide in the door channels. Beware not to be too kind with the lubrication. my window opens itself slightly as I drive along and needs a bit of friction to stop this happening. (Ed. note; washing up liquid contains a lot of salt.) Replace the trim panels and handles.

The rear of the sunshine roof's headlining was hanging down in the car. I removed the trim around the sunshine roof aperture and after pulling aside the head-cloth in the front corners of the sliding panel with the roof slightly open, I slackened the guide fixing screws and moved aside the guides allowing the panel to be lifted out, with cardboard protecting the paintwork of the roof. The rear of the head-cloth had been stuck to the metal part of the panel. This adhesive had failed, the correct MG method of fixing was to tack the head-cloth to a wooden bead held by pop rivets to the upturned flange across the back of the panel. This was missing so I replaced it and fitted a new piece of head-

cloth, tacking all four sides. I replaced the sliding panel again with cardboard to protect the paintwork.

Radiator cleaning. I have a small air compressor, which is also fitted with a connector for blowing up tyres. I have a length of steel pipe of tyre valve diameter, which I grip in the connector. The other end of this pipe is flattened so that when the compressor is switched on it makes a high-pressure air spray. On looking under the bonnet I noticed the radiator to have a dense matrix with narrow spaces between the gills which on close inspection had become clogged with muck. You could not see daylight through the radiator. I set to with my air spray and working along each individual airway blew showers of muck out of the gaps. The result immediate and daylight could be seen from under the bonnet through the radiator. If you do not have a compressor you could possibly get the same result from an electric tyre inflator.

Brake cylinder return spring on a YA. With the help of an ex-garage owning friend I overhauled my brakes hydraulic system. When

re-assembling the master cylinder it was obvious that the brake pedal return spring was broken. The broken piece was removed through the pedal box. Without the use of a high lift hoist and with the exhaust pipe in place there seemed no way that a new pedal box return spring could be installed. This spring is essential as without it the brakes could fail to release, and drag. I found an alternative position for this spring by removing the outside ball-shaped pedal shaft end cover. I cut out a notch approximately $\frac{3}{4}$ " square from the top rear face of the cover next to the flange. I wound some stiff fencing wire around the brake pedal with its end protruding through the notch in the cover. I made a loop in this end for attaching a spring. A short distance behind this unit is a tube linking parts of the chassis. I wound some duct tape around this and around that a piece of galvanised chain which I bolted together. Between the end of the chain and the end of the wire loop I hooked a tension spring of similar dimension and strength to the broken pedal spring. The links of the chain allow for adjustment of the spring tension on the pedal. ●

