



'Hotel Guillier, Brittany,  
Sept. 1992' Photo:-  
Dennis Doubtfire

## HISTORY OF THE Y REGISTER, PART I

By Dennis Doubtfire, 'Southern UK Rep.' 01823 400164

AS IT IS COMING UP to Christmas as I write this, I could not help but make the comparison between the birth of Jesus and the Y Register. What comparison you ask? They both took place in an Inn, ours in the Talbot at Ripley on a rather wet evening in October 1990; the other has already been well documented. For any new Y owners let me explain our early history.

Since its conception in 1947 the Y Type had enjoyed being part of the T Register with its own registrar who sat on the committee, and had a vote on all discussions. The Ys were always welcome at T Register events, and became a sort of surrogate parent of the TD. We had been born with a lot of new goodies that the sporting fraternity liked the look of, ie the XPAG engine, rack and pinion steering, rigid boxed in chassis and independent front suspension. So MG took our chassis, cut it in half, removed four inches and turned the back half upside down, and hey-presto the TD was born.

Perhaps that was to work against us, as the sporting boys used to bend and break their cars pretty frequently and had a habit of pinching parts from us for spares. So over a period of years the T Types remained healthy and the Y Types declined. This was the state of play in

1990 that David Washbourne, Colin Rae and myself were a part of. David Washbourne by the way was the incumbent registrar of the Y Types. Do not get me wrong, everyone was very happy with this set up, except for one thing; we wanted a voice of our own.

So when on that wet night in October 1990, David came into the Talbot and found Colin and I with long faces and empty glasses, he was very quick to fill them up. We enquired as to why the sudden show of affection, and it was then he told us the news. He had been asked to take over the SVW Register which was very dear to his heart. That meant he had to relinquish as Y Type Registrar, and he thought that we should take it over. By this time our glasses were empty again and David volunteered to refill them. Colin and I debated for some time before we said yes and on reflection never regretted it. David had been very ably supported during his stint in office by Ian Pattenden who agreed if David was to leave then it would be best for a complete change of management.

So from October 1990 with the main club's blessing, you were lumbered with us as Registrars. The one thing both Colin and I were very keen about was improving the status of the Y, and to make it become a

model to be desired. We both felt we could not accomplish that whilst we remained a part of the T Register; so we made an application to the main club to form our own self governing register. As a first step we were told we had to form a committee and prove to the directors that we were capable of running our own affairs. We decided that we would become chairman and secretary, but who would be which? This was decided in a gentlemanly way, by the toss of a coin. Colin became chairman which left me as secretary.

We had another very keen Y owner at the bar, Ian Hopkins and he agreed without too much arm twisting to join us as Graphic Designer as he has a talent that we were to make full use of in the years to come.

The other thing that we all agreed on was that the committee members must be local to one another, unlike the T Register committee which was spread all over southern England. So the search started for enthusiastic Y owners willing to help the cause. It did not take long to spot Jack Murray and his artistic talents down in the wilds of Petersfield and he came on board as Photographic Collator. He also acquainted us with David Hague who very shortly was to take over the spares role from Derek Moore. Thus it was we had



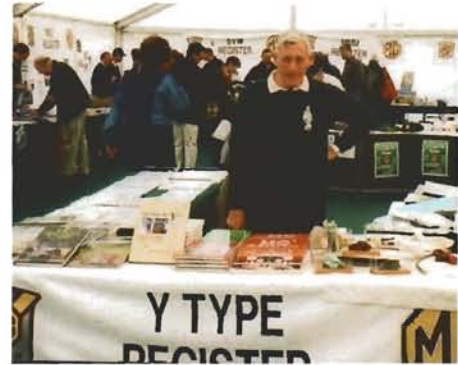
## Y-TYPE NEWSLETTER

NEIL CAIRNS 01525 217394 (answer phone)  
scribe@mgotypes.org www.mgotypes.org



Left: 'Golden Jubilee Celebrations, Luxembourg, Aug, 1997'  
Photo:- Dennis Doubtfire

Below: 'Dennis Doubtfire, Silverstone 1997'  
Photo:- Neil Cairns



'HOPEFULLY, APPRECIATION OF THE Y TYPE WILL CONTINUE TO GROW AS IT HAS SINCE THE REGISTER WAS FORMED'

to Brittany for the tenth anniversary of our inaugural 1992 tour. This involved some of the previously used hotels and road runs, and was a gloriously sunny week.

Also in 2002 Paul Barrow and David Pelham set up our website, which if anyone is not aware may be found on [www.mgotypes.org](http://www.mgotypes.org). This has gone from strength to strength under Paul's diligent guidance and has led to a greater world-wide involvement of owners in technical matters, regalia sales, spares wanted and for sale and a continuously growing photo montage of our lovely cars on 'Ys on Parade'. If your car is not on there, contact Paul and send him a photo without delay – whatever the condition of your car – you can always update the photo when you have washed the windscreen!

Very sadly in early 2004 our Secretary John Edwards died after a short illness. It is however very gratifying to report that his family have still kept his Y Type and it appears regularly at the Gosport Classic Car Show with his widow Janet and daughters in attendance.

New recruits to the committee in 2004 were Ted Gardner and shortly afterwards Paul Gresser, Ted having been coerced into becoming our Secretary, a position he manages to hold to this day in the face of stiff competition! Also early in 2004 our Treasurer and Webmaster Paul Barrow departed these shores to settle in Seattle. Fortunately advances in modern electronic wizardry and gadgetry have meant that Paul has been able to continue these

functions very ably from the other side of the pond. This arrangement has worked very well with the valuable assistance of Bill Gates.

Also in 2004 we had a most enjoyable Yorkshire Dales long weekend organised by our northern colleagues Andrew and Arlene Coulson. Paul Gresser organised another successful Continental tour in 2006, this time to the Ardennes.

For the last 10 years Jerry Birkbeck has organised the annual Spring Run, which has been the event to get most of us kick-started into the classic season and also the event where one can see the highest number of Y Types. There are always at least 30 cars but the target of 50 has so far proved elusive. Every year has been started from a different venue, usually one of Jerry's friends' pads, otherwise known as a stately home. This year is no different and we hope we saw as many of you as possible on the 'Diamond Jubilee Run' at Charlecote Park on Sunday 13th May. This year is special as it will be the 10th Spring Run and Jerry has said it will be his last, unfortunately I do believe he means it. On the Saturday night before, we had a dinner at the nearby Charlecote Pheasant. The Run was a little later in the spring this year, so it should have been a bit warmer so no excuse that you did not have a heater.

So how many Y Types do we have on the Register at the moment? The latest figures from Jack Murray are 999 YAs, 377 YBs and 300 YTs, a total of 1676 but new cars are still appearing

from barns, under tarpaulins etc. Of course many of these may be beyond or in process of restoration, the number of 'live' cars is far fewer.

The Y Type committee is still mainly in the south of England, for the same reason as that behind the initial thinking of Dennis and Colin, i.e. so that meetings do not involve too much travel and can be held reasonably frequently. Neil Cairns is our most northerly regular, from Leighton Buzzard, normally arriving at meetings on his motorbike and covered in snow!

Being aware however that we would like to be as inclusive as possible, we do now have representatives in the north of England (Malcolm Hardy) and the midlands (Jerry Birkbeck), as well as Denis in the southwest. Internationally we are represented by Wayne Musselman in North America and by Alf Luckman in Australia. Any or all of these gentlemen can be contacted via the website. The south of England gang meet irregularly, but generally every month or two, more frequently in summer than in winter.

What of the future? Well I am sure your committee, whoever they may be, will continue to represent the interests of Y Type owners with enthusiasm, whether in organising events, spares and regalia or representations at MGCC level. Help, parts, books and advice are all available to the Y Type owner either via the phone, letter or through the website. Colin and Dennis, you may rest assured that your heritage is in good hands.



the nucleus of our committee so set about organising our first events.

Ian gave us a nice new Y Register logo which gave us an identity and which was transferred onto sweatshirts and a banner, so that people could see that we had arrived. The events that we embarked upon were many and varied, and included tours, rallies, gatherings, etc which were always well attended; seldom did we have less than 10-14 cars on parade which was very rewarding.

1991 progressed with great enthusiasm. Our library of in house publications started to evolve about all Y topics as well as major publications. Then in November 1991 at a main club council we were given approval of our efforts and permission to leave the T register, and stand on our own two feet. Now it was all down to us.

Our committee continued to grow with Paul Rundell joining us as area coordinator. Our first AGM was held at the club offices at Abingdon with accolades all round for a

very successful year. About this time I had a visit from our much travelled Y owner, Chris Backlund who was keen to help us organise our first continental tour. So with his help the First Brittany Tour was organised for September 1992. This was an overwhelming success. Flushed with triumph a tour of the Yorkshire Dales followed in 1993 and a tour of Holland was proposed for 1994, but had to be cancelled due to lack of support.

1997 saw a return to the continent with a tour of Luxembourg with Jean-Marie Gillen as our host. This was to be part of our Golden Jubilee celebrations, 1947-1997. The year was memorable in many respects. It saw the start of our hugely successful Spring Runs, the '97 run being called 'The Birth of the Y Run'. This was organised for us by stalwarts Jerry Birkbeck and Richard Dick, who have continued to organise a different route every year since. This run attracted 42 cars, marvellous. The main highlight of 1997 was the award to the Register of the 'Nuffield Gold Cup', a fitting

reward for all our hard work. We had the cup on display at Silverstone and felt very proud, as we were only the second register to receive it in the whole history of the club! Silverstone concluded with 30 Ys doing two laps of the racing circuit, terrific.

During this time our committee had grown a little, additions were David Pelham as PR man, Brian Moyse as treasurer and Paul Barrow. Colin chose to stand down as chairman in 1995 and was succeeded by Paul Rundell, who later on handed over to Peter Arnell. It was a pleasure to have had the opportunity of working with the committee. A more loyal and hardworking group you could not have wished to meet. The year 2000 saw me moving to the West Country, so I handed over the reins to the committee.

For me the end of an era with friends made worldwide, and to think this all started with three elderly men; David Washbourne, Colin Rae and myself, meeting in an Inn just before Christmas.

## HISTORY OF THE Y REGISTER, PART 2

By David Hague, 'Regalia & Sales' 01730 266362, fax 01926 740206.



First Brittany Tour; Mont St Michelle, Sept. 1992  
Photo:- Dennis Doubtfire

**I MUST START BY THANKING** Dennis Doubtfire and Colin Rea for their enthusiasm and dedication in the early years to get our Register off the ground. Without them we would still be no more than an adjunct to the T Register. It is largely thanks to them that the Register is now very active and a Y Type is now seen as a very desirable restoration project.

As Dennis has written earlier, Colin moved away in 1995 and was ably replaced as chairman by Paul Rundell. I well remember Paul telling us that he was moving house around that time. He was very enthusiastic about the size and capability of the garage and outhouses, then as an afterthought "oh, and the house has some bedrooms, etc". Readers will fully understand! Although Paul has since sold his Y Type it is still actively involved through its new owner and Paul remains of course a very active member of the MGCC with his TC, MGA etc.

In 1998 Paul handed over to Peter Arnell, owner of several MGs and an active member of the SE Centre who is still our very capable chairman to this day. However when Dennis himself moved down to the West Country in

2000, it was very difficult to find a replacement for him. It was really only then that we realised how much Dennis had been doing for the Register. His title was Secretary, however in practice he was also Registrar, *Safety Fast!* scribe, minutes secretary and looked after ordering, stocking and sales of Regalia. Our other committee members in 2000 when Dennis departed were Ian Hopkins, Jack Murray, Andrew Gilham, Bill Atkinson, David Pelham, Brian Moyes, Paul Barrow who took over from Brian as Treasurer in 1999 and myself, David Hague.

A major innovation in early 1998 was the publication of Dave Lawrence's book *Let There Be Ys*, which has become a 'must have' for anyone restoring a Y. It has proved so popular that it has now sold out. We would quite like to be inundated with requests for a re-print but would need to be pretty sure of selling a couple of hundred to try and persuade Dave to organise this.

Before his departure, Dennis had talked Ian Young into taking over as Secretary. Ian is mainly a classic motorcycle enthusiast, stretching to a third wheel with his Morgan and even trying a

fourth wheel for a spell with his Y Type. At the same time Dennis used his powers of persuasion to recruit Neil Cairns, that well-known technical guru, as *Safety Fast!* scribe. Neil tells me he is still awaiting the £100 K salary he was promised when head-hunted for this post! The rest of the committee then 'volunteered' (with much twisting of arms behind backs) to take over Dennis's other functions, Jack Murray becoming Registrar & Regalia stockist and I became minute secretary and looked after Regalia sales. Dennis continued his association with the Register as West Country representative (and occasional consultant).

The foreign tours continued with a five day excursion to Holland in 2000. Dennis was obviously missing his involvement in matters Y and organised a tour of his local Exmoor the following year. In fact this was to the eastern part of Exmoor and he followed this up a year or two later with the western area tour of Exmoor. In 2001 we were saddened to lose our colleague Bill Atkinson who died far too young. Bill was a trusty and reliable friend who could always be relied upon to locate the nearest bar selling decent ale! It is always a pleasure to meet up with his widow Lesley at our annual committee lunch. To commemorate Bill we now have the 'Y Register Bill Atkinson Cup' for the best YB.

2002 was quite an eventful year. Ian went back to bikes and handed over the secretarial pen to John Edwards, owner of two Y Types, though only one was on the road. John also took over the writing of minutes at our committee meetings. He organised a one-off event, a riverside picnic in August, which fortunately was blessed with good weather; several outdoor games and a wind-up gramophone playing chart-toppers from the 50s. The following month we went



# HISTORY OF THE Y REGISTER, PART 3

By Jack Murray, 'Registrar'. 01730 300134.



Jerry Birkbeck (black jacket, Midlands Rep & Spring Run Organiser) awarding Ted Gardner (Register Secretary) a certificate for the Best Clearhooters Spotlight, at the 2005 Spring Run' Photo:- Neil Cairns.

**HAVING PREVIOUSLY READ** the contributions from Dennis and David, you can see that I took over the vacant Registrar's job from Dennis when he moved westwards in 2000.

Since the Register's inception in 1991, thanks to the efforts of Dennis and Colin Rae, there had been a gradual growth of interest in the Y Type. The result was that we were receiving a steady stream of information about Y Types around the world. By the time that Dennis left us for warmer climes, the register had grown to hold information on 880 cars.

At this time my knowledge of modern technology was limited to the use of a school's 'BBC Master' computer. Using this highly advanced machine, I had attempted to form an embryonic database – real state of the art stuff, whilst maintaining most of our records on

a card index system.

Our knowledge base received a mammoth boost when contact with John Lawson resulted in his generous offer to share the information he held. I feel that this may need some clarification to those who may be new to the Y Type.

John Lawson was, and still is, the organiser of a completely independent 'Y Register' that preceded our own by many years. His interest and enthusiasm for the model and his bi-monthly newsletter 'The Classic Y' eventually prompted him to publish the Y owners' bible of that time *M.G. Y Type Saloons and Tourers*. Unfortunately, this book is now out of print although it remains a source of valuable information and second hand copies can still be obtained from our Register sales person, David Hague.

John's release of information boosted the knowledge we already held by a further 597 cars giving us a total of 1477 in 2002, a welcome increase. This massive increase in information coincided with the demise of my BBC "calculator" and the welcome arrival of a more up to date machine, capable of organising a real database that could be interrogated efficiently. Despite the use of modern technology, I still endeavour to maintain the old index card system and John and I update each other on a regular basis.

The next significant event that had a real impact on our knowledge base was the inception of our Y Register website, which took to the ether in April 2002. With the approval and support of the Committee, Paul Barrow set the ball rolling and remains the webmaster

to this day, enhancing the profile of the Y Type worldwide and performing his role with great efficiency. Find the website at [www.mgytypes.org](http://www.mgytypes.org). Since the website now reaches all corners of the world, we have become aware of Y Types on all continents, from Cuba to Argentina and India to Japan, with most countries in between. Of course, there has been a vast increase in our knowledge of cars that were originally exported to Australia and the U.S.A.

In consequence of all these developments, our information now comes from a variety of sources including Main Club, survey forms, website registration forms, Register Area Representatives and reliable eagle eyed Y owners from across the globe.

In conclusion, the Y Register continues to go from strength to strength with unknown cars still appearing on a regular basis and proud new owners being registered with some frequency. Currently, we hold details on 1680 cars worldwide. The breakdown of this number is that we have knowledge of 1002 YAs, 377 YBs and 301 YTs. Unfortunately, of the 1680 cars we have listed, we are currently only able to confirm that 848 are on the road or under restoration both in the U.K. and around the world. We have confirmation that 121 can be classified as "dead" and the remaining cars are at present listed as fate unknown.

Hopefully, appreciation of the Y Type will continue to grow as it has since the Register was formed and our records will continue to reflect this.



'Gold Cup Celebration Run 1997' Photo: Brian Cox