



Welcome to the Y TYPE REGISTER Newsletter

Dennis Doubtfire – President of the MGCCY Type Register

In our last spread in the summer we introduced a long-term and thoroughly committed YB owner – Richard Dick. I thought it would be well worthwhile to recognise the contribution made by our President, Dennis Doubtfire.

Without Dennis, and in the early days Colin Rea, the MGCC Y Type Register would probably not have been formed. Certainly, the tremendous dedication of John Lawson captured both in his book

MG Y Type Saloons and Tourers and his own Register and newsletter raised the profile and awareness of the marque. However, it was and continues to be the commitment and dedication that Dennis applied that truly raised the awareness of the Y Type and led to the formation of the MG Y Type Register as a significant force in the MG world.

Early Days

Dennis, who retired from the motor trade as a garage proprietor in Surrey in 1988, bought his first MG – a TD, that year. Then, in his own words, Dennis mentioned: *“1989 saw the MG bug biting harder and I bought YMG 125, and then spent the next four years de-rusting and restoring her”*.

The interests of the Y Type had come under the wing of the T Type Register for a number of years. But for too long this pretty and practical model had been butchered for spares – especially the engine – for the more glamorous TCs–TFs.

Their presence on the roads of the UK was limited as I can recall in the late 1960s and early 1970s. Very few were advertised and until the MG specialists NTG began to cater for them from 1968 there was very limited support for the production of spares and next to nothing for body spares.

That the Y had much the same running



Dennis sharing a joke with Lesley Atkinson, Luxembourg 1997

gear as TCs–TDs theoretically made mechanical parts easier to source. This though was a double-edged sword as there was a greater probability that Ys ‘ripe for restoration’ would probably end up being acquired by T Type owners. Something that is far less likely nowadays as the status of the Y model is now far greater than in Dennis’s early days of dealing with the T Register.

Dennis became an annual contributor



Dennis’ lovely YB at Henstridge



Dennis the navigator – “You don’t need sat navs – this is the route!”



Dennis the chauffeur – “Now ladies just follow me, but don’t open the sun roof!”



Dennis and Brian Church, 1993



Racing Dennis bursting up the test hill at Brooklands



Dennis and Jerry Birkbeck with Gold Cup Spring Run, 1998

to the T Register Yearbook in which a ‘Y’ column of two sides of A4 was allowed. Indeed a casual observer would have had no idea that the Y Type’s interests were represented within this T Type publication.

In the 1991 Yearbook, Dennis’s contribution was entitled ‘YA, YB, YT – Why not?’ He spoke to Jack Murray, our Registrar, who was “amazed that the first car that Mollie (his wife) had driven was a Y Type – UMG49 – which was her sister’s car!” His other contributors mentioned seeing Dick Jacobs racing a Y Type at Silverstone and winning his class as the spur to buying a Y back in 1954. Another recalled that “most girls prefer a car to a pillion seat and so for motorcyclists compromises had to be made”. He went on to add that he was attracted to the “classic, flowing lines”, the “relative ease to work on the car” and “despite the fact that

the car is not a rag top – fresh air motoring can be enjoyed courtesy of the sunshine roof and the opening windscreen”.

Through his willingness to become involved, Dennis was able to make contacts with the Y-owning community and made many new friends as a result.

A new Register is formed

Anyhow, along with Colin Rea and David Pelham, Dennis broke from the T Register to form a specific Y Type Register within the MG Car Club in 1991. So thanks to him the Y Type is well recognised and supported through the MG Car Club for over 22 years. Such was Dennis’s drive, it was great to see that, in 1997, the 50th Anniversary of the launch of the Y Type, that the fledging Register won the MGCC Nuffield Gold Cup. A rare honour

indeed, as traditionally Centres rather than individual Registers had won the award.

Getting to know Dennis

I first came across Dennis in 1992 when I bought a 1950 YA and rejoined the MG Car Club. My details were forwarded to the Register and I began to talk to him over the phone to tap into his vast knowledge



Dennis offers sage advice as Neil Cairns sorts out Alan Chick's fuel system: "Has Jo lost Jerry again?"



Dennis the salesman – "How can I help you?"



Dennis looking somewhat lost – "Where did I put the car last night?"

of not only Ys but also other models. He would willingly send parts and guidance – generally in a handwritten letter, which on occasions (most) that was never that easy to read!

He persuaded me to organise a *Spring Run* in March 1997 as a celebration of 50 years of Y Types to be known as the *Birth of the Y Run*. This was really well attended and drew models from across England and Wales. This has now emerged into an Annual Event.

There are a legend of tales about Dennis that include his love of speed and arriving in style at events, losing the rest of the pack in the first trip to Brittany and one that is worth recounting.

Dennis had run out of petrol and was parked up at Stonehenge on his way back to Somerset when remarkably our Secretary Brian Moyse motored along and, seeing Dennis, rescued him and got him on the road again.

Dennis – El Presidente

At our AGM in 2007, it was agreed that Dennis, who had done so much for the Register, should be honoured following his retirement as Secretary and move to the West Country. The outcome was that he was appointed, or should that be anointed, as our President appropriately in the Diamond Jubilee of the Y.

Dennis is now firmly ensconced in

Somerset with his wife, Barbara. He sold his TD a few years ago but his lovely MG is well fettered and appeared earlier this year at the SW Gathering.

Dennis's beautiful YB, very appropriately registered YMG 125, pictured at the SW Gathering in August 2011

The photographs show Dennis throughout the years at various events in the UK and Europe.

Perhaps it is fitting that Dennis should have the last few words:

"My Interests include gardening (mostly grass cutting), shed maintenance, MGs and keeping the house up to scratch. Photo by courtesy of Spitting Image!"

More on electronic ignition

Readers may recall my experiences in trying to fit a commercially available electronic ignition system. Sadly, after a number of problems I returned the product and was duly reimbursed.

Recently I was forwarded from HQ a letter from Sid Brooks who lives in Littlehampton, West Sussex. He had seen my note earlier in the year on electronic ignition and he thought that his exploits may be of interest. I thought that it would be very useful for our members and have included his letter in full.

I leave Sid to take up the story:

"I started with my BGT, where cleaning and gapping the points is a pain through poor accessibility. Deciding that reduced maintenance and minimum modification was the objective I concluded that a Transistor Assisted system, i.e. one in which the current gain of a transistor is used to reduce the current through the points, would be suitable.

A kit of parts was obtained from Maplin Electronics and was fitted to the BGT in April 1995 and has run for 45,000 miles without problem. You can visit Maplin online or visit

a local store (www.maplin.co.uk/ignition-amplifier-kit-316 to buy online)."

Fitting a unit to the Y

Sid goes on to explain how he fitted his unit to his mother's Y Type.

"The next step was to fit a unit to the Y. The Y is of course POSITIVE earth and the kit is NEGATIVE earth. Whilst it is easily possible to re-polarise the Y electrics, I did not want to do this. Study of the circuit diagram showed that a simple modification would allow POSTIVE earth operation. This was fitted to YMG 5 in May 1997 and has now covered 17,000 miles.

Measurement shows the current through the contact breaker (c/b) points is reduced from the normal 4.0 amps to 0.18 amps and there is no pitting or discoloration of the points.

The unit is small, and to avoid contamination I fitted it inside an ex-throat pastille tin measuring 3/12 x 2 x 7/8 inches. In the Y this is mounted inside the Battery Box and is not seen. The only visible bit is three wires from the bottom of the Battery

Box close to the ignition coil.

Fitting is simple with little modification:

- *Remove or disconnect the capacitor (condenser) fitted in the distributor head*
- *Remove the wire from the SW terminal of the ignition coil and fix it to a point of the unit*
- *Connect SW of coil to a point on the unit*
- *Remove wire from the CB terminal of the coil and connect it to a point on the unit*
- *Connect CB of coil to earth (chassis)."*

Syd goes on to mention that if anyone would like details of the POSTIVE EARTH modifications then he can send them. (Anyone interested, please contact me and I will forward your contact details to Syd.) This was the early approach to electronic ignition, where you still use the points as a switch but reduce the current that they take and hence no pitting. You still get wear in the points (on the fibre heel) and still need to check the gap occasionally, but not replace the points.

Spring Run 2012

We have now finalised a venue for the 2012 Spring Run. We are venturing west and visiting the superb Forest of Dean, This will be over the weekend of May 12 & 13 2012 and we will be based in Goodrich at the Hostelrie where we will be holding our Annual Dinner on the evening of May 12.

I am hoping that around 50 will attend this. Details will be sent out of the Hotel, menu etc, in due course and will be published on our website. For those of you who do not have access to the internet then please phone me

Sunday 13th will see a start hopefully from Goodrich Castle, which is on the northern side of the village and has car parks, catering and toilets. I have yet to resolve this but by the time this article is printed I will hopefully have sorted everything and will be able to send out application forms as well as having a copy on our website.

Other events in 2012

Below is a list of likely events for 2012 where it is known from experience that Y Types and their owners be very welcome. For a number, final dates have to be released:

Spring Weekend and Run 2012

May 12 & 13 in the Forest of Dean – full details to be released later (this may well have been published by the time this newsletter has been printed).

MGCC SW Centre AutoAero Charity Day 2012

Peter Vielvoye to advise at a later date if this is on.

Macmillan Classic Motor Show 15 July 2012

Local event held at Clandon Park, near Guildford, attracted 300 multi-marque cars this year. Further information and registration forms will be available from Brian Moyses in January 2012.

Churchill Classic Car Show June or July 2012

Show held in the Cotswolds. This is a bi-annual event and is a super show with over 500 classic cars parked on the village green. Further details from Jerry Birkbeck.

Ripon Old Car Show July 29 2012

Further information will be available from Andrew Coulson nearer the time.

Cranleigh Classic Car Show August 19 2012

Another local event held in Surrey, attracted five Y Types this year. Brian Moyses will coordinate attendance closer to the date.

Autumn Run 2012

Peter Sharp to advise.

And finally...

All that's left to say is a very Happy Christmas and New Year and keep those Ys on the road.