



# WELCOME TO THE **YTYPE** NEWSLETTER

I am writing this at the beginning of November, a few days before the *Classic Car Show* at the NEC where hopefully I may have caught up with some of you. It is season's greetings time, so to all Y owners and followers a very happy Christmas and New Year.

This Newsletter has two principal articles with some photos of the restoration of a couple of Ys. Neil Cairn's

well-known YB was badly damaged earlier this year and he finally picked up the repaired car on the first Friday of November.

The second is indeed a restoration of a YB that Peter Sharp, our Secretary, acquired in 2006. Peter's tale is both informative and encouraging, especially for anyone about to commence a rebuild.

## THE IMPOSSIBLE WE DO TODAY, MIRACLES TAKE LONGER

It was a nice clear morning on Sunday April 29 2018, an ideal day to go for a run in our 1952 MG YB. But it was to prove a devastating day for the poor car because as we negotiated a mini roundabout only a mile from our home, a young lad in a silver Corsa failed to slow for the junction and 'straight-lined' the roundabout. He ended up going across the front of me, on the wrong side aiming for a decreasing gap. It all happened in less than two seconds but his car took the front off my YB, the Corsa riding up the off-side wheel and becoming airborne. At a guess he was doing

30mph and I was doing about 5-8mph. The photo says it all. The day out had come to an abrupt halt. Details were exchanged and my car was totally unmoveable. The suspension was all smashed and the wheel at a drunken angle, the wing ripped off and the whole front end pushed sideways. I used the insurance recovery to get my car home as it was a Sunday and no garages were open. I was adamant the car would go to Brown and Gammons of Baldock, as they had restored the body in 2009.

Then the hassle with the insurance company began. They told me to put

the car in my garage; I told them it was IMMOVEABLE. It ended up outside my house, on the road, for two days whilst I argued with them over getting it to B&G. They wanted it to go to one of their 'repairers' and simply did not understand that you do not just get a new wing off the shelf for a car that they only made 1,301 of 65 years ago! I reminded them of their clause that whilst my car was at home it needed to be in a locked garage overnight. They relented and B&G collected the YB on the Tuesday. Then I was told that as we had not worn seat belts, this could affect our claim. I saw red and demanded to know if they knew what year the Construction and Use Regulations required seat mounting points to be built into a car, and what year the law came out about wearing them. There was silence at the other end. I pointed out that a car designed in the late 1930s with a wooden floor did not have seat belts. The last straw was when the forms arrived for my claim of injury (my left hand was badly bruised where the steering wheel had hit it when the car was thrown sideways, as I changed gear). I had told them of the hand injury, but THEY had added "back and neck pain". I am an honest chap and refused to get



The car immediately after the accident.







Heading off to Brown and Gammons involved in such chicanery. The car was in storage as B&G simply could not drop everything to do my car. It would have to await its turn. Explaining this to the insurers bought the comment that they would only pay the storage for one month. Another argument ensued when they again wanted to move the car to one of their approved restorers. When the lad checked their list of 'approved restorers', guess whose name was on it. Yes, B&G.



On the mend



Neil being handed the keys by Ron Gammons

The week after the damage, I used the MGCC Y Register Facebook page to obtain the items needed to repair the car that were peculiar to the YB. Most of the mechanicals are straight TD/TF/MGA but bodywork items are non-existent. By the end of the week I had a new damper, a serviceable steering rack, offers of three wings and a wheel. Chrome items like bumpers, etc, are available from NTG of Ipswich. The biggest problem was finding a wing that was not rusted away at its edges, and that did not require extensive repair before it could be used. A friend of the Y Register spotted a pair on eBay a month later and B&G bought them. I inspected the one used on my car and it was in excellent condition. It is well worth



Bent and broken suspension and steering components

belonging to a club as the contacts you have are gold dust; without them one would be really stumped. B&G carried out their inspection for the repairs and found the chassis was perfectly straight. The quote for the work required was mostly man-hours and the cost eye-watering; thank the stars for agreed-value cover.

After a nail-biting period of time the phone call eventually came that the car was ready for collection. It



Back, as good as new



has virtually a complete new front suspension, as both kingpins were found to be bent (one possibly by a pot hole some months before the crash). A huge bill went to the insurance company and I had to pay the excess plus some extra work I got them to do. There is a before-and-after photo for

you to study. Having not driven it for six months and got used to my wife's Fiat Panda with its power steering, it was a bit of a surprise to find the YB's direct rack and pinion system quite heavy at first. Modern drivers are spoilt with their servos and steering power. The car is once again stunning and my

wife followed me home in her car and commented on just how many people stopped to watch me pass. B&G have pulled a miracle from the bag and resurrected my 'Pride and Joy'. Ron Gammons handed the keys over to me on condition I avoid silver Corsas.

**Neil Cairns**

## THE RESTORATION OF LDA 506/YB1127

In 2006 I bought two MG Y Types: our wonderful GBX 166/Y6041 who is now a full member of the family and LFG 662/YB1100 which was a chassis and body and bits with a V5. The latter was bought with the intention of restoration, something to keep me occupied. I set about collecting all the parts I needed to complete it, with all the best intentions one has for getting a classic back on the road. While getting parts, I visited Dave Gibson in Newton Longville to look at a boot lid. Among the spares he had was a whole YB with everything necessary to make a whole car. He wanted the engine for his TD but he had a spare engine in parts (bits in a box, actually). I bought it from him and sold YB1100. I don't know what state it is in now. I haven't heard from the buyer, although I did ask for progress reports. In retrospect I should have kept it – the panels were better than anything I have acquired since; ah, well.

The new YB LDA 506/YB1127 came with the engine of YB 1093 (SC2/17960) which came off the line at Abingdon two weeks earlier. I don't know what became of that car. The engine went to T&L Engineering for a rebuild. The crankshaft of SC2/17960 was unusable, but luckily I got a spare one when I bought Y6041. This went into the rebuild and the engine waited patiently, with all its bearings graphited, to be put into YB 1127.

Stuff from eBay, from the MGCC Y register and from friends was stockpiled. There was an almost complete kit of parts with the car when I bought it but you have to keep buying stuff, don't you...don't you?

YB 1127 was first registered to John William Lloyd on May 15 1953 in Wednesfield, Staffordshire, and spent

the next 20 years around what's now called the West Midlands. It passed through eight hands before being sold to Geoff Lebbon in August 1972 for £38.00. Geoff owns LB Restoration Services, then based in Walsall, now still going strong in Cornwall. He did not, however, restore YB1127 although he still remembers it fondly and still has a YT that has to be 'got around to'. He sold it to an antiques dealer who put it in a shed and left it there, for about 15 years I think. During that time the shed roof leaked water onto the car. It was sold in 1988 to Alfred Chow and his brother in Islington. They also bought two 1970 MGBs and built them into one racing MGB and did some of what Alfred calls 'unofficial racing'. YB1127 was sold on in June 1993 in sad circumstances. It had started and run while Alfred had it, but not on the road. "The engine ran and it drove, but there were no brakes," Alfred told me. The tax disc was still on the windscreen, dated September 1973.

It was bought by Tony Hewlett, from London Colney, who gave it the first attention it had had since, well, since the 1970s. Tony spent a lot of money restoring the chassis, brakes, suspension, Jackall and steering. The engine was rebuilt and the engine compartment and front valance were sprayed.

Tony sold the car to Dave and Dorinda Gibson in 1999. I bought it from them in March 2008.

I stored it while I planned a rebuild and, as I said, collected parts for it. What amazed me at the time was that, wherever I went to collect parts I'd won on eBay or bought from classified advertisements, I found garages, sheds and barns full of other cars. Some were in temperature-controlled



Dragged out of the lock up in 1993



Chassis rebuilt and painted in the 90s



As collected in 2008





facilities, some were in lock-ups or domestic garages, some were in dilapidated sheds. Some were pristine, some were concours. (While looking for the company that was going to re-core the radiator I went to the wrong farm by mistake and walked into a barn full of concours condition classic cars, all cocooned in transparent temperature-controlled tents. The owner told me they were for his pleasure; he never showed them or drove them.) There were many more, er... projects, shall we say. Crumbling wrecks that were becoming crumblier every year while the owners waited for the 'right price' to be offered. Piles of bits were very common too, the owners confident that "if I could get a good two days to work on them, it'd get through an MOT". It's amazing what's out there.

The reason I was looking for more bits was that when I had the wings and other panels blasted, I found that they weren't as good as I thought. It is a shock when what you think is pressed steel turns out to be finely crafted lacework! I also found that part of the rear wheel arch consisted of a tack welded refrigerator door and that one rear wing had been repaired using a number plate. I thought that the restoration would be a matter of stripping the paint on the body and having it resprayed. Stripping and blasting showed that almost every panel was rotten or had been poorly repaired, all apart from the usually worst body section, the lower rear wheel compartment; this had been replaced. After a few false starts with unsuitable workshops, the car ended up at P.J Smith Classic & Modern Paint & Bodywork Ltd in Bedford in October 2010. Phil took the body off (the chassis



Undergoing restoration

was in the same good condition as when it was rebuilt in the 1990s) and separated it into its components.

The car has been with Phil since. He is a painstaking perfectionist but even he hasn't spent all that time on the car. He agreed that he would work upon it as funds permitted; he had a lot of other work to do as well as mine. In the past few months the body has been painted and reunited with the chassis and engine. The engine was started in August for the first time since its rebuild, which was the first time the car had been fired up for over 45 years. As it was less than 20 years old when it was taken off the road, that's two thirds of its life. It is almost finished now, apart from trimming. How much have I spent? I don't know and I'm scared to tot it all up. Will I get my money back? Not a chance. But if I've been responsible for bringing a neglected, crumbling Y Type back to life, I'm happy.



## DEREK MOORE'S YB MEETS UP WITH PADDY HOPKIRK'S BMC 1800

Reg Dixie has kindly forwarded me a photo taken in Abingdon earlier this year, following the MGB Register Lecture 'The Story of the 1968 London to Sydney Marathon'. Derek Moore's much-travelled YB meets up with the BMC 1800 that finished second in the famous long-distance rally.

Derek's YB left the Abingdon factory in September 1952 – 16 years before the BMC 1800 left the Competitions Department to be driven by Paddy Hopkirk, Tony Nash and Alex Poole over 9,000 miles to Sydney in November/December 1968.



## ... AND FINALLY!

Our YT gets ready to roll off the Caen-Portsmouth ferry at the beginning of October this year, on return from an excellent break in Normandy, organised by the MGOC.