

WELCOME TO THE Y TYPE NEWSLETTER



Richard with Jerry and Jo in the background

As you read this, we will have had our 2023 Spring Run from Hatton Court Hotel in Gloucestershire on the weekend of May 13-14. It was to have been the weekend before, but the date clashed with another traditional event which pulled rank on us. More about the run in the next edition of *Safety Fast!*, together with an account of the Y Type presence at Gaydon on May 27

This year's run is significant because it will be the last one to be arranged by Chris and Annette Callaghan. Chris has decided, reluctantly, to give up for health reasons.

They took over from Jo and Jerry Birkbeck in 2014. Their runs, ending at interesting places, have always been preceded by a memorable dinner at lovely hotels, mostly in the Cotswolds.

I talked to Chris about organising the runs and about his MG history.

PS: You took over our Spring Runs from Jo and Jerry Birkbeck in 2014, didn't you? They'd done a run since 1997, with local knowledge assistance from Richard Dick. How easy was it for you to take over?

CC: I was used to tulip maps and arrangements for road runs after experience with the Abingdon Works Centre. All I had to do was find a venue and visit it, find a country house hotel and agree a deal for accommodation and evening meal. Then I got out the OS to settle on roads between the two, and did a tulip route map.

PS: Did you get any help with it?

CC: Yes, Annette gave me a bit of help.

PS: In which way?

CC: Well, she rang up the hotels, got deals from them and worked out a menu.



shaped place card and printed the names and choices on them.

PS: What would you say is the most difficult part of arranging road runs, the route or the organisational detail that goes with it?

CC: Probably the detail.

PS: So doing the runs has been a partnership thing for you and Annette?

CC: Oh definitely, 50/50 all the way.

PS: 50/50 Chris?

CC: Well, maybe 60/40.

PS: At least.

Chris and Annette have suffered from the usual niggles that beset anyone organising any sort of car road run. One year a bridge repair scheduled by Network Rail to begin on a Monday was started on the Sunday of a run (lack of communication between contractors? Who'd have thought!). One year the route crossed the Thames by Swinford Bridge. George III allowed the builders to charge for crossing and retain profits tax free. George's generosity still stands, with the crossing fee barely changed. Chris therefore had to provide 20 drivers with a shiny 5p piece each to get across.

Chris has MG and Abingdon in his blood, starting with going to the MG Social Club in 1967; cousins, aunts and uncles all worked for MG at Abingdon. Famously, his Auntie June was pictured on tins of MG Car Club Sweets sold at Kimber House, trimming Y Types on the line. This tin has now been superseded but she is still to be seen on a big display picture upstairs at Gaydon Motor Museum. His uncle, Alan McDonald, was a test driver for MG on TDs, TFs, MGAs and MGBs. His job, Chris says, was to "pick two or three cars a day and drive them" On one occasion at the end of a long straight, the MGB he was testing carried straight on into a field. Instead of the steering wheel guiding the car round the bend, it came off in his hands. Back at the factory he forcibly expressed his opinion of the line operatives, one of whom had simply forgotten to do up the bolts. He has owned many MGs over the years, including a J2 which he rebuilt, an M Type, four or five MGBs (he's not sure how many) and three MG YBs.

After serving as committee secretary for some years (another at least 60/40 split with

PS: And that was that?

CC: She worked out a table plan and had it drawn up so people would know where they were sitting.

PS: And people ordered their meals from the menu when they got there?

CC: No, they sort of decided beforehand.

PS: How did they know what was on the menu?

CC: Annette got a copy of the menu and everybody who was attending told her what they wanted.

PS: So, she had to chase people for their choices and let the hotel know in plenty of time.

CC: Yes.

PS: All people had to do was to turn up then. Sit down, eat and chat. Every pre-arranged meal I've ever had anything to do with, at least half the people there had no clue what they'd ordered. Was that ever a problem?

CC: No, there were place settings on each table with a person's name and menu choices: starter, main and pudding.

PS: Good of the hotels to do that.

CC: No, Annette did that.

PS: The hotel had the place settings and she filled them in?

CC: No, Annette designed an Octagon



Chris and his Y Type

Annette) he became Chairman in 2017 and after a break came back in 2022. He is giving up organising the Spring Runs for health reasons; he says he finds it hard to hold a pen and his lung capacity is down to 60%. We thank him for his efforts over the years, which have helped keep the Register alive and well, and wish him many more years of motoring – Y Type, MG and Super Minx together.

Mick Briere has bravely volunteered to organise our Spring Runs from next year. We all look forward to seeing where he takes us.

Pictures here include Chris and Annette at Abingdon's entrance gate in 1987; the MG/Pavlova sign has now happily been saved and restored and is on display at

Kimber House. I have also included a picture of the Spring Run's first organisers, Jerry and Jo Birkbeck and Richard Dick.

The picture of the 2018 Dinner shows the standard of function that Chris and Annette have organised for us.

