

CLASSIC CARS FOR SALE

WELL, Y NOT?

Contributor **Chris Adams** on why he bought one

It was ten years ago while searching for a more capacious MG to accompany our 1972 MGB Roadster that I and my partner spotted an MG which I was previously unaware of – the Y Type built from 1947 and 1953.

We wanted something with more passenger and luggage space and the deco styling of an Old English white YB, spotted at a Beaulieu Autojumble, appealed to our taste, so we purchased Priscilla.

With its running boards, extended wheel arches, wind-out windscreen, suicide doors, centre split lift-up bonnet and exposed headlights, they look distinctly old fashioned when put alongside the 'modern' ZA which superseded it in 1953.

While there were 6158 YAs built from 1947 to 1951 just 1301 YBs were constructed between 1951 and 1953 and of these the Y Register says just 180 are still known to exist. One reason that so few survive is that many Y Types were scrapped for their running gear as it fits the more fancied MG TB, TC, TD and TF sports cars.

There was a YT open-top four-seater tourer version made between 1948 and 1951 – I have seen examples of YAs and YBs being chopped to create a YT as they are more desirable and command a hefty premium so be careful here.

It takes a while to spot the difference between the YA and YB – the latter features fuller rear wings to accommodate the 15 inch wheels and has hub cap medallions while underneath it gets an uprated braking system, improved rear axle and stiffer front



shock absorbers plus a front anti-roll bar. When it comes to performance, the statistics say 62mph should be reached in a dizzying 28 seconds - this sounds an age and is. But it does pull away from the line to 30mph surprisingly quickly while cruising is best done at about 50mph where the YB is happiest.

Originally the Y Type was installed with a four-speed gearbox, but one of the popular conversions is to fit a modern five-speed transmission to give better flexibility and it is well worth doing as it makes high-speed motoring more relaxing.

Under the bonnet is the familiar 46bhp XPAG 1250cc engine. Originally supplied with a single SU carb the YT was fitted with twins and as a result power was upped to 54bhp – our YB is also fitted with twin carburettors which gives it an extra kick.

As well as the transmission upgrade, another popular enhancement is the installation of servo-assisted braking for the all-round drum brakes which, to check-over, will require a five point puller for the rear drums and pads.

Apart from this, working on the YB is as painless as a T Type, as is servicing because it's very much familiar MG territory of the period and everything is accessible and readily available.



I have found specialist NTG Motor Services of Ipswich to be especially helpful in this respect with bits and pieces. The reported Achilles heel of the Y Type, although I have yet to experience it myself thankfully, is the rear half-shafts which have a tendency to fail.

Luxury features of the time include the opening sun roof, leather upholstery and polished walnut interior, while most owners fit modern indicators to supplement the original Semaphore Trafficators.

As well as being easy to look after, the added benefits of a 65 year old YB is zero rating for Vehicle Excise Duty and no requirement for an annual MoT.

Insurance, because of its modest performance and relatively strong construction, is as affordable as you can get and if you can perform the routine servicing yourself there is very little more to do apart from add fuel, making a Y Type one of the cheapest and most practical of classics to own and run; I've certainly don't regret adding one to my fleet of MGs as a T Type alternative but with room for four.

Although relatively scarce, prices for the Y Type remain still very modest in, MG terms; Most of the price guides give a range of £1500 for a basket case up to £7,500 for one in excellent condition, but on a quick internet search I found several early examples commanding prices as high as between £12,000 and £17,000 – or more. Duo-tone painted versions tend to be more desirable and of course the YT convertible commands a premium so £15,000 for a fair-to- good example is not unexpected – many went overseas so you can find them by surfing the wonderful web. And if you want more information or advice on buying and owning a Y Type, the Y Register is a very active group and both the MG Owners Clubs and MG Car Club are willing to assist as well.

