

Reproduced by kind permission of MG Enthusiast – originally published March 2002. Subscription to MG Enthusiast can be obtained at www.mg-enthusiast.com or by telephoning +44(0) 1924 499261.

OWNER'S VIEW

Sedate saloon adds to John Rowe's MG stable

Quality appeal of Forties saloon

Enthusiast John Rowe bought a Russet Brown MGB GT in 1978 and in the following twenty-three years he and his wife, Margaret, have covered over a quarter of a million miles in the car. At one time John acted as an environmental quality advisor to industry and this involved travelling 20,000 to 30,000 miles a year in the MGB. He now works just a few miles from home and does a lot less driving. Although they still have their first MG, recently an MG RV8 has joined the fleet and now serves as comfortable and rapid transport on longer journeys.

Running an MG as an everyday car gave John an interest in the marque and he decided that he would like to have one of the older

type down, the more rust he found. It was clear that the only thing to do was to carry

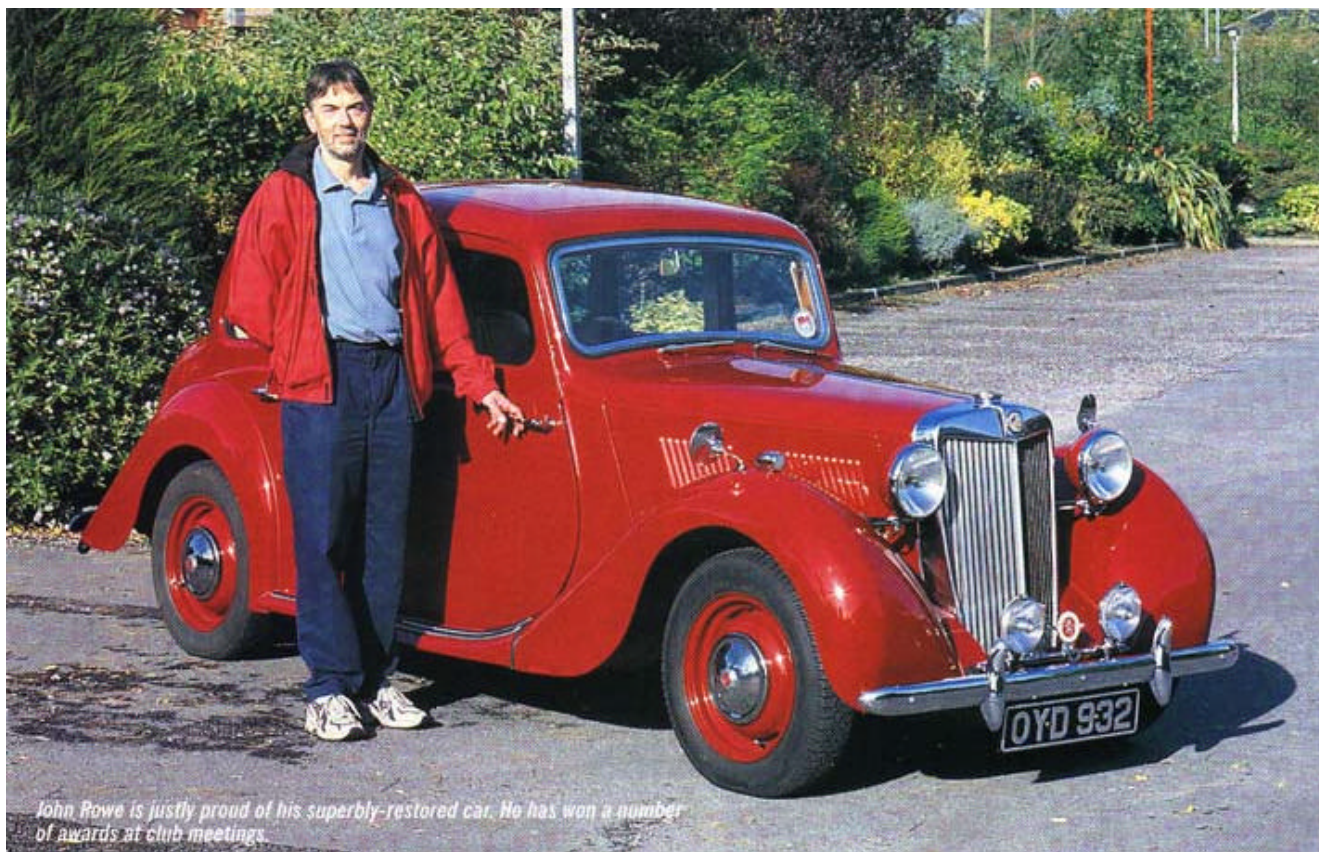
THOROUGH REBUILD

out a full and thorough rebuild, not an easy task with a saloon car. The rear end of the body, the boot floor and spare wheel compartment, as well as the bottom edges of the doors, the door pillars, the wings and running boards, would all need to be repaired or replaced.

Unlike the later sports cars, no replacement panels pressed from original tooling can be purchased from the usual suppliers. Instead, there are some hand

renovating the hundreds of other components took most of John's spare time over a number of years. The engine, gearbox and back axle were carefully taken apart and rebuilt; luckily all these major mechanical units are the originals fitted when the car was new. He searched autojumbles to locate some of the smaller fittings missing when he bought the car and also to find the parts he needed to renovate the other components. He tackled jobs like fitting a new wiring loom and installing brake and jacking system piping.

Y-types have complexities, like the built-in jacking system, that restorers of open two-seater MGs do not have to worry about. Also, with a four-seater saloon car the interior trim



John Rowe is justly proud of his superbly-restored car. He has won a number of awards at club meetings.

MG saloons. At first he considered buying a Z-Magnette, but in the end he concluded that he really wanted a car that had more traditional styling. The 1940s design of the Y-type had great appeal and the search was on to find a suitable example. In 1992 he heard that the car he now owns was for sale and a deal was done.

Having bought what was really a restoration project, it was time to find out exactly how much work was needed. Having initially thought in terms of just tidying things up a bit, the more John stripped the Y-

fabricated repair sections, sills, etc. available, but these require considerable skill to make them fit properly. Time to call in the experts. John turned to a professional body shop who were able to successfully repair the all-steel saloon body. They either fabricated the necessary sections from steel sheet, or adapted the repair sections John purchased. The result was a sound and rust-free body ready for painting. The final finish of Autumn Red two-pack paint was applied professionally.

Cleaning and repainting the chassis, rebuilding the suspension, and stripping and

is both more difficult, and more expensive, to restore. He had the seats covered professionally but John did tackle things like fitting the headlining, carpets, trim panels, etc. The results are a tribute to his skill and effort.

Having undertaken such a comprehensive and thorough rebuild on this car, John says that he is not sure that he would like to tackle another in the near future. However, he says that when he retires in a few years and has more time, he may be tempted. In the meanwhile he enjoys driving his attractive Y-type to MG meetings and entering it in the



After about a year of ownership, the YB looked rather worse than it had when it first arrived. However, this was a low point and professional help with the body soon saw the project on the right road. After a lot of hours, and money, the body was ready for painting. A lot of the metal at the rear of the body had to be replaced. Painted in Autumn Red, the YB body looks much as it must have done when it first arrived at Abingdon nearly fifty years ago.

CONCOURS BUG BITES

concour. He is often accompanied by his father who, although more interested in old motorcycles, takes a keen interest in the other cars on display.

John find his Ytype to be both nice to drive, and able to keep up with traffic on most urban and rural roads. Motorways, however, reveal that the comfortable cruising speed of 55-60 mph is a little low in heavy fast-moving traffic.

Wherever possible these roads are best avoided, especially when visibility is poor. On the other hand, that is a small penalty to pay for running such an appealing small saloon. One wonders if any of the current crop of MGs will gain similar attention when they are fifty years old.