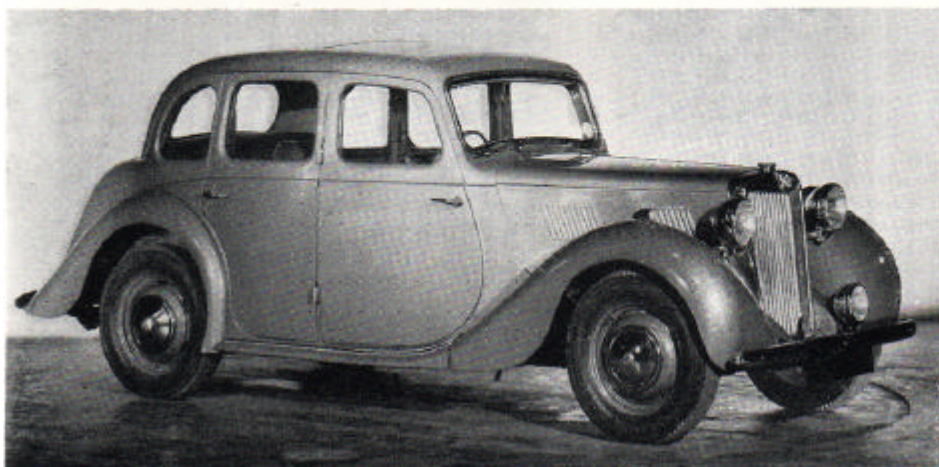


Portrait Gallery

No. 22:

The M.G. 1½-Litre
'Y' type



When the 'Y' type M.G. saloon was announced in 1947, it was the first Nuffield production car to have either independent front suspension or rack-and-pinion steering gear. It represented a major breakthrough in improving the roadability of British small cars, for most other makes were still using pre-war-style 'cart springs'

WITH the outbreak of war in September 1939, production of three saloon M.G.s came to an end, for it put *finis* to the 'VA' (1½-litre), 'SA' (2-litre) and 'WA' (2.6-litre). All three were straightforward, conventional designs of no particular technical merit, but they were well built and fulfilled a need for a high-quality car in the medium-price range. There was therefore a gap to be filled in the immediate post-war years, when the only M.G. built was the two-seater 'TC' Midget. Various people had thought about the next M.G. saloon during the war, when they could spare time from other more important activities, but it was not until the spring of 1947 that it was announced to the public.

Looking back on the 1½-litre M.G. from the standpoint of today, it seems a very ordinary little car, and it is necessary to judge it against the background of those post-war years. There was no Morris Minor in those days. The average small saloon was a singularly dreary cart-sprung device, probably designed before the war, and making no concessions to the more advanced thinking of post-war times.

Into this world came a medium-priced, luxuriously-finished saloon of compact dimensions, propelled by a single-carburettor version of the M.G. 'TC' engine. The body and its appurtenances were altogether conventional — and, therefore, by no means roomy inside — but three things were new to the British motorist of that time: a really stiff box-section frame, effective independent front suspension, and rack-and-pinion steering. They added up to new standards in ride comfort and roadholding, which were greeted with delight by all. By the standards of the times, a cruising speed in the sixties and a maximum of just about 70 m.p.h. meant a fast car, and this was achieved without noise or effort. And for positively the first time, octagon-fanciers were able to buy a car which could maintain its speed over really rough roads without inflicting great suffering on its occupants.

So the 1½-litre M.G. met with the success it deserved, and continued in production for more than six years with comparatively few changes in design. Late in 1948, an open four-seater was produced for export only, with two carburettors instead of one, but less than 1,000 of these were built. More significant was the appearance of the 'YB' saloon at the end of 1951. The brakes of the 'YA'

had never been its strong point, and this problem was solved by the adoption of 2LS brakes at the front. Again, the 'YA' could be made to oversteer more than somewhat, though this upset contemporary road-testers surprisingly little. On the 'YB', the fitting of a front anti-roll bar and smaller wheels improved the roadholding considerably, while larger shock-absorbers were also fitted and the rear axle was changed to a hypoid design of the type then current on the 'TD' Midget. Unfortunately — as so often happens when a car is subject to improvement — the weight crept up at the same time, and this, combined with more 'gentle' valve timing, meant that the 'YB' lacked the acceleration of its predecessor.

The interior of the 'Y' type was very well furnished, although none too spacious. Neat instrumentation was provided in an elegant walnut fascia panel



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SPECIFICATION

Production period: April 1947 to December 1951.

Engine: Four-cylinder with pushrod-operated overhead valves. Capacity 1250 c.c. Full-flow oil filter. Single semi-downdraught S.U. carburetter, 1¼" dia.

Transmission: Single-plate dry clutch. Four-speed gearbox with synchromesh on second, third and top. Open propeller shaft with Hardy Spicer universal joints. Spiral bevel final drive.

Chassis: Box-section steel with tie-rod bracing to scuttle structure. Built-in hydraulic jacks.

Suspension: Independent front by coil-spring and wishbone, with rack and pinion steering. Underslung rear suspension by semi-elliptic leaf springs, interleaved with rubber and rubber-mounted, with inverted rear shackles. Panhard rod at rear. Luvax-Girling hydraulic shock absorbers.

Brakes: Lockheed hydraulic with 9" dia. drums.

Body types: Four-door saloon.

Wheels: Bolt-on pressed steel.

VITAL STATISTICS

Wheelbase: 8' 3"

Track: Front, 3' 11³/₈"; Rear, 4' 2"

Weight: 1 9½ cwt. approx.

Bore and Stroke: 66.5 x 90 mm.

Power output (quoted): 46 b.h.p. at 4,800 r.p.m.

Compression ratio: 7.3 to 7.5:1

Tapet clearances: 0.019" hot, inlet and exhaust

Valve timing: Inlet opens 11 deg. BTDC, closes 57 deg. ABDC. Exhaust opens 52 deg. BBDC, closes 24 deg. ATDC.

Ignition timing: At TDC (retarded)

Tyre size and pressures: 5.25 x 16 in. Pressure, 23 p.s.i.

Rear axle ratio: 5.143 to 1

M.p.h. per 1000 r.p.m.: 14.6

Castor angle: 1 deg. ± ½ deg.

Toe-in: Nil

Carburetter needle: Weak, EF. Standard, Fl. Rich, DK.

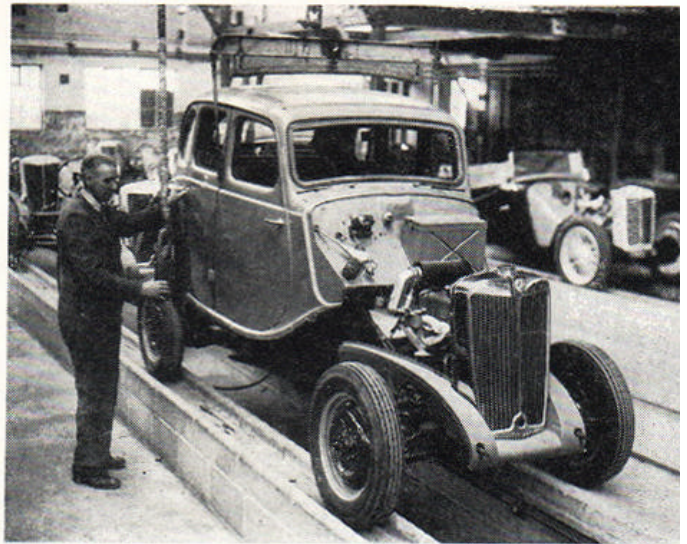
Capacities: Fuel, 8 galls. Water, 13 pts. Oil, 9 pts. (engine);
1¼ pts. (gearbox); 1½ pts. (rear axle).

MODEL 'YT'

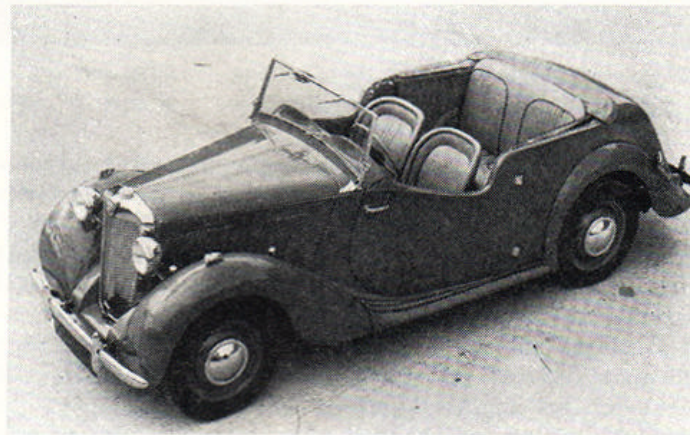
Produced for export only between late 1948 and 1950. Specification virtually identical to 'YA', but fitted with two carburetters. Engine power output, 54.4 b.h.p. at 5,200 r.p.m. (as 'TC' Midget). Gearbox, wide ratio as 'YA'. Weight, 1 8¾ cwt. approx. Body style, two-door, four-seater tourer.

MODEL 'YB'

Produced from December 1951 to August 1953. General specification as 'YA' saloon, with detail changes. Altered valve timing — inlet opens 5 deg. BTDC, closes 45 deg. ABDC; exhaust opens 45 deg. BBDC, closes 5 deg. ATDC. Larger clutch (8" dia. instead of 7¼"). Anti-roll bar fitted to front suspension. Larger shock absorbers all round. Two leading-shoe brakes at front. Hypoid rear axle with slightly higher (5.125:1) final drive ratio (14.42 m.p.h./1,000 r.p.m.). Smaller wheels carrying 5.50 x 15 in. tyres. Castor angle, 2 deg. ± ½ deg. Weight approx. 20¾ cwt. Can be distinguished from the 'YA' model by overriders on bumpers, slightly deeper valances on rear wings, and of course the smaller wheels.



'Y' type saloons were assembled at Abingdon while 'TC' Midgets were still in production. However, most of the 'Y' chassis components later formed the basis of the 'TD' Midget



Comparatively few 'Y' type tourers (above) were built and those were all for export. The 'YB' saloon (below) proved much more popular. It had twin carburetters and externally could be distinguished by the smaller wheels, fatter tyres and deeper wing valances

