



ME AND MY MG

Mike Long explains his love of the MG Y Type.

A few years ago, I decided to buy a classic car, although I actually ended up with two! More of that later. After considerable deliberations about what to buy, I spotted an MG Y Type and nostalgia kicked in. In my distant youth, I had owned a 1952 MG YB, registration UMG 780, which cost me £200 in 1968.

I cut my teeth as both a driver and amateur mechanic in UMG 780, the latter necessary to keep it roadworthy on a student's income. My parental home was on the Isle of Wight and I worked in Warwickshire. The YB completed many journeys between Warwick and Southampton. In those days, the A34 was mostly single carriageway and went through the centre of Abingdon by way of a tortuous one-way system.

Having decided on another Y, I spent a lot of time, and considerable expense, looking for a suitable one. I travelled many miles to look at promising cars, only to be disappointed at my first glance. I can say without fear of contradiction that the camera can lie! I had a close shave with one YB. I liked the car, but a ringing sound

from the bottom of the engine at tick-over bothered me. I thought it was probably the bearings, but decided to buy the car anyway. Fortunately, my head overruled my heart and I changed my mind. The sad tale of the car was later told on the MG Y Type website by its subsequent purchaser. The main bearings failed on his way home. Returning home the second time with the engine rebuilt, one of the rear springs broke.

Getting despondent about ever finding a decent Y at a reasonable price, I saw a 1934 Lanchester LA10 in very original condition for sale. I liked the car and bought it.

Shortly afterwards, in response to my 'wanted' ad on the Y Type website, I was offered UMG 576. I was tempted, but as it was in Yorkshire, I arranged for a local classic car dealer to inspect it for me. His reply was that if I did not buy it for the asking price, he would. So I did.

UMG 576 is an early YB, one of the 'hybrids' produced during the transition from YA to YB production. It was originally supplied by University Motors to Lt Col Philip Jackson, from Carlisle, on 23 January 1952. It had four further owners up to 1969, when it was 'retired'. I have the original buff and green continuation logbooks, which give the full ownership history of the car. A 'Morris Motors Replacement' engine was fitted in January 1961.

In 1998, the owner before me bought it and restored it to roadworthy condition, including a body-off re-spray and new interior trim. Although still incomplete, he returned the car to the road in 2004, but gave it little use. When I bought it in 2009, it had covered only about 200 miles since 1961, mostly to the local garage each year for MOT. It was still incomplete, although most of the parts required to complete it came with the car.

Mike's current MG Y Type UMG 576





Mike's first Y Type, a 1952 MG YB

During the winter of 2009/2010, I completed the restoration, fitting the remaining parts, correcting things not to the original specification and improving things that I thought poorly done. I had to get a few missing parts, including correct wiper wheelboxes to enable the windscreen to be opened. I replaced prominent flashing indicators with more discreet ones and re-commissioned the trafficators, which I use most of the time, although I do use the flashers in heavy traffic.

I had to improvise a few things to get close to the original. It had TD type overriders on the rear bumper. Y Type ones were impossible to get. Morris Minor ones are very similar, readily available and relatively cheap. It took about an hour to modify each with a small angle grinder.

UMG 576 is now fully restored, close to its original specification, with a few period accessories. The original colour was 'duo-green', but I am not certain about the actual shades. As always with old cars, there are still a few things to do, but this will be done as and when time permits.

I try to drive it at weekends as often as weather permits, and attend a few local shows. It has covered about 1,500 miles in the last two years, during which it has proved reliable, and most enjoyable. I have had a few teething problems though.

Firstly, the battery kept discharging when the car was parked, necessitating a handle start, to the amusement of bystanders. I traced this to a faulty 'new' starter switch, which kept a slight contact across the points, allowing current to flow through the starter. Re-fitting the original one, which came with the car, solved the problem. So much for 're-manufactured' parts!

Then, the throttle return spring broke, with an interesting result – just like a Toyota! I had to be towed home by the AA. The spring was quickly replaced with a new one from 'the stores'; I now carry a spare in the boot, just in case, although if the new one lasts as long as the original, it will not be needed by me.

I also had difficulty re-starting when the engine was hot – the common problem with XPAG engines and modern petrol.



UMG 576 with a Bristol K5G CDL 8 bus for company during an event.



This was overcome by fitting a heat shield and insulating washers between the manifold and carburettor.

The photo with the bus was taken at the Isle of Wight Bus Museum annual running day in October 2011. CDL 899 is a Bristol K5G supplied new to Southern Vectis in 1939 and still on its fleet. It is the oldest bus still in service with its original owner in the UK. As befits its venerable age, it is now mainly used for special occasions and private hire for weddings and similar functions.



The Y Type sitting next to the Lanchester.



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