

# The MG Y Type Round Britain Relay



The spiritual home of the MG provided the perfect setting for the finale of an innovative event to mark the 70th anniversary of the MG Y Type on Sunday 30th July.

A gleaming array of Y Types and their owners gathered at Kimber House in Abingdon to welcome in the last two drivers as they completed the final legs of the MG Y-Type Round Britain Relay. Launched almost two months earlier at Lakeside Shopping Centre near Dartford, the event brought together 52 MG Y Types and their intrepid owners who traversed the roads of Britain to raise awareness of this rare model in its 70th birthday year.

Sponsored by Stewart Miller & Peter James Insurance, the Relay featured one of the biggest collections of the model to take part in any single event, and saw vehicles cover an undulating 1,834-mile route around the UK.

Split into a southern and a northern route, the event's 37 stages took drivers to locations throughout the length and

breadth of England, Wales and into Scotland, including the Severn Valley Railway, British Ironworks Centre in Oswestry, The famous hillclimb venue Shelsley Walsh, Gateshead's The Angel of the North and Bamburgh Castle.

Organised by the M.G. Car Club Y Type Register, the MG Octagon Car Club and the MG Owners Club, the event was the brainchild of Y Type Register member Julian Bosworth who wanted a 70th anniversary celebration that would involve Y-Type owners and enthusiasts from across the country.

In the sunshine on the Kimber House drive, Y-Type owners Mike Brown and David Gregory, fresh from completing the last legs of the route, brought together the two halves of a specially-crafted wooden 'Y' baton – each of which had accompanied each driver throughout each leg of the northern and southern routes - to signify the event's culmination.

Following a celebratory reception featuring restorative tea and cupcakes, the completed baton was presented to Ian Quarrington, MG Car Club Chairman, alongside route co-ordinator Maggie Grafham, MG Y-Type Register Chairman Chris Callaghan and event sponsor Peter James, who praised both the organisers and those who took part.





“MG is a marque that is particularly close to our hearts, so to be at Kimber House, celebrating the 70th birthday of such a rare model among those who are most passionate about it is a very special experience indeed.” he explained. Stewart Miller & Peter James Insurance ran a photo competition launched at the start of the Round Britain Relay, offering a voucher for up to £100 worth of insurance to the person who captured the best image of a Y Type taking part in the Relay – to check out the Relay photos and see competition results visit the MGCC Y Type Register webpage. The MG Y Type was constructed in 1939 with a view to launch the model at the 1940 Earls Court Motor Show. However, the onset of WWII delayed its launch until 1947. The styling of the body had its roots in the Series E Morris 8, though the new Y model used a separate chassis. New independent front suspension, designed by Jack Daniels and Alec Issigonis (better

known for his innovative 'Mini') was incorporated and although this had been used in racing 'R' Series MGs in the mid-thirties, the Y was the first Nuffield production car to include this set up. This arrangement became standard in all subsequent MGs – a fact that not too many MG owners are aware of. The Y (only later referred to as the YA) was complemented by a Tourer version – the YT, from 1948 to 1950, most of which were produced for export, and in 1952 the YB was launched, boasting enhanced braking, a hypoid rear axle and smaller wheels.

The Sponsors Stewart Miller & Peter James Insurance is the enthusiasts' Insurance Broker, providing unrivalled insurance expertise and the most beneficial rates for all MG club members.

For more information, call the team on 0121 506 6040.



Bamburgh Castle

## Our part in the MGY Type Round Britain Relay

We were interested to hear about the relay to celebrate the Y types 70th anniversary. The idea was first thought of and route planned by Julian Bosworth, but ably run by Maggie and Paul Grafham. As soon as plans were finalised I put our YA forward, as we have been confident in its reliability lately.

We were selected to carry the baton on the final leg from Rugby to Abingdon. As the start date approached, we decided it would be good to support the teams at the start and on the anticlockwise route. Arriving in good time at Lakeside Shopping Centre we were warmly welcomed to the relay with a coffee by Maggie and Paul .

They had arrived in their well-known 'Little Gem', the car that was willed to the MG Car Club, they knew the former owner so bought it at auction. We chatted to the other participants and took a few photos of the cars and the lovely wooden Y shaped batons, with the magnificent six-foot posters provided by sponsors Stuart Miller and Peter James Insurance as background.

Three Ys set out northbound to the first baton change where Little Gem left us for the long journey home. Then joined by three more Ys and an MGB supporter, we continued the relay through the lovely village of Finchingfield to the Horse and Groom for lunch. This proved to be a brilliant choice, as there was Morris

dancing and a car show in progress. After an excellent lunch we said our goodbyes and reluctantly left the relay to visit the Letchworth Picnic, a car show we planned to visit on the way home. Unfortunately after 134 miles that day 458 YUD let us down with a completely flat battery. Tricia 'phoned the Green Flag and with their help we limped home. Knowing the YA must be reliable for the relay, I fitted a Dynamator supplied by Pete at the Octagon Club and now the car has electricity to spare. Our big day finally came. With excited anticipation we set out early from Luton to be at Rugby before 10am where Ashley



Bateman was waiting for us. He came from Nottingham single-handed in his autumn gold YB to hand over the baton, and continued with us to Abingdon. I heard later this was by far the longest day trip in his ownership, so top marks Ashley for a trouble free run.

Researching the route from Rugby to Kimber House, Tricia found little of interest until realising a short diversion would take us to The British Motor Museum at Gaydon. I had twice before seen Len Shaw's YB rally car at the museum and thought it should be included in the relay. I emailed Tom Caren the show manager, whose permission allowed us to dress the car with our posters for a photo or two and also use their excellent café. Thanks Tom, it proved such a popular idea that the relay teams from Warwick joined us at the museum, along with Peter Sharp who came to support us in his black Y type and Brian Rainbow in his MGB GT.

Soon it was time to head for MG C.C. head quarters, where eight Y types finally lined up at the rear of Kimber House along with our sponsor's van with Sir Stirling Moss's image on it. Maggie and Paul helped by Liz Allsworth organised a great reception and spread for us all. Both the relay baton Ys were reunited on their plinth to the click of many cameras, and so this really superb event came to a very fitting close.

**David and Tricia Gregory**

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