

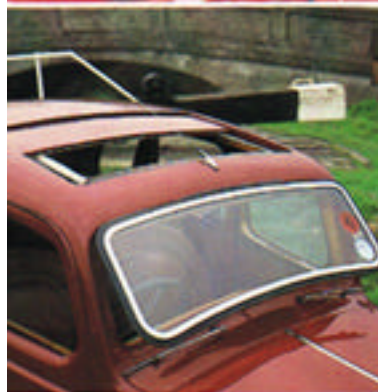
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Y TYPE SALOON

When production of the MG TC resumed at Abingdon after the war, plans were also well advanced for the production of a new MG saloon which had originally been designed during the period 1937 to 1939 for introduction in 1941. The MG Y type or one and a quarter litre saloon as it was sometimes known was really an MG version of the Morris Eight series E, four door saloon and was a pre-war project that Syd Enever and Cowley suspension designer Alec Issigonis had been working on in 1937. The all-steel body resembled that of the Morris but had suitable modifications to the front and rear end to give a traditional MG 'look' with specially swept tail and rear wings. A new and rather more traditional nose included a vertical chrome slat radiator. The chassis however was completely different. The frame was of welded box section and underslung at the rear with leaf spring suspension. Front suspension was independent with coil springs and wishbones which was somewhat a rarity at that time and the first such application to a Nuffield Organisation production car. Torsion bars as used on the earlier 'R' type were not utilised and did not reappear for many years later until the launch of the MGC in 1967. Rack and pinion steering was introduced for the first time on an MG and was mechanically more precise than the Bishop cam type used on the earlier T series models.

Solid and robust, the 'Y' type chassis was to form the basis for many future sports models however like so many pre-war designs the car was far too heavy for its engine with the car weighing in at 20 hundredweights some 440 lbs heavier than the TC. With only a single SU carburettor and a detuned version of the 1250cc XPAG engine, as used in the TB, that had a lower compression ratio and different valve timing, performance was far from brisk. It was however an ideal cruising car with a high degree of comfort and a touch of luxury. The gearbox was a four speed synchromesh unit with remote control that was renowned for its positive change and the rear axle was of conventional MG design.

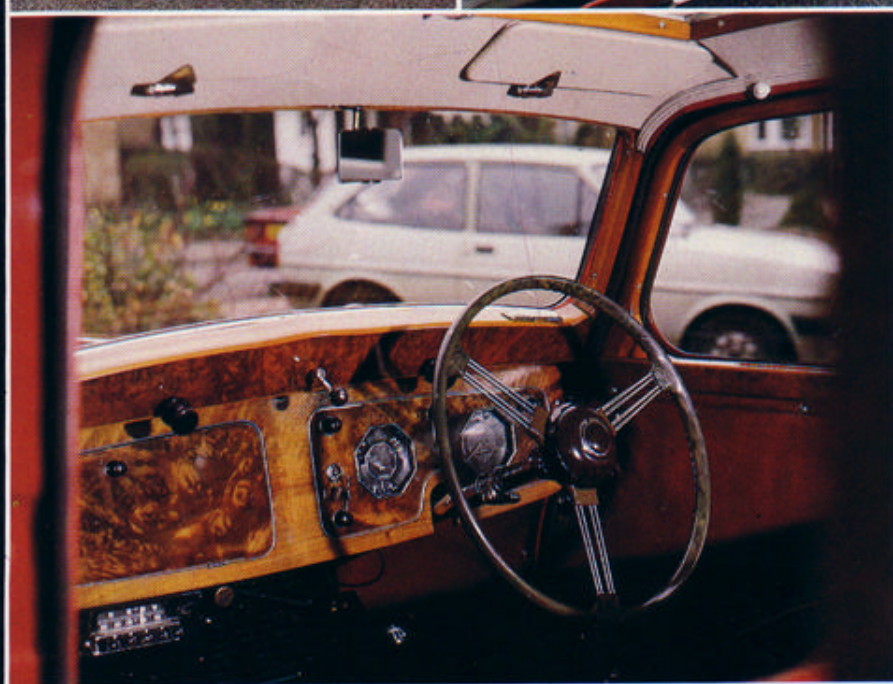
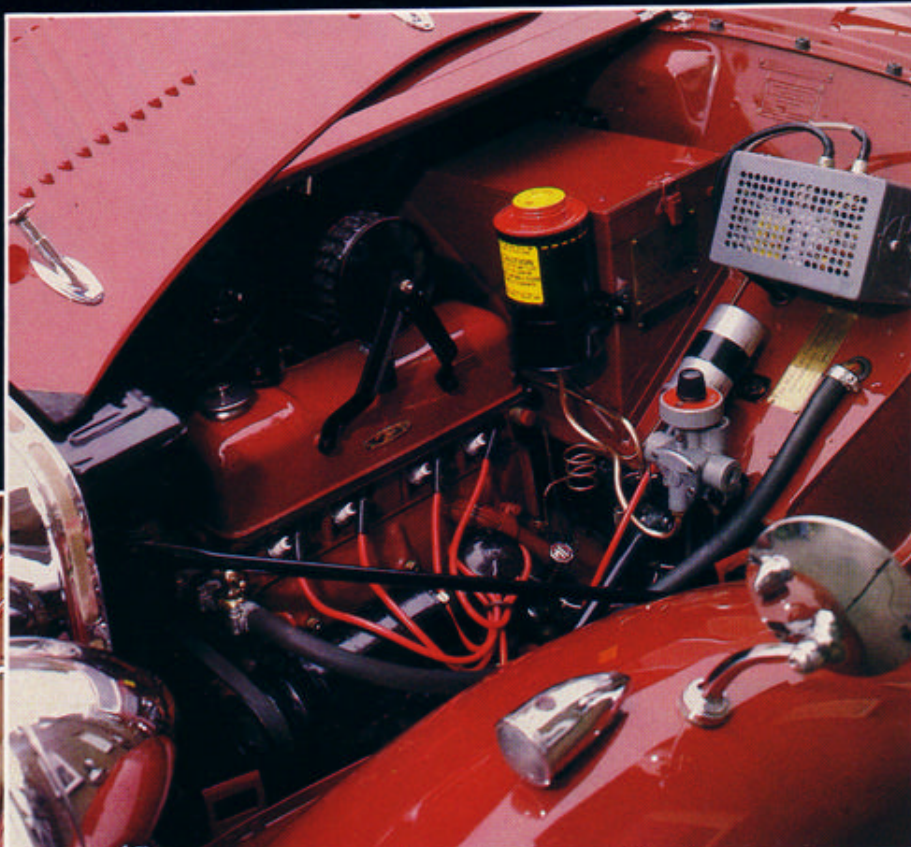
The whole car was extremely well appointed by post-war depression standards and was very much in the style of the pre-war 'S', 'V' and 'W' saloons and tourers. It was welcomed by both the motoring press and public alike when it was announced in the spring of 1947 for £547. The car subsequently enjoyed sales success both at home and abroad and although of compact dimensions and not particularly roomy, the ride and roadholding standards were excellent and at the time was judged exceptionally comfortable compared to many of its contemporaries. There were many features fitted as standard on the Y type such as the Smiths 'Jackall' four wheel hydraulic jacking system. This consisted of four hydraulic jacks located adjacent to the wheels that could be lowered all at the same time to support the car entirely free of the ground, this enabled wheel changes and general maintenance. The front could also be raised independently and vice versa. The hydraulic pump was located on the nearside of the engine bulkhead and was activated by a hand operated lever. Other features



worthy of note were the opening front screen and sliding steel sunroof together with an adjustable telescopic steering column and rear window blind. The Y Saloon sold quite well though it could not hope to equal the runaway export success of the TC and TD Midget models. 6,158 examples were produced at Abingdon through until 1951 when a slightly improved version the YB was introduced. This car had slightly smaller wheels (15" instead of 16") and a front anti-roll bar was fitted. Larger heavy duty shock absorbers were employed together with a hypoid rear axle and uprated brakes, all of which greatly improved the car's performance on the road with better handling and stopping power. Like its predecessor, the YB had to counter very little by way of competition from other manufacturers and despite the uninspiring appearance the Y series MG achieved a production figure of well over 8000 units by the end of production in 1953.

Worthy of mention is the production of an open touring version of the Y type which was launched at the Motor Show in the autumn of 1948. The YT as it was known was an open topped full four seater. This car was lighter and slightly quicker than the saloon versions powered by a TC specification engine of 1250ccs. The car unfortunately was not greeted with enthusiasm due to its rather bulky appearance and was reminiscent of an Army General's staff car. Most of the production (877) were exported with Australia as the main market. The YT utilised the same chassis as the YA with the 54bhp twin carburettor TC engine as power unit. The dashboard was different being somewhat similar to that of the TC. It was assumed that most of the YTs were built in left hand drive specification for the export markets but in fact most were right hand drive versions destined for Australia rather than the USA. Low volume production of the YT continued through until 1950 and was one of the last open tourers of its kind to be made apart from that produced by the Singer Motor Company.

Y TYPE SALOON



SPECIFICATION

Engine: XPAG 4 cylinder in line, water cooled.
Bore & Stroke: 66.5mm x 90mm
Capacity: 1250cc
Valve gear: Pushrod overhead.
Compression ratio: 7:2:1
Power Output: 46bhp @ 4,800rpm
Carburation: Single SU 1 1/4" semi downdraught.
Clutch: 7 1/4" Borg & Beck single dry plate.
Gearbox: 4 speed, synchro on 2nd, 3rd and top.
Suspension: Front: Independent coil and wishbone. Rear: Half elliptic.
Shock absorbers: Luvax-Girling piston type.
Brakes: Lockheed hydraulic with 9" drums.
Wheelbase: 8'3"
Track: front 3' 11 3/8" rear: 4'2"
Steering: Direct acting rack and pinion.
Wheels and tyres: Bolt-on ventilated disc. 5.25 x 16"
Weight: 20 cwt
Production: Early 1947 to late 1953.
Number produced: YA: 6158. YB: 1301. YT: 877
Performance: 0-60mph in 29.3 secs.
Fuel consumption: approx 27mpg.
Cost new in 1951: £565 plus purchase tax £315 7s 9d.



MG 'Y' Type Saloon

The superb Autumn Red YA featured is proudly owned by Chris Cridland from Oadby near Leicester. Aably assisted by his son Colin the car has been lovingly restored to concours condition over a period of three years. Chris purchased the car as a non runner in February 1980 with many parts missing and the bodywork and engine needing a lot of attention. A total strip-down was commenced in mid 1981 with the intention of restoring PRB 346 to first class original specification. The engine was totally rebuilt, being rebored and fitted with new pistons and a reground crankshaft. The body was also dismantled and stripped to bare metal with repairs necessary to the doors and rear end of the car, finally the car was resprayed to the original paint specification MG Autumn Red. The interior was then renovated to bring it in line with the rest of the car. The leather seats were in reasonable condition and simply needed minor refurbishment. A new headlining was fitted and with attention to detail a replacement rear window blind completed the passenger compartment. Chris was keen to see the Y type 100% correct and with this in mind, set about finding a period valve radio set to grace the french polished wooden dashboard. After a long search of numerous Autojumbles he finally found one which cost him a fortune to have renovated and put into working order. The power unit can be seen in the engine compartment above the Jackall jacking system and is huge compared to the compact units of today.

PRB 346 is in regular use throughout the summer months and covers many miles on family outings and gets many admiring glances from passersby. The Y type is certainly a rare sight nowadays on our roads and it is difficult to estimate how many of the 8000 produced survive today. Sadly many were dismantled, mainly for the XPAG engines to be transplanted into the T series models. One thing is for sure though, Chris will definitely not be dismantling his!

Article & photography RICHARD MONK

