

CHEQUERED FLAG

A BMC COMPS LEGEND PASSES

Brian Moylan typified the unsung heroes behind Abingdon glory.

The last way that Brian Moylan would have ever described himself was as a legend, but that is exactly what he was

Photo courtesy of MGCC/Safety Fast!



Doing what he did best: Brian Moylan preparing the Timo Makinen Healey 3000 for the 1963 Monte Carlo Rally.

in his career as a stalwart of the BMC/BL Competitions Department and before that with the MG Car Company. Brian moved into Comps under Marcus Chambers, subsequently working with both Stuart Turner and Peter Browning. In those Abingdon days Brian did far more than merely service on an event, for he was a builder and preparer of cars starting with the models from the Nuffield saloon stable and then through to the MG Midget and MGA, the Big Healey, MGB and inevitably the immortal Mini Cooper. Finally came the TR7, Marina and the endurance event cars – the Austin 1800 and Triumph 2.5PI. He was a fastidious worker who was highly regarded by the BMC team drivers; some idea of the esteem in which he was held was the presence of Paddy Hopkirk at his funeral.

Fortunately Brian left us with two priceless volumes, one detailing his career as a Works Rally Mechanic from 1955-1979 and another dealing with the Works Minis. They tell us so

much of an era that is now sliding into history, but to read about it at first hand from someone who was a key team member is to be transported back in time. It is doubtful whether today's rallying could ever be chronicled like this, but one fact is absolutely certain – the BMC team competed brilliantly and equally knew how to enjoy themselves.

That Brian was MG through and through became even more evident after his Abingdon days were done. He was a founding member of the MGCC Abingdon Works Centre, later its Chairman and an indefatigable worker in establishing the superb gatherings of BMC/BL competition cars, drivers and ex-employees beside the Thames at Abingdon. Just as significant was his role as a prime mover in ensuring that MG's history in the town should be properly recognized. Above all he was the most helpful, friendly and approachable person it was my pleasure to meet. Brian typified what the MG marque was all about.

70 YEARS OF THE MG Y-TYPE


During the days of my first T-Type ownership it must be admitted that the Y-Type didn't exactly stir the soul. The historians amongst us might have noticed that the model had a not inconsiderable competition pedigree in the racing hands of Dick Jacobs and rallying with Len Shaw, and there was even a Y-Type daring to battle with the T-Types in T-Register racing thanks to the efforts of Frank Vautier. But with values at a low ebb, they tended to be dismissed out of hand and those that changed hands did so at a pittance.

Yet the MG Y-Type was far better than its detractors would have you believe. It was a car that but for the outbreak of war would have appeared some seven years ahead of its actual launch in 1947. With its box section chassis, rack-and-pinion steering and independent front suspension this was a car with considerable potential and it was both well appointed and comfortable.

Its one downside was its weight and the choice of the downrated TC 1250cc engine in single-carb form. Even so it more than held its own against its contemporaries, particularly if adapted to twin SU form as the export-only YT Tourer was.

Some years ago I was able to sample a restored example, and this firmly disposed of any underwhelming preconceptions I might have harboured. For what we had here was a YB that, twin SUs and wire wheels apart, could have come freshly off the Abingdon line. It was astonishingly comfortable, but above all it was a driver's car. Immediately you could feel the benefits of independent front suspension coupled with precision steering. This was genuinely fun to drive. It exuded quality and it was easy to see why the Y-Type was a popular choice with those who wanted and could afford something different.

Just as with other previously passed-over models from the 1940s and 1950s, the Y-Type's day would dawn again. No longer was it a model sought after by just a handful of dedicated enthusiasts, but now it was back in the mainstream of collector

vehicles. Period films and TV productions have brought such cars right back into the limelight, emphasizing that they can be used and enjoyed, although values have risen commensurately. Today restorations once deemed uneconomic mean that unrestored examples are at a premium and are much sought after. The Y-Type's future would certainly seem a healthy one. 



The MG Y-Type was a post-war success for Abingdon and remains a perfectly useable classic choice today.

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