

Developing the MG Breed

Graham Robson traces the development of post-war MG models

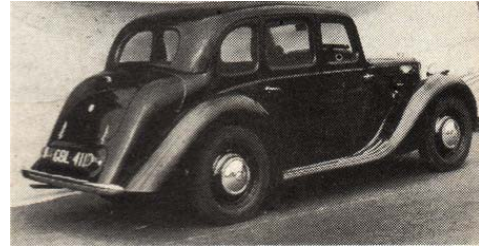
YA, YB and YT family

If it hadn't been for the Second World War, the YA saloon would have been introduced in 1940, but its launch was delayed until the spring of 1947. In engineering the YA was an amalgam of TB, Wolseley 10 and Morris Eight Series E components, all melded to a special box-section chassis frame with coil spring independent front suspension designed by Alec Issigonis. The four-door saloon body shell was a re-styled version of the Morris Eight Series E shell, with long nose and special tail.

The 1,250cc engine was a single carburettor version of the TB's unit, and produced 46 bhp, while the gearbox was related to the TB but had its own ratios, and the gearchange of the Wolseley 10 of 1939. The YA was a refined little car, but was only capable of about 70 mph, and was physically small because it was based on the smallest Morris body shell. The elements of the suspension, however, were very successful, and survive on the MGB to this day.

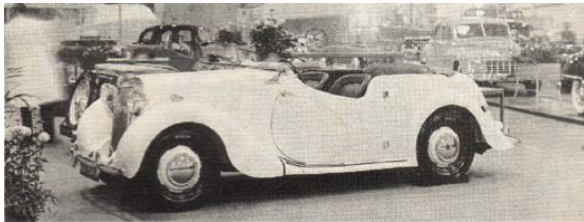
It gave rise to two derivatives. From 1948 to 1950, and for export only, there was the two-door four-seater YT Tourer (body by Morris Bodies), which also used the 54 bhp TB/TC engine tune. Only 877 of these costly little cars were built. In 1951, too, the YA gave way to the YB saloon, which looked the same, but had the 15in. road wheels, the front anti-roll bar, the leading-shoe front brakes, and the hypoid axle of the TD sports car, but with no increase in engine power. It finally went out of production in 1953, to be replaced on the Abingdon production line by the ZA Midget.

It is worth noting that the TD Midget was originally developed around a shortened version of the YA's chassis, and used its front and rear suspensions, and the rack and pinion steering.



Above, MG's Y Model was a good looking version of Morris E Series body.

Performance and fuel



Above, attractive tourer version of MG Y Type found less than a thousand buyers.

Sports saloons — Y and Z Series

These figures are interesting because they show just how slow the Y-Series sports saloons really were (though they cannot measure their roadholding qualities, which were markedly superior to those of the TC sports car) — a YA saloon, for instance, is considerably slower than any modern family car, and could probably be outpaced even by a Morris Minor 1000 or Austin A35. Even the Z-Series Magnette was no great shakes in terms of acceleration. In both cases, this was due to rather underpowered engines, and rather heavy construction.

	YA Saloon 1,250cc	YA Saloon 1,250cc	YB Saloon 1,250cc	Magnette ZA Saloon 1,489cc	Magnette ZB Saloon 1,489cc
Cost when new	£672	£880	£989	£915	£1,072
Road Tested:	9-5-47	3-8-51	11-4-52	26-11-54	5-7-57
Maximum speed (mph)	70	70	71	80	87
Acceleration (sec):					
0-30mph	6.9	6.7	6.9	5.9	5.1
0-40mph	—	—	—	—	—
0-50mph	16.9	18.2	18.4	15.3	12.6
0-60mph	28.2	29.3	30.4	11.6	18.5
0-70mph	—	—	—	34.1	27.60
0-80mph	—	—	—	—	45.0
Standing 1-mile (sec):	—	—	24.5	22.4	21.2
Top gear acceleration (sec):					
10-30mph	13.0	13.9	15.4	11.0	11.9
20-40mph	13.1	14.0	15.3	11.2	11.5
30-50mph	14.9	15.2	16.0	11.9	11.7
40-60mph	—	19.0	22.0	13.6	13.6
50-70mph	—	—	—	19.3	17.4
Overall mpg	28	31	26.5	25.3	25.1
Axle ratio	5.143	5.143	5.125	4.90	4.55
Unladen weight (lb)	2,262	2,240	2,341	2,478	2,464

The above are only the Y Type related extracts from articles in Thoroughbred and Classic Cars – January 1981. Both articles tried to summarize all MG models produced to that date. As such, they were necessarily brief and only restated previously held opinions concerning Y Types. They were not based on test-drives or personal research. Webmaster's comments "They did have some nice photographs though!"