

Buying an M.G.

I've been in the motor trade for quite number of years, from a grease monkey, to garage owner, the last few years with classic cars. Around 4 years ago, I had a phone call from a gent (I'll call him Fred) , asking if I would be interested in his M.G.B. that was in a poor state of repair.

He lived in Elvington on the East side of York, so I made arrangements to view the car. It must have been summer, as I remember the pleasant run out to village in the sunshine, and I found his bungalow with ease. It was set well back from the road with a long drive on it's left side, with a double garage, doors open, but no sign of the M.G.

I knocked on the back door which was answered by "Fred" who greeted me and took me round the rear of the property to the other side, and there on the far side of quite a large lawn was the thing, or what remained of it, He explained, that around 18 years previously, he had bought the car in running order, from Bournemouth, but with some rather rusty areas. He enlisted the help of a friendly neighbour to help strip the car, with the intention of doing a complete rebuild. They spent a couple of days taking off - bonnet - boot lid - hood and frame - doors - all the chrome work, which they lent against the garage wall ready to be moved and stored inside. Depending where you live, can relate to when your bins are emptied, and rubbish is removed.

The, (what we used to call bin men) men from the council have to start some where in the morning, and it must have been their end of the village, for by the time Fred surfaced and had his breakfast and wandered outside to survey their previous days work, they were long gone, along with all the parts that were lent against the garage. By the time he was organised, found the refuse wagon, it was too late. The load had been taken to the tipping area and run over by other vehicles. Needless to say, he was very disappointed. What was left was pushed over to where it was when i looked at it. It was covered over with a tarpaulin whilst he decided what to do with it. No doubt it went down the bucket list fairly quickly. Eighteen years is a long time, and as you know, we have rain and gales, sometimes at the same time, and no doubt the cover must have blown off on one such occasion and was not replaced, b----r it. I'll do it tomorrow. The car had sunk into ground so the sills were level with the lawn the same with the wheels (to the rims) and weeds were growing through holes in the floors and what had once been a white car was now a mixture of old English rust, dark green mildew, and algae with the odd bit of grubby white - it reminded me of a " Picasso" I once saw. What was it worth ? Not much. I think his wife was leaning on him pretty hard. At that time, i think, one could get £130 for a scrap vehicle, so that was it, the deal was done, but he would have to get it to the end of his drive ready to be picked up

A friend (I still have one or two) picked it up with his recovery truck and brought it to our home, (" not some more scrap you've bought" her indoors said when she set her eyes on it) she was a not happy bunny. The windscreen, cylinder head, and carbs. plus one or two other small items were removed and the rest went to the China to be made into frying pans or something, I think. So, what have I got out of the transaction ? apart from a few bits. I have a chassis plate, a couple of old tax discs, and am the owner of a phantom M.G,B. I gained something that money cannot buy - experience - that comes sometimes with making a mistake.

I'm still learning.

Derek