

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

September 16, 2016

Hi Mr. [REDACTED]

My wife, Lisa, gave me the letter that you sent to her on September 11, 2016 regarding the 1964 MGB that you recently purchased. She married into our family in 1991 so she has had some involvement with the car, but that car was in my family for as long as I can remember. We put it on blocks back in the mid to late 1980's (I'm guessing 1987) and just never found the time to work on it or renovate it after that.

My dad, [REDACTED] bought the car from Roddy Reynolds Motors on the corner of Elmwood and Main St. in Columbia back in 1966 (I think) shortly before I was born. Ironically enough there is still a used car lot on that same location today called BWK of Columbia. I'll dig around to see if I can find the paperwork on the car but I remember the car from when I was a toddler as I used to hide out under the tonneau cover when it rained and dad didn't have enough time to pull up the top. When I was a child I also used to ride in the area where the soft-top would ordinarily be stowed when the top was up as it was just big enough for me to lay down back there. This was obviously back in the days before child seats as my folks didn't think twice about me riding back there.

One early story that my folks always told me about the car was that a lady was driving really slowly through town and dad couldn't get past her as it was a two-lane road so he was very frustrated. Apparently his language spilled over to my young ears because when the road finally expanded to four lanes and we pulled up next to the car at a stop light, they told me I shook my fist at her and yelled "learn how to drive you dumb broad". Dad couldn't find any place to hide and I was told that his face turned about ten shades of red as the kind lady waved back at me and smiled.

I can also remember when I was a little boy that my dad would let me steer the car as I sat on his lap when we visited a friend at the lake up in Chapin. We would pull off of Amick's Ferry Rd. and as soon as we hit the gravel road, the wheel was mine. I couldn't have been more than 4 or 5 years old but that was always the highlight of my trips to the lake. What's ironic is that we live out Amick's Ferry Road about 3-4 miles down the road from that old gravel road now.

Dad always liked sports cars and he liked to work on them as well. He also had a fully renovated 1962 Honduras Maroon Corvette with a fuel-injected 327 engine that he bought in the mid-70's. We recently sold that car as well, as the fuel-injection system was a pain to keep running at low speeds. It did "wide-open" really well, but just always balked at in-town driving and lower speeds.

The MGB was my parents' second car in addition to a Corvair but it was primarily my dad's commuter car for work until around 1973 when he purchased a brand-new Chevy Camaro. At that point the car was driven sporadically (mostly on the weekends) but it didn't see a lot of action as dad was also working on the 'Vette at that point.

Around 1981 my dad and I did some minor repair work to get the car in better shape again and it became my first car when I turned 15 and got my learner's permit. Needless to say, I was the only 15 year old at Irmo High school driving a convertible MGB. The car was a lot of fun but with no radio, no A/C and not much of a heater it took some getting used to. However, I enjoyed driving it so much it made up for the lack of amenities. I had worked that first summer after we got the car running well and I intended to upgrade the stereo from the "All Transistor" AM radio that was in the car to something much bigger and better. However, none of the stereo places in town wanted to deal with the dual 6-volt battery system so I was left with a Sony Walkman and headphones on one ear to allow me to hear music that was more current than the AM radio would permit. The car did pick up AM 560 quite well, but that was about it as far as local radio stations. I bought the Pirelli tires that are still on the car with that summer job money and was really excited about having a nice set of tires on the car.

The car (and from what I hear, a lot of MGB's) was infamous for the starter motor flywheel "locking" which would cause me to pop the hood, unbolt the starter, put the car in 2nd gear and rock it back and forth to unlock the flywheel. I actually parked it on slight inclines whenever I could, so I could roll-start the car by popping the clutch with the car in 2nd gear. I could also give one or two kicks out of the driver side door to get it rolling just enough to pop the clutch and turn the engine over. It was apparent to me early on that I needed to ALWAYS have a tool kit in the boot. When I explained roll-starting to my kids and a few interns at my office they looked at me like I had three eyes. They have no concept whatsoever of a 4-speed manual transmission or of roll-starting a vehicle.

This car was my baby and was beloved by all of my friends and girlfriends. On weekends I would pick up an old girlfriend and we would just cruise all over the Irmo/Chapin areas but we especially loved going down Corley Mill Road with the big hill/dip right before coming back up to the dam. This was way back in the day before River Bluff High School and all of the development took place on Corley Mill Rd. The car was just fun to drive and on spring or fall days with the top down there was nothing else that compared to it.

I drove the "B" on my very first car date with a girl I had been wanting to go out with for a long while. She was the third of three girls so I guess her dad had heard all of the stories and wanted nothing to do with us getting home late. He told me that if we were a minute past the 11:30 curfew he had given the girl (Jenny – which ironically is also my daughter's name) that I would never go out with her again. Needless to say after a great date, movie and dinner, the starter locked up at the movie theater about 4 miles from her house. This was pre-cell phone days so unless I got the car running we were pretty much doomed as the movie theater had closed as well. In my white sweater, khaki pants and penny loafers I pulled out my trusty tool kit and got the car running. I was officially a mess with grease all over me and we got to her home around 11:45 which meant that was a first and last date with Miss Jenny. Her dad never would let me go out with her again even though she pleaded with him and I showed him the greasy hands that night. However, I've been happily married to Lisa for the past 25 years and I'm still friends with Jenny, so I guess it all turned out well.

Because my friends loved the car so much they asked me to drive it to Myrtle Beach in addition to some of the larger cars that we took to get all of our supplies there for a week at the beach. Three of us (two in the passenger seat) decided we'd cruise Ocean Drive but we learned the hard way about air-cooled engines in the stop and go traffic. I think we made one run and the car kept overheating at every stop, so we parked it at our motel and walked Ocean Drive as my friends' cars were four-door "parent specials" not worthy of being seen in at the beach.

I was an officer in the Key Club and the Future Business Leaders of America (FBLA) at [REDACTED] and the sponsors of those organizations would invite the officers to come to their monthly meetings in downtown Columbia so I was typically the one that drove. The FBLA meetings were great as the two girls that usually went with me were really cute and we'd squeeze into the B tight as ticks. I feel quite certain that we'd get pulled over today as the car isn't built for three and we were literally crammed into the car. One of them would shift gears with her left hand for me as her backside was on the center console so it made it hard for me to reach the shift knob. Most days we would have to do some cruising on the way back from those meetings and we'd just tell our club sponsors that the meetings went a little longer than normal.

This was also the car that I took to school at Appalachian State University in Boone, NC, so having that convertible in the mountains and hitting the Blue Ridge Parkway was like a slice of heaven during the early fall and spring. However, Boone in the winter was another story, as I froze my fanny off when the weather would drop to single digits. The heater was non-existent in that weather so I just layered up. The car drove remarkably well in the snow but I suspect that's where a lot of the rust came from as the roads were always salted and no matter how hard I tried it was hard to keep that off of the body. Another girlfriend of mine from [redacted] went to App with me and our parents would put us in the car first and then pack our luggage/supplies all around us and in the boot. We basically couldn't move or stuff would go flying. She always laughed about our trips up to Boone as our A/C was 2-55 (two windows at 55 mph), our radio was a set of shared headphones for the Walkman, our heater was basically body heat with the hard top bolted on and the car also liked to leak on her feet when it rained. I'm sure by now you've noticed the worn door pin on the driver's side door – that liked to spring open during hard right turns so I'd have to reach out and grab it quickly before it hit any oncoming traffic. She always thought that was hilarious – I, on the other hand, did not, since it was tricky to get the door shut with one hand and keep the car on the road with the other. However, I don't think either of us would trade those trips for anything.

A buddy of mine went to the University of Virginia and wanted me to bring the car up to Charlottesville so we could cruise his campus and town to show off for all of his girlfriends. As I was about 2 hours into the trip the fuel pump cut out and was giving me fits as the car ended up stalled on the side of the interstate. I tried every trick in the book that I knew on getting the fuel pump started again but nothing worked. In frustration, I smacked it with a hammer which must have knocked the right dirt loose as the fuel pump started working and I made it to Charlottesville. We stowed the hard top in his dorm room and prayed the fuel pump would hold up through the weekend which it did. However, it officially died when I got back to Boone and it was replaced with the one that is on there now which is, obviously, not a stock piece.

We've got two kids in school right now so money is tight and we didn't have the room, time or money to work on the car after my folks passed away. I had no qualms about selling the 'Vette. It was a nice car and we got a nice price for it which helped with the kids' education. However, selling the MGB was rough, but it needed more work than we could give it. We just hoped that someone else would either buy it and use it as a parts-car or find it and fall in love with it.

I'm happy to hear that you're planning to renovate the car as I agree that it deserves to be seen in all its glory again. The car was easy to work on as there wasn't much in the engine well and I'm hoping that you can get it back up and running quickly. My dad's sisters are really excited that you're intending to renovate the car as well. His baby sister loved dad's car so much, she bought a '67 MGB and renovated it and still has the car running and looking beautiful down in St. Augustine, FL.

All of our family pictures are still boxed up from my parents' house but I was able to find a few old 35mm slides of the car when I was a toddler. They aren't great but I figured they were good enough from 35 mm slides that are as old as I am. I also enclosed a photo of a pencil drawing that one of my dad's best friends drew of the car shortly after dad bought it. The same man who drew the picture is a retired Presbyterian ARP minister and he's also the person who did the eulogy at my dad's funeral. If I recall correctly he was a Triumph man – maybe a TR-6 – but that was a long time ago.

You can keep the photos as I had them printed for you and I'll send more pictures if I find more as we go through my folks' stuff.

Best of luck with everything – if I can find more photos, I'll be happy to send them. I'd love to see the finished product when you get done with the renovation. I hope that you have as many great memories in the car as we do. The car was a blast to drive and it sounded so sweet when it was running well that it's a sound I won't ever forget. Thanks for reaching out to us.

Sincerely,

