

## The B in the Woods

- By Rick Eisele

This whole story started in the late summer of 2009. I was helping sell off parts and cars that were stored in and around a barn in the woods near Chelsea. The property was owned by a man that used to operate a sports car repair shop in Ann Arbor, which he closed in about 1995 or 1996. He passed away and his widow wanted to clean out the barn and property so she could sell it. I helped for a couple of reasons. First, none of the other people involved wanted to take the time to list items on Craigslist and eBay. I didn't have a problem with that, so we agreed on what percentage of the sale would be mine, which I applied to the purchase of one of the cars in the group. Despite there being a couple of pretty nice Bugeyes, I wanted one of the MGBs that were there. As of mid-January, 2010, I sold enough for the owner that I have paid for the MGB. Yea!

Here is what I got from the deal. It's a 1980 MGB with a factory hardtop and overdrive. Having the hardtop probably saved the interior

from being overrun by raccoons and squirrels, although it still smelled musty and needed a thorough cleaning and the carpets replaced. What else? The car had only 10171 miles on it. The last tag on the license plate expired in 1997. The woman that owned the property and the car had all the paperwork back to the original window sticker and purchase agreement papers from the dealer, Town Toyota in Greenfield, Wisconsin. Fortunately the dealer had it undercoated before it was sold. It was shipped to Michigan in about 1990 for the brother of the sports car shop owner and he had it completely gone through and checked for any problems. I got the Heritage paper for it, so the paper trail was as complete as I could get it.

The tires on the car had holes in the sidewalls of a couple of them that you could stick your thumb in. The right front tire is the only one that still held air. I couldn't check the battery because I couldn't get the right side door open and couldn't work at it until I got it off the trailer. I hoped that the old one was taken out before it was parked. I didn't want to



think about what may be in the gas tank or carburetor float bowl or how much of the brake system I would have to replace. I sprayed some penetrating oil in the cylinders and let it sit for a while, then changed the oil before trying to turn it over by hand. Yep, it turned over, but the fan belts cracked a lot!

I think I found a good one. Even more so because the purchase price isn't coming out of my pocket!

Update, summer of 2011: As with many things in life, plans change. Things seemed to get in the way of working on this car, so I sold it to a friend. He now has it running and is taking it to a body shop to have the rusty right side dog leg replaced. He then plans on selling the car. I have since purchased a '63 MGB that will need a complete restoration and rebuild. As I am still working on the Bugeye Sprite I've had for about nine years, the MGB will have to wait until I get time to work on it. Maybe next year!?

