

Give Me A Call First - April 2012

The question is why do so many let their LBCs sit so long without driving them. What was my excuse? Time really slips away and other aspects of life takes precedence. I am now working on an MGB with only 30,000 miles, owned by the original purchaser, that has been sitting in a garage for the past 35 years. You have to ask yourself, is it worth it. Over the past 37 years working with LBCs, I have gotten a lot of cars back up and running that sat for years. I always work up an estimate from my knowledge of what they need before doing much to them.

This gives the owner an idea of how much they will need to anticipate spending before we get too deep into the project. I try to explain that it is generally less costly to replace it with a running car that they can just get into and drive as opposed to waiting for the repairs. And, it usually will save them money. Very seldom do they take my advice as the car has sentimental value that is more important than money. I suggest that sentimentality only goes so far; we can swap ID numbers and make it the same car. OK, that may not be perfectly legal.

This 30,000 mile MG, a 1971, spent a lot of time up north so there is some rust. The interior is nice except for the driver's seat and passenger's arm rest. Under the hood was as near original as I have ever seen. Only the plug wires and two hose clamps were incorrect. It is good to see some cars this original and lots of pictures were taken before we pulled the head. Well, now it is not original under the hood anymore is it?

We had to free numbers 2 and 3 pistons so we could turn the engine. Next we will clean things up internally and get it running to check out the rest of the car. Since the hydraulics are shot, we cannot test the clutch until we replace them. There are a lot of things that we need to fix before we can check related areas. How do you decide how far to go before saying stop? Like I said, experience has taught me what will need to be fixed first so further diagnosis can take place and I know what this will cost before pouring a ton of money into the project.

If you have an LBC that has been sitting for a long time and are thinking about getting it running again, ***give me a call first so I can try to talk you out of it.*** Then I will tell you how much it can cost with several variations and in a prioritized order for work progression.

If you want to tackle it yourself, I will give you all the information you want. Some simple steps to take first: pull the plugs and squirt in a lot of lubricant. I use ATF and a solvent mix to help soak into the rings and then let it soak a few hours. Then try to turn the engine by the crank nut or rock the car if the brakes are not frozen. If the engine turns, you are on to the easier aspects of your project. Do not just put some gas in the tank and see if it runs. You should flush the tank at the least or pull it and have it cleaned is better. Do not pour in a can of sealant unless you want clogged filters later on. A clean tank with fuel in it will not rust. Once the tank is clean, you can put gas in it and see if the pump still works. After sitting for years without working, the pump diaphragms can dry rot. So, expect to replace the pump either now or shortly.

I still like to use a Facet electric pump that is easily found on EBay. This is a great temporary way to get fuel to the carbs and then you can use it as an emergency spare. Make sure the carbs are free to operate and watch for leaks. I like to rebuild them before trying to use them but kits are getting quite expensive. So try to clean them and just keep an eye out for leaks. Oh, do not try to start the car inside

a basement or garage unless you have excellent ventilation and fire bottles that are fully charged. Be prepared for lots of smoke out the exhaust.

If you are lucky enough to have it start, then do not let it run too long. You need to check the cooling system, charging system, etc. before you let it run very long. Your work is just starting on getting the car back on the road. It will be worth it though as you will really enjoy your first drive. Except for the stalling, bad brakes, lack of rear view from bad top, square tires, and smoking engine.

This is a great winter type project to take on. However, if you have waited until spring and need help, give a call and I will be glad to discuss it with you. Hope to see yall on the road somewhere soon. Barry