

County Classics

BY GRANT FORD | If you have an event that classic car enthusiasts would like to know about let Grant Ford know. Email him at ford27163@acomm



A machine so lovely it's more than a car

AUSTIN HEALEY SEBRING SPRITE

IT HAS happened before and I dare say will repeat itself in the future when I see a machine that is so lovely, it's more than just a car. The Prangnell family have one, a Healey Sebring Sprite from 1959; although that is not how it left the factory.

The Austin Healey Sprite (known affectionately as 'frogeye') first arrived on the scene in 1958 and was built by BMC as a low cost sports car 'that a chap could keep in his bike shed', as quoted by advertisers.

Designed by Donald Healey and assembled at the Abingdon Works (MG), the car was a great success.

This lovely looking, small car quickly found fame, which it still enjoys today. Powered originally by the BMC 948cc engine producing 43hp, it was nippy rather than fast but immediately became popular in motorsport circles and excelled in rallying.

The most legendary of the racing Sprites was to be the Sebring, named after the Florida

race track that has hosted endurance races for many years. In 1957 for the 12 hour event at Sebring the competition department at Donald Healey Motors entered three special Sprites.

Finishing 1st, 2nd and 3rd in their class they brought the Oxfordshire factory to the attention of the lucrative North American market. The race winning success continued on for years and the Sebring Sprites returned annually to Florida racing well into the swinging sixties.

Chichester based Mike Prangnell first acquired his 'Frogeye' 12 years ago, an ex-Californian rust free example that he could enjoy in competition and for fun. In 2009 a Sebring conversion proved very tempting and with a few suppliers around, the choice of Archers Garage for the replica parts was made.

Archers have one of the original race Sebrings, which is believed to have been driven by Stirling Moss and is the car that Mike took his inspiration and measurements from.

The transformation took him a year and will stand up to any scrutiny. The lines and panel gaps are excellent and the interior is a

great place to be unless you are over six foot.

The paint work complements the rest of the car; it is bold and bright and suits the little Sebring perfectly.

Mike and Ros are members of the Sadcase Club and I thank them for their time, input and a Sebring Sprite.

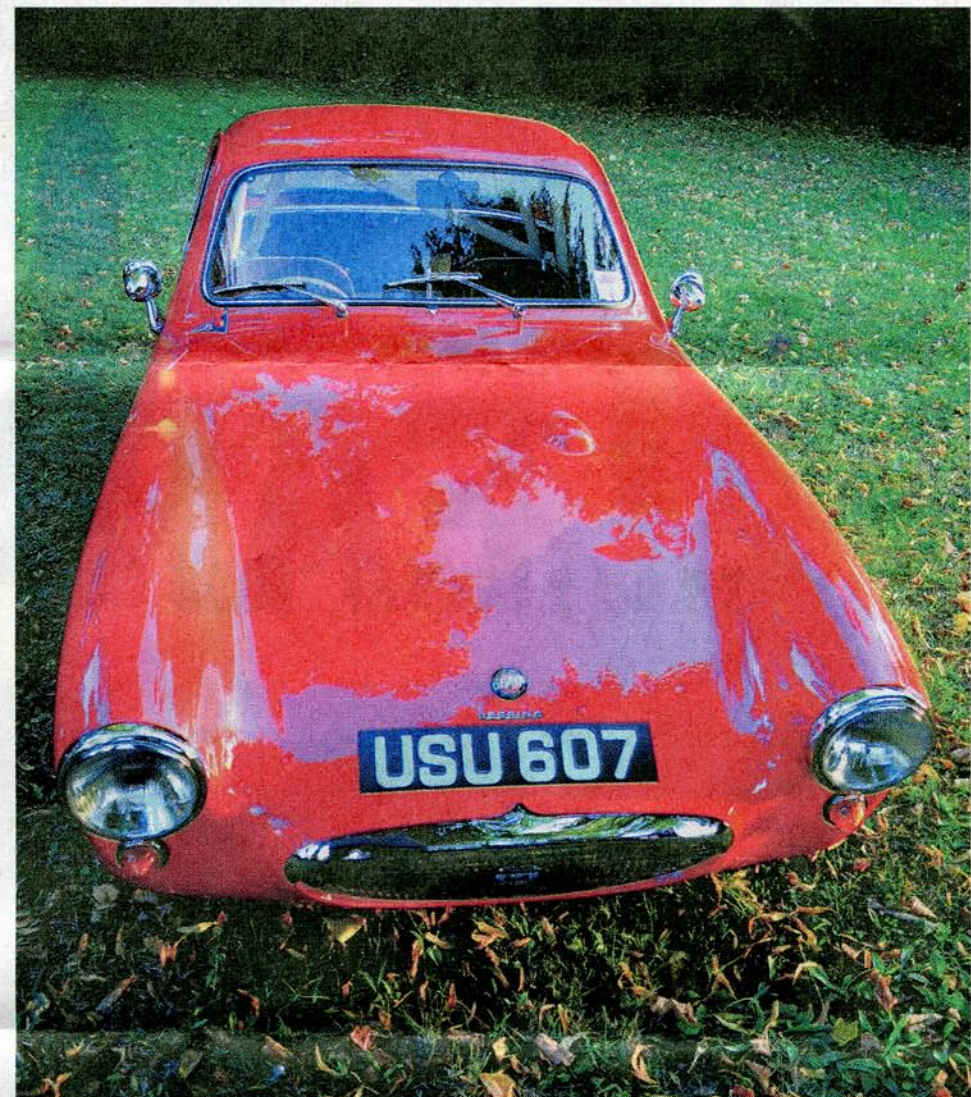
FACTS AND FIGURES

Model: Austin Healey Sprite
Year: 1959
Engine: BMC A Series 948cc 4 cylinder inline (originally)
Performance: 83mph 0-60mph 20 seconds
Fuel Consumption: 38mpg
Cost New: £669.00
UK average house price 1959: £2,410.00
Pint of Beer 1959: 11d

CLUB CORNER

West Sussex has some great classic Car Clubs, all very friendly and spread across the County

SADCASE: Storrington And District Classic And Sportscar Enthusiasts
2nd Tuesday in the month evening meeting



- The Fountain Inn, Ashurst, West Sussex
4th Tuesday in the month evening meeting
- The Spur, Slindon, West Sussex
Annual show takes place end of June at The Storrington Village Day
Web-site: www.sadcase.co.uk
Contacts: Martin Pester/ marden@mistral.co.uk
Jim Sanson / jimsanson@talk21.com
Publicity/Press relations / chrismason662@hotmail.co.uk
Free membership.

An internet based club formed 4 years ago that has grown rapidly and covers a large area of West Sussex. SADCASE is known for a relaxed and informal approach; a tip for their evening meets, is arrive early to secure a car parking spot, as they have become very popular.

DIARY DATES

October 5: The Regis Rally (Bognor Regis Motor Club) www.theregisrally.co.uk
October 6: Goodwood Breakfast Club Italian Sunday
October 8: Sadcase meeting The Fountain Ashurst
October 13: Amberley Autumn Vintage Vehicle Show



October 13: Sadcase run out to Stansted Park (see website)
October 14: Southern Classics 'Noggin & Natter' Gardeners Arms, Sompting 8.15pm
October 20: Manhood Classic Car Meet Sidlesham FC
October 27: Collector Mania Show Midhurst

We do everything to ensure all dates are correct but can change so I recommend checking with the clubs or organisers before you leave. Have an event classic car enthusiasts would like to know about let me know. ford27163@aol.com

