

Michael's Red Sprite

I bought 2953KZ, an 1959 M1 Austin Healey Sprite, in September 1970 when the newer model made these cheap sports-cars even cheaper. Not knowing anything about them or cars for that matter I didn't know it was a "banger" having Morris 1000 wheels and engine as well as a fibreglass bonnet. It also had advanced rust growing throughout the structure. I'd bought a shed. It handled worse than the minivan I'd sold, so I invested in wide wheels and a stage 1 cylinder head. The end came quickly when I ran the crankshaft snapping it in two as I tried to see how fast I could make it go. All history now.

As you can see I became permanently attached to the car and eventually had the pocket money to put it back together. Today it retains those wide wheels, a bigger "midget" engine and shiny paint. Oh and I got rid of all the rust, I think. Registered in Northern Ireland in 1961 to a member of the RAF. A left hand drive export in 1959 possibly to RAF Germany, I'd like to think.

The Mk1 Austin Healey Sprite was an idea from Donald Healey aimed at weekend racing in the days when people used their car for work and competition at weekend meetings. The Healey Team entered it in many competitions and famous names had a go at competing internationally in them. After 50 odd years I'm now a fully paid up Frogeye anorak!