

# Pete Graves – Pete's Frogeye

**1988** I purchased a 1959 Austin Healey Sprite (aka a Frogeye) from an acquaintance as a good runner. However, removal of seats and carpets revealed a different story! There was extensive corrosion and the rear suspension (quarter elliptic springs) was nearly collapsing!



Rear offside bulkhead

I started a major reconstruction of the Frogeye, spurred on by my son who by the age of 22 had already restored an Austin Mini Clubman, a MG Midget Mk3 (design based on the Sprite) and an MGB roadster!

The restoration basically involved replacing the bottom 6 inches of the car body (see folder), and took many years. It was interrupted by helping my son restore a 17th century wood-frame house and then a Victorian end-of-terrace cottage.



New floor pan welded in place

**2003** the engine was reinstalled in the repainted car and the lengthy fitting-out took place.

**2004** In April the car had its first outing after a nut-and-bolt check and an MOT at a local specialist MG garage.

**2008** the car was taken to Goodwood along with many other Sprites to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the marque.

The car was given its paces round the Goodwood Circuit, revealing the need for better brakes and a stiffer front suspension.



**2008** and **2009** the Frogeye took part in one-day non-competitive rallies organised by the Motor Sports Association (MSA). The routes are unknown until the day, and my navigator has to follow a tulip route book, relying heavily on the odometer for distance – difficult when the Frogeye's is 8% inaccurate!

**2014** the Frogeye took part in the MSA Spring Classic in North Wales, involving a round trip of 800 miles, and proving again that new brakes were essential for mountain driving. Afterwards the gearbox was rebuilt.

**2015** the front suspension was changed to fit an antiroll bar and also high-performance disc brakes. This proved an excellent modification for the route taken on the 2015 MSA Classics in South Wales, ending in a spin round the Pembury Race Circuit.



**2016** the MSA Classic used roads in Herefordshire and Gloucestershire, and en route I meet up briefly with my former secretary Norma Crownshaw and husband John.

The Classic ended up at the Castle Combe race track



So for fun, excitement and wind In the hair, the Frogeye is the car for me, although difficult for an ageing body to get into, and an uncomfortable ride. Stupid Pete!