1936 Riley 1½-Litre Kestrel Sprite Sports Saloon

Registration no. CPP 755
Chassis no. SS26K 4878
Engine no. SSK 4878

Clothed in stylish bodywork by Stanley Riley, the Coventry marque’s pre-war offerings were among the world’s finest small-capacity sporting cars. Riley’s proven twin-camshaft layout was retained for the new Hugh Rose-designed 1½-litre four introduced in 1935. The Falcon saloon made its debut on this new 12hp chassis, which was also available with the familiar Kestrel saloon and Lynx tourer coachwork. The following year the range was augmented by the Sprite two-seater sports and three more saloons. In Standard trim the 1½-litre 12/4 engine produced 45/46bhp with a single Zenith carburettor. The Special Series came with twin SUs and 52bhp while at the top of the range was the 59/61bhp Sprite specification engine that added £48 to the car’s purchase price. The six-light Riley Kestrel is one of the most striking and handsome saloon cars of the 1930s and when fitted with the Sprite engine - the most powerful of the options available - it goes remarkably well too. Listed in David Styles’ definitive Riley history ‘As Old as the Industry’, this original and correct Kestrel Sprite has undergone sympathetic restoration over the years and is reported as structurally very sound with some recent work on the ash frame. The doors are said to shut nicely and the car to feel taught on
the road. The black paintwork may be substantially original while the chrome is quite recent and excellent. Retaining wonderfully patinated green leather seats, the car is very smart internally, boasting with new carpets, door cards and headlining (with functioning sunroof) and refurbished interior woodwork. The car retains its original engine, which is described as very lively and shows good oil pressure. We are advised that the pre-selector gearbox functions as it should and that the car is a pleasure to drive, with light and precise steering, while the brakes pull it up straight. The Kestrel Sprite is described as a really characterful drive, keeping up with modern traffic with no trouble at all. 'CPP 755' has clearly been well looked after in recent years with careful maintenance by discriminating owners. Accompanying documentation consists of a history file containing three old-style buff log books showing ownership from new; sundry invoices for restoration, parts and servicing since 1990; a selection of photographs; instruction manual; MoT to August 2014; and Swansea V5C document. The car is currently taxed for the road.