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## AC Ace

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Lot sold	<b>USD 234 598 - 275 998</b> GBP 170 000 - 200 000 (listed)	Drive	LHD
Chassis number	AE102	Condition	Used
Number of seats	2	Location	
Drivetrain	2wd	Fuel type	Petrol
Lot number	336	Exterior colour	Other

### Description

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1955/62 AC Ace 'Ruddspeed' Roadster  
Registration no. UBP 888  
Chassis no. AE102

The success of Cliff Davis's Tojeiro sports racer prompted AC Cars to put the design into production in 1954 as the Ace. The Davis car's pretty Ferrari 166-inspired barchetta bodywork was retained, as was John Tojeiro's twin-tube ladder frame chassis and Cooper-influenced all-independent suspension, but the power unit was AC's own venerable, 2-litre, long-stroke six. This overhead-camshaft engine originated in 1919, and with a modest 80bhp (later 100bhp) on tap, endowed the Ace with respectable, if not outstanding performance. Nevertheless, in tuned form the Ace enjoyed great success in production sports car racing, winning its class at the Le Mans 24-Hour Race in 1959. In 1955 AC added a hardtop version - the fastback-styled Aceca - and both models later became available with the more powerful Bristol engine before production ceased in 1963.

Towards the end of production the Ace was also made available with the 2.6-litre overhead-valve Ford Zephyr engine installed. The first cars were converted by Ken Rudd of Ruddspeed before the factory took over. A 12-port cylinder head, branded after Raymond Mays of ERA and BRM fame the latter Formula 1 team's engineers having developed this head conversion - was usually fitted together with other internal modifications, in which form the Zephyr-derived unit produced no less than 155bhp on triple SU carburettors.

Chassis 'AE 102' left the factory in October 1955 and was first registered on 17th November 1955 as

'UBP 888'. Distributed through Rudds of Worthing, it was first owned by one M Parry of Beech Hill, Middlewarberry, Torquay. The Ace then enjoyed three further owners (full details available) before being acquired in May 1968 by Mr D Coates of Kent, who owned the car for some 38 years, keeping it in storage for most of that time, before selling it to the immediately preceding owner in February 2006.

'AE102' was originally delivered with AC engine number 'CL2221' (see below). Wishing to race the car in club competition, Mr D Raven of Leicestershire (the second owner) had the Ace delivered to BRM Garages in Bourne, Lincolnshire in 1962 where it was fitted with a Ford 2.6-litre engine (number '185470') to 'Ruddspeed' specification. Equipped with a Raymond Mays Conversion and three semi-downdraft SU carburettors, the car instantly became a competitive prospect in contemporary club racing.

BRM Garages' extensive re-engineering also included the installation of a Moss gearbox with low 'sprint' ratios; a low-ratio rear axle; front anti-roll bar; and a Bendix fuel pump. Acceleration 0-125mph in 25 seconds was claimed.

Mr Raven used the Ace for 4-5 years in the mid-1960s for sprinting, circuit racing and hill climbs (see photograph entitled '64 Peterborough Motor Club Silverstone Ravens Ace' and also page 46 of 'Big Healeys In Competition' by John Baggott).

More recently, this A.C. Ace competed in historic events in Europe on a number of occasions including the Gaisbergrennen Salzburg, the Ollon Villars hill climb in Switzerland, and the Vernasca Silver Flag hill climb near Milan (in June 2012).

The current vendor purchased the Ace at Bonhams' Goodwood Revival Sale in September 2012 (Lot 123) and embarked upon a last-nut-and-bolt restoration to prepare the car for further historic touring and competition. Completely stripped and extensively rebuilt, it is yet to be fully run-in following completion earlier this year. The paintwork was superbly undertaken by Spraytec - arguably the UK's top historic automotive paint shop - and, needless to say, the car presents very well. It is finished, appropriately, in BRM Green with dark green Bridge of Weir upholstery. An alternative interior leather trim (for taller drivers) has been made for the car and is included in the sale. The original seats are, of course, fitted presently. The Ace also has a superb mohair tonneau, and it retains the pair of precision rally stopwatches fitted when acquired by the vendor.

Amazingly, with the assistance of the AC Owners Club, the car's original AC engine block has been discovered and is included in the sale. Of course, this Ace is far more desirable as a period Ruddspeed conversion (undertaken at BRM Garages themselves) but the original block is a nice piece to complete the car's exemplary history, while also adding to the Lot's intrinsic and collectability value...

Accompanying documentation consists of the original logbook; various MoTs from 1968 appearing to substantiate the mileage of only 49,900; bills for work and parts; V5C Registration Certificate; and correspondence relating to topics such as the reuniting of the original chassis plate with the car after a period of 18 years.

## Bonhams 1793

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