S E Gazette

AUTUMN EDITION



MAGAZINE OF THE ISETTA OWNERS CLUB OF GREAT BRITAIN

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Editors Bit



Phew, what a sigh of relief. I got through the first edition almost unscathed. In fact quite a few members actually liked the format so for the moment it looks like you are stuck with me. I must apologise to David Marsh who provided the article on **The BMW 600 - 50 Years Young.** Being new to this job I forgot to include his authorship. Look out for his Bristol & Bath Rally Report in this issue.

I am still waiting for an influx of articles from you the members, but you seem to think everybody else will contribute. Take a look in the mirror, you are the "everybody else" so put pen to paper.

I guess by the time you read this the rally season will be almost over. I have only managed to get to three rallies this year and on one the weather was typical English summer rain, I think I will join our chairman

and take to the canals. At least I have my Berkeley T60 project to work on in the bad weather. I keep collecting parts and now have 1½ engines 4 gearboxes 3 diffs and bits I don't know where to put..... Enough for now, I must get started on the Winter Gazette......

Chairmans Chat

Here I am in early September, wondering as usual what to include in this summary of the Club's affairs.

Firstly it is right that I commend Ian for the content and presentation of his first Gazette, it was a great read and very colourful. Although, as I write this, I have not seen the rest of this issue, I am sure Ian will maintain the high standard and that this issue will be informative and well presented.

From a financial point of view the Club continues to be stable and if lan can get the content from you the members, finances will not be a limit to further issues of the Gazette.

Over the past ten years or so, the Club's turnover has fallen and it is clear that we are now in no danger of ever exceeding the threshold where it is mandatory for us to be registered for VAT. As VAT is a net cost to the Club and involves significant administration, I have decided to de-register the Club as soon as possible. There could be a payback to the taxman of relief claimed on purchases, but this will soon be counterbalanced by savings. I have been waiting on the 2007 accounts to be audited but this is now largely done and we are ready to go.

Although I do not contribute that often, I do visit the Isetta World web site

(http://autos.groups.yahoo.com/group/IsettaWorld/) which is sponsored by the IOCGB, fairly frequently and am constantly amazed by the breadth of subject matter and the geographic spread of the contributors. Terry Parkin provides an excellent moderating service as well as suggesting other sources where queries may be answered.

Keep up the good work Terry and "Thanks" for your efforts.

Finally a first trail for the NEC Classic car show 14/15/16th November. Lee Turnham has managed to secure a great stand for us this year and a really splendid display is planned. Please put it in the diary and go along for some inspiration and a great day out.

As the nights draw in and our thoughts stray to the last few rallies of the year and then the winter work to be done, may I hope that you had enjoyment from your car(s) this year and managed to attend at least one or two rallies through the summer.

Happy Bubbling

Bob Crompton



I took this rather interesting picture of our 1961 BMW Isetta, which is now based in France, in a very pretty little village, called Le Mee-sur-Seine. It is now getting very regular use, on the 'School-Run', we have very few problems, and it gets many admiring and inquisitive looks. Our dog Luna, as you can see, also enjoys coming along for the ride, indeed, when I start the car up, she appears very quickly on the scene, ready for her trip. Terry Martin.



The Belgian team for the Liege - Brescia - Liege. 3 x Isettas & 2 BMW 600's sent in by Carine Meynckens

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FOR SALE. LHD isetta door in solid condition, needs light superficial cosmetic work in the usual places but overall VERY solid. £230, buyer to collect, call steve on 07791 835686

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FORTHCOMING EVENTS

10th - 12th October The "OKTOBERFAHRT" AT The Golden Square Caravan Park near Oswaldkirk.

1st - 3rd November Halloween Rally at The Bubblecar Museum Lincolnshire. Contact Mike or Paula on 01400 262637 for further details.

A ROAD LESS TRAVELLED

John Jensen

We Isetta owners are always on that road it seems, enjoying the sights and sounds that others seldom see, not to mention endless smiles from folks along the way. This past year my "road less travelled" turned out to be an adventure in the engine compartment of my Isetta. That journey is now completed.

A couple years ago I was assembling my "primo" engine, one with an aluminium billet rod to match the light crank, an NOS engine case, superb head, hardened seats, and an NOS Kolben-Schmidt piston. Upon installing it a year ago, I swear it had a slight knock, the rod big-end probably. I had another engine almost ready to go, so I decided to assemble it.

Unlike a full-time mechanic, I don't spend eight-hours a day on this stuff. I do what I can when an hour or two is available. I had been at the point where I needed to insert retainers for the gudgeon pin, but decided I would get some better circlips for this purpose, instead of the bent wire gadgets that some bloggers had warned against. I had the new ones in a little baggie on my workbench, but got distracted rigging a piston-ring compressor and totally forgot installing the circlips, never to know that this engine had an issue that would worsen mile by mile.

At first it ran fine, but in time, and after 600 miles, it began to use oil. Friends said they thought they saw smoke from my

exhaust. I couldn't believe that. Since my engine was getting poor gas mileage, I figured it must be rich carburation. After all, I had a new piston, new cylinder, new rings, I couldn't possibly be burning oil. The engine ran well enough to drive regularly, so I continued cleaning my carburettor, adjusting my timing, verifying my TDC, switching from accelerator pump to the stock main jet, cleaning my carburettor again, and on and on. I figured it would improve as it got broken-in, but it only got worse.

Then one day I had a big backfire explosion in the muffler that looked like three bullet holes from a burst of fire from an AK-47. I found my compression gauge and removed my spark plug. It was black and oily and my compression was 65psi, not an encouraging sign. I pulled my engine, removed the severely carboned head and then the cylinder. That's when I noticed my special circlips were missing! I looked into the cylinder and saw two gudgeon-pin grooves down each side. These four new channels provided a place for the compression to slip past the piston rings and enter the crankcase, pushing oil out the breather and letting quite a bit get sucked up into the combustion chamber to char everything up on top.

A month later I had a new piston, a freshly bored cylinder, a clean head ready to assemble, and my muffler holes repaired. I installed the engine again. I began breaking in the rings with some driving, but was having backfiring issues still, not all the time though. It was inconsistent. I

kept on trying to locate a spark or timing issue, a short or a loose connection, but everything checked out fine. I went back to my old coil and condenser. I removed my centrifugal advance and found one broken spring. It still coughed and back fired.

And then I thought, what about a sticking valve. At last, my natural genius surfaced! I unbolted my upper mounts to let the engine drop a little and removed the head. I made a valve compressor and checked my valve stems. They looked like they could have been sticking, so I cleaned them and installed the head again. Before torqueing down the head-bolts, I checked the rocker end-clearance. It was too wide, and would permit too much oil to splash around up on top, work its way down a valve stem, and cause a valve to stick.

The specification for the rocker side-clearance is 0.02-0.06mm, or in inches 0.0008"-0.0024", about the thickness of a cheap sheet of copy paper, just enough to permit the rocker to move freely and some oil to pass through the bushings. It is not so easy to find feeler gauges this thin. I now think that the weep hole provides the minimal required amount of lubrication for the valves, rockers, push-rods and cam followers. If the side clearance gets beyond this spec, there would be too much oil escaping into the rocker chambers.

It is not difficult to adjust the pillow blocks at each end of the rocker shaft if you have the assemblies on the workbench. But, if installed in the engine and in the car, work-space is limited. It is worth re-checking the side-clearance once you've torqued-down the head bolts though, just to be sure nothing has slipped!

I went for a test drive and found that I now had more power, so I assumed that sticky valves had played a role in the misfiring. But, as the engine warmed, some misfiring returned. I tried a new plug wire and this almost solved the problem, but I had a small back-firing "pop" through the carb between shifts.

I used a light and a mirror to see inside the plug-wire terminal of the coil. Aha! I could see it was not a pin at all, but a brass or copper screw. I had never seen a screw in a coil before. Must be a modern thing. I twisted the wire down into the coil orifice and firmly onto the screw threads, tightened the coil cap and went for another ride. At last, the popping issue was completely gone.

The principle issue had been a plug wire not screwed down onto the coil terminal for good contact. The coil functioned, but was inconsistent. Minor issues were one broken advance spring and possibly sticky valves. I'm up and running again, the nearly-new engine revs freely with good lugging power in 3rd and 4th. My engine hasn't run so well in ages, and this is without the accelerator pump, just the stock 125 main jet. It's like driving a sports car now.

Hopefully, if you go down that road, yours will be a shorter adventure than mine.

My Long Term Project

I recently rejoined the club after an absence of many, many years – at least twenty, I think. I first joined the club back in the early '80's, before I left home to study. At that time I was working on my 1955 bubble window 250cc Isetta. I had the chassis stripped and powdercoated, and fitted new brake lines, re-kitted the master and slave cylinders, fitted new brake hoses, fitted new king-pins and bushes, did a top end overhaul on the engine, and put it all back together. Even had the engine going - it sounded great! I also had some welding done on the front wings which was terrible. and which will be redone when the bodywork gets underway. (Expect an order for the club replacement panels!) Alas, with moving away from home the bubble came to a complete standstill, where it staved for all the time I didn't have a garage. Then, I moved to New Zealand, and eventually had a garage, but was a long way away from my bubble. Then, miraculously, my bubble was lovingly shipped all the way over (or is it under) here, and now I have the bubble, safely tucked away in the garage, and no money to do anything with it. At the moment, anyway. But I have high hopes that funds will be built up over the next twelve months to breath new life back into my long-time awaiting project. I'm sure other members will be more than familiar with the demands on time and funds that mean not so much progress happens on their cherished chariots that they would like.



I'm planning on a complete restoration back to original; my car was ivory in colour. Since my time of original membership the internet has pretty much revolutionalised access to information and spares; I've done lots of hunting on the German sites that have parts available specific to my early model Isetta. At the same time, I'd like to congratulate the IOC of GB for the great service in terms of spares and opportunities for members to get together to enjoy their cars. I know of two other Isettas in New Zealand – one in Eastbourne, about half an hours drive from Wellington, and the other in Southwards Car Museum, about an hour north of Wellington. Is there more? (If you know of any more please let Julian know. Ed.)

Parts that I'm going to have difficulty with are the 2 quarter front bump-(I have one and think ľШ have to have one handmade to match by panelbeater who knows how to handcraft aluminiand um). some rubber



parts which seem impossible to source: the front triangular window rubbers, and the rubbers which go between the long headlamp pods and the body. Also, ideally, some new rubbers for the indicator lenses – I've only seen my type of tear-drop shaped indicator lens in old photos of Isettas, not on any contemporary photos. Does anyone have experience in having rubber parts like this manufactured singly or in small batches? I've seen some new triangular window rubbers available from Isetta-Classics (www.isettaclassics.com), but they look different. My window has a metal frame at the front edge and bottom of the window, which pivots. One other question I have which I'm hoping that someone may know the answer to, is what colour is the correct factory colour for my chassis? There is an excellent article on the internet colours on original (http://www.isettatech.com/pdf/IsettaPaintCod es-Color.pdf) which lists "Frame and Chassis Gray" but states that the colour was introduced in 1956. What about 1955?

Julian Foster

Bristol and Bath Microcar Rally 5-7th July

Living just up the road from Bath it was my intention to attend the whole of this rally but due to another commitment I could only attend for one day – the Saturday. I arrived early to find most of the attendees still in bed – after all it was only 8.30 am. The only sign of life one lonely Trojan three wheeler put-putting over to the loos at the Club house. The rally was held at the Keynsham Rugby Club ground a great venue with on site facilities and a pub across the road.



I introduced myself to the organiser Winford Jones and his wife who I had met at the 33rd National last year. He gave a brief background to this small (40 members) but active club — it was formed in 1984 to give local micro cars enthusiasts a home as it were as well as the single make clubs. The club is ticking along and is always on the look out for new members. Perhaps I will join them to cause a membership surge. Anyway on with the report. (Winford has a Lambreta Mink — a prototype three wheeler that never made it to full production).

There were a number of familiar faces and cars at this event – the editor of the IOC Newsletter in particular – his grey ghost Isetta "Bessie" looking resplendent especially that wonderful carpet and interior trim.





Three other familiar faces to me were there as well – best described as the Northern Contingent (or is it Continent?) – well that because they were – they had driven some 240 miles to get the event staying overnight in Birmingham and after the event were to return back the same way.

The Trio consisted of the Trojan, Jim Hacking's now on the road Zundapp Janus and the NSU Prinz. Having seen the Janus in pieces in Jim's workshop I was pleased to see it now on the road – however this had not been achieved without problems. Jim had bought the car partially restored and had completed the restoration, one bit he had taken as being OK was the engine which it was said had been restored. Well the first real test drive proved that to be wrong as the engine threw piston rings to gay abandon – (Can I say that?).

It turned out, after a very careful examination, to be that the piston had been put in the wrong way round as a result the little pegs that hold the rings in place was snagging on the exhaust port, hence the problem , turn it round and there you are. This is quite some car — Jim has had a few of his chums in it — total weight 50 plus stone and it still went well not bad for 250cc. BTW there are only 24 of these running in the world today — out of the 6,900 that were made between 1957-1958 in Nuremberg.





The other attendees had between them, 6 Three wheeled Bond Bugs – a four wheel Bond Bug, 4 Bonds, 3Schmitt's, a Scootacar, a BMW C1 motorcycle and a BMW 700. Wow – I had heard about this 700 when writing a recent article of the BMW 600 never thought I would see one and in such great condition too. I knocked on the door of the camper van alongside it and found it was owner by Chris Beal who was only the second owner from new. The car had 65K miles on the clock. He had obtained it in 1992 from the original owners relatives in Hampshire.

And the ignition Key is (Mark one Mini style) on the floor!



I was fascinated to see a number of Isetta and BMW 600 features still in this model—the way the choke and heater were positioned next to each other being one of them — this car has twin carbs and is 42 bhp. I do hope to see more of these very modern, looking cars which belay it real age — the car was registered in 1962!

The day was to have the traditional road run – this one ending up at the Cranmore Steam railway – famously the brain child of the painter David Shepherd and the home of the Black Prince Railway engine – I went a head to find a good spot to take the photos. I found out you could pay for a days training to be a Train Driver. That solves next years birthday gift for you Kids!



he run to the railway was not without event - the Scootacar had an overheating problem and stopped at least twice – I saw the owner looking frantically for cold water to cool, it down only 100 yards from the finish. The BMW 700 had also had problems after stopping to help the Scootacar earlier on, it had suffered a broken clutch cable. I went to try and find Chris but failed – I hope that's because he got it going again. And the last to arrive were lan in "Bessie" the Isetta and the three long distance travellers.



All too soon I had to leave. Anyway it was a great day – well done to the Bristol and Bath Club – lets see some more IOC and BMW car club members there next year – great venue – and great friendship as always in bubble car land. David Marsh



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<u>Isetta World News ...</u>

Isetta World's topics have ranged far and wide since the last Gazette, covering subjects such as discussions concerning the Bing carburettor float, Isetta original paint colours and schemes, and several new owners have had their rebuild queries answered and their heads examined (?).

We have also had an entertaining posting from Thomas F Volkmann of New Mexico, USA, about a recent memorable Isetta journey ...

Just to set the scene, a couple of weeks ago Tom had ventured out in his freshly re-commissioned Isetta but had experienced clutch failure which necessitated him getting the car recovered and taken back home... he continues his story:

"After the not-so-triumphant adventure in the Isetta a couple of weeks back, the car is now on the road again. A new clutch disk has been fitted and a few other mechanical items have been tended to. I changed the oil in the trans and chain case; both oils were still dinosaurs when last filled. So, with the car again in (supposed) tip-top condition, I concluded that another epic journey was in order, mostly to vindicate myself for the previous failure.

This time I was able to entice Liza to go with me. With 2 small kids, it is rare that we get to do anything alone together, so this was a treat. We sent the kids off to school, and got a late start on our attempt to repeat the journey of several weeks ago. Our Isetta ran well and climbed up into the Heights of Albuquerque. As we levelled off on Tramway Boulevard and picked up some speed, the open sunroof flap began to occasionally slap around in the wind. The center bow, now

trailing, was banging loudly against the roof just often enough to scare the c**p out of us, so we stopped at a 7-11 to seek a remedy. I found a bungee cord, and came outside to a reasonable crowd gathered around the car, and Liza explaining the merits of the Isetta.

Some folks actually followed us down to the 7-11 from Tramway, just to get a better look. 20 minutes later, we were on the road again, with the bungee between the front top bow and the luggage rack. Inelegant, but effective.

The climb through the canyon was smooth, slow, and steady, as it was before. Passing through Tijeras and into Cedar Crest, the little car soldiered on. We opted not to climb back to the summit again in favor of pressing on. Approaching Madrid, we found ourselves holding up a rather impatient driver in a Suburban, who thought maybe getting very close to us would encourage us to climb faster. The road was guite twisty, with nowhere to pull off. I realized that we were both leaning forward in the seat, and I felt a familiar tension in my back and neck. I am practicing my Isetta relaxation, and once I was aware of this sensation, I let it go and relaxed. We crested the hill, and the big 'burb passed. I need to get over feeling guilty when I hold folks like that up for a mile or so; they will get over it (and if they don't...)

Madrid is a small former mining town that wouldn't blow away after the mines closed. It is now a small Mecca to artists and Hippies and other folks with more spare time than me. It has a distinctly Bohemian feel about it, and the Isetta was an instant hit as we drove down the main street at just below the posted speed limit of 20 MPH.

Madrid is a popular destination with motorcyclists: the Harley guys head for the Mineshaft Tavern and drink beer, and the Ducati guys stop at the Coffee Stop and drink espresso. Maybe that explains the difference in riding styles?

As we approached Santa Fe, we paid notice to the spot where our clutch had failed a few weeks back, and pressed on. Approaching Santa Fe from the south put us onto Cerillos road, which is filled with car dealerships, a mall, factory outlets and chain stores. It is 3 lanes each way and always

gridlocked for 5 miles or so before getting to the "nice" (old) part of the city.

Today, as a special bonus, Cerillos road was under construction, with all the traffic funnelled to one side. Progress was slow. The

Isetta felt like a Ferrari at the speeds we were travelling. Finally, we passed St. Francis Drive, and stopped for an unbelievably good lunch at La Choza. After lunch, we drove around the plaza in the center of Old Town, and parked briefly in front of La Fonda hotel. We were inundated by spectators. We finally had to pry ourselves away from them so we could get back into the gridlock on Cerillos Road.

Heading back, we began to be concerned about how late it was getting. We needed to pick the kids up from their school/ daycare, and it was dawning on me that life takes a long time at 40MPH. We decided to take a chance on a "shortcut" that goes from the ski area to a little town called Placitas. I had seen the turn-off for this road when I plodded up to the summit the other day, but couldn't remember exactly where it was. We finally found it, above the ski area, some 8 miles of steep climbing up the summit road.

Unfortunately, the road to Placitas is pretty unimproved. There is a stretch of about 15 miles that is unpaved and has not been graded in years. Much of it crosses bare rock, and other parts are deeply rutted. It was a beautiful journey, mostly steeply downhill. There were precipitous drop-offs, hairpin turns, and rocks in the road that had tumbled from the faces of the uphill cliffs.

This was pretty exciting in an Isetta. We finally determined that we were not gong to make it to get the kids by closing time, and that we had no cell phone service in the mountains. The race was on. We rode that trail like a (very bumpy) roller coaster, dashing for Placitas where we could get a phone signal and make plans for the boys. The Isetta held together amazingly well, and before I knew it, we were back on the pavement, just as the rain started. At speeds above 30, the rain seemed to just pass over the car, not in through the open sunroof. As we approached I-25, we found cell service, and called a friend to pick up the kids...

We headed for home through Bernallilo,

and back to Corrales through Rio Rancho. We met up with our friend Jeff and the boys, and I gave the car a look over. It was somewhat streaked with mud from our mountain adventure, and one of the rear mudguards had loosened up, but all in all it was a very successful trip. My key learnings for the day were that Santa Fe is 100 miles via the canyon and Madrid vs. 50 miles on I-25, and that a one hour trip in a contemporary car= a 2 hour trip in an Isetta. I guess people like me who are engineers are supposed to be good at math, but somehow the time calculations just escaped me. 200 miles round trip at 40 MPH= 5 hours. Duh.

We did stop once for fuel in Santa Fe, and showed about 42 MPG. I guess that isn't too bad given that we had a lot of climbing on the way, and that I had the throttle nailed to the floor 99% of the trip. I would expect better mileage on the way home, as Santa Fe is 2,500 feet higher than our home in Corrales. Now I feel vindicated....until the next thing breaks!

Tom F. Volkmann, Corrales, New Mexico "

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Isetta World's members include most of the World's top Isetta restorers and authors of books on Isettas and associated topics.

Isetta World's Files section contains much useful information for the Isetta enthusiast. Isetta World's "Photos" section contains over 800 photos of Isettas, parts and accessories, etc...

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Terry Parkin, Moderator



THE INTER Owned by Bob Purton

The Inter was built by S.N.C.A.N The Societe Nationale de Construction Aero Nautique at Lyonn France for Ateliers Electro Mechaniques de la Siene of St Ouen. Publicised in 1953 and produced from 1954 to 1956, some being assembled as late as 58. Well over two hundred were built, my example being the the fifth one made, just over 20 survive. The original design was for the two front half axles to fold in greatly reducing the cars overall width but only the first few sported this feature before the idea was dropped as was the Torpedo open top model. Both cable brakes and hvdraulic brakes were used, the former being a Bendix system. Despite what early literature said all cars used the two stroke 175cc Ydral motor, some the L49 bitube and others the AJ55, both engines used the 6 volt Westinghouse gyrostarter, this starter predates the 12 volt dynastart and is possibly why the Inter was not so successful, the device was rather week and is the reason why most of the twenty surviving cars are not running. Fortunately my one is fine. I am told that Ydral motors actually sued Westinghouse, the American electro engineering giant over it as they had spent a fortune tooling up for there engines to accept the device and for the problematical backlash they received. Unlike the dynastart the gyrostarter is not permanently engage to the crankshaft, a motor with a flywheel is started up and when maximum speed is reached a lever is thrown which releases a clutch that transfers the momentum to the crankshaft effectively kickstarting the engine. The whole thing sound very much like an aircraft or a helicopter preparing to start up. I found my current car about six years ago in France as a wreck with many parts missing, it took much searching and the remanufacturing of guite a few parts to finally get it finished and running (unfortunately no picking up the phone and ordering parts from stock like when doing an Isetta or Schmitt) a lengthy but highly satisfying project. How does it drive? Well the suspension is by Neimann rings, these are sets of rubber bands that reduce down in size as they fit inside each other, the same system as used on the Klienschnigetter and the Isetta Velum, also still used today on some French trailers. Although it sounds quite crude in practice the system works very well and is far superior to the harsh rubber in torsion Messerschmitt arrangement, it handles well too. My car is equipped with the hvdraulic brakes which again kicks sand in the face of the Schmitt. Performance is not wonderful but adequate, it has a proper reverse gear (no stopping and starting the engine) and three forward ones. I think it would have benefited from a four speed box for more flexibility. Steering is by a bicycle chain linked to a rack and pinion and is quite direct. On the whole I like driving Inters but like most low production microcars they were undeveloped due to the short production period and improvements could have been made. One major weakness was that the small 6 volt motorcycle battery that powered the gyrostarter would be completely flat if your car could not be starter after say the fourth attempt. I fitted a whopping great 6 volt optima under the passenger seat to solve that problem. I'm glad I acquired this car when I did as now finding one for sale seems almost impossible. If anyone wants a closer look it should be at the National Microcar rally in September.



CLASSIC MOTOR SHOW NEC BIRMINGHAM

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The Classic Motor Show is a "must do" event for all motoring enthusiasts. With an enormous display of 1000 cars spanning five NEC halls this really is the biggest and best show of its kind in the UK.

If you like cars, you'll simply love this! Cars from all eras and generations are here, from the very earliest, through to classics of the future. Cars fondly remembered and cars you'll still dream of owning. Cars of all kinds ranging from 1920's wealthy gentlemen's playthings to 70's family saloons, from British sports cars to huge American muscle cars, from road cars to racing cars, from the humble runabout to the outrageous Italian supercar – they're all here at the Classic Motor Show.

Also a superb place to buy and source, with everything on offer from a simple nut and bolt through to a superbly restored classic car, The Classic Motor Show boasts the biggest collection of dealers, companies and traders offering every conceivable product or service to the classic car owner/enthusiast or prospective owner, all under one roof.

All this PLUS some great features including - the Live Stage and WheelerDealer Live with TV's Mike Brewer and Edd China, the Restoration Theatre and the ever popular Dream Rides in Dream Cars feature making The Classic Motor Show a fantastic day out for owners, enthusiasts and "petrolheads" of all ages! We look forward to seeing you at the show.

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