

ISETTA

Gazette

Autumn 2010 edition



The Isetta Owners Club of Great Britain Ltd.

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Editors Bit



After the Bristol Microcar Rally at Keynsham my wife and I took the opportunity to continue our journey to Devon and stay in the Paignton area for the rest of the week.

We decided to visit the South Devon Railway which runs between Buckfastleigh and Totnes. On entering the car park at Buckfastleigh we were flagged down by a railway official and directed to park in front of the station. Apparently, any classic cars are requested to park there to add to the character of the railway.

The front cover of the Gazette shows 'Bessie' taking pride of place at the booking office entrance.

Be prepared for a much thinner Winter Gazette next time as at this moment I haven't anything to go in it. Out of around 400 members only 2 or 3 contribute articles for publication. All of you have stories to tell around the campfire about your bubbling exploits, how about letting the rest of us share those moments. The ball is in your court, if you want a Gazette with lots of blank pages just sit back and wait for it to arrive, if not, put pen to paper or fingers to keyboard. You know how to contact me.

Ian Parris

Chairmans Chat

I am writing this in early September when most of the Rally activity has been and gone, I hope you had a good Rally season and gained a lot of inspiration for your own efforts. I honestly tried to make it to the National Micro Car Rally this year but events conspired against me at the last minute. My apologies.

I understand the NMCR was well attended and was a splendid showcase for all the different Microcars, a BIG Thank You to the organisers.

The Piaggio is now ready for its MOT (only 2 years late !!) and if I can find someone to offer insurance, it should be on the road by mid October.

Elsewhere in this issue you will see a Notice for the AGM, I would encourage you to come along and be part of the running of YOUR Club. We try to keep it short and sweet while allowing discussion of important issues.

As you may recall, I will be standing down from Chairman at this AGM and Jeff Todd will be taking over. I wish him well and look forward to working alongside him in my continuing roles as Treasurer and Company Secretary.

As Autumn comes upon us we can look forward to our usual presence at the NEC in November, organised, as usual, by Lee Turnham and I look forward to meeting as many as possible of you then.

In the meantime, I wish you all well and who knows, next year you might see me getting out of a powder blue Piaggio at a Rally near you.

Bob Crompton

Getting your Isetta carburettor to work right by john jensen

Here is a series of steps to follow to get your engine to run normally. Seems like very couple years I have to go through most of these steps to clean my carb. My fuel tank is well sealed with no tank rust for 20 years, but additives or impurities resembling rubber cement may form when fuel remains in the tank for a long time. Recently I removed my fuel valve and installed a different one. There was little or no sandy matter in the fuel tap when I removed it, only some fuel goo clinging to the inlet tubes.

The pot metal Bing carb does tend to form deposits of alkali, oxides or calcium. Cleaning it out every year or two is a good idea! If you go through the following steps, most likely your carburettor will work fine for you, if there is no physical damage to the carburettor. If, after doing the following for your fuel system and carburettor, you should probably investigate the electrical components, timing and valve adjustments. Your accelerator and choke cables should move freely, too.

fuel system remove internal fuel-tank rust and coat the inside fuel valve remove and clean it where possible fine screen on each inlet tube is a good idea valve should seal properly in the "off" position test by blowing through inlet tubes fuel line no in-line fuel filters, they impede flow use sediment bowl only verify that you get a respectable trickle from fuel line air-filter canister new paper filter carburettor removal disconnect slide piston and choke piston check that cable-return function is good disconnect intake air hose and fuel line from carb remove carb from engine carburettor cleaning remove dirt and grease with kerosene and a brush remove caps, jets and air-mixture screw add 1-cup of LimeAway to 3-cups hot water in a container drop the carb and all the parts in the mix, slosh it around after 20-30 minutes, run hot water into the bucket until clear add some dishwashing detergent and slosh that rinse again, same way check float chamber and caps for residue carefully remove all the parts from the hot water to dry a can of spray air will help to remove water in carb assembly check slide needle, replace if pitted check float needle, replace if pitted visually inspect jets to see that they're not clogged the slide needle jet can become oval from vibrations replacing all jets is a good idea install the jets fairly tight in the correct locations add float needle and secure float in slot use new gaskets on caps and filter bowl assembly replace soft rubber tip on choke piston install air-mixture screw 1.5 turns out from closed install carb use 3/16" pressed paper gasket at intake manifold install carb snugly to intake so no air can leak in set slide needle with key at 2nd notch down from top install cable through slide piston fit slide piston into carb and secure top insert choke piston and secure top adjust top fitting to remove slack from choke cable fuel hook-up attach fuel line to carb turn fuel on, see it flowing into sediment bowl see that the float rises slightly tap the float needle gently to see if the float floats no fuel should be leaking out the overflow hose fuel should not rise above the float secure the float cover secure air filter intake hose to carb start-up choke "off", fuel "on" back out idle screw to let slide piston reach bottom screw idle screw in to raise slide piston 2mm or so valves adjusted, timing set, plug ready transmission is in neutral don't touch the accelerator during this process turn key to "on" and then to "start" it might start in one or two turns if not, pull choke out slowly 1/2" to 3/4" while cranking it should start within a few more turns if not, stop cranking after 10 seconds if it starts, it may begin to run rough as it warms up shut the choke "off" and let it idle to warm up warm engine adjustments adjust idle to 1000-1200 if possible adjust pilot air screw 1.0-2.0 turns out for smooth idle remove slack from accelerator-cable at top of carb rev engine, it should not stall coming off idle And then if it doesn't run..... I would look for problems with the timing, check that you have a spark, and double- check this list. If your engine has never run for you, install a new coil and condenser, plug, and plug wire.

My new engine seems to start immediately, first revolution, without choking. My former engine required choking, but that was also a different carb.

Your Isetta should start right up and run well for you.

Isetta, a hobby by Andrew Meyckens

I saw my first Isetta in the early sixties, being only 6 years old, when I went to school in a small village near Antwerp. It was a beautiful, shining black Isetta that had caught my eye...and my heart.

Ten years later, on my 16th birthday, my brother and I were able to buy an Isetta that belonged to the Belgian postal services. I was stored at the local scrapyards awaiting its demolition, but we came to the rescue! The car needed a lot of TLC and was restored thanks to help of a friend mechanic. And finally, on my 18th birthday (1974) the little car was ready to go. I travelled 32.000km with this car. It never let me down.

From 1978 onwards I collected more and more Isetta's and stored them into a shed ... a second bubble, ... even a third as I had left school and started to work (elevators) and make money! Money I mostly spent on bubble cars: Messersmitt but foremost Isetta.

In 1984 I decided to sell all my Isetta's because my second hobby demanded more money: I was running a PA sound system and I wanted to become a professional sound engineer.

In 2001, when I was working for television, I saw an interview with an Isetta owner. As they say, first love never dies: I realized that my love for the bubble car had never stopped.



In September the same year, I found an Isetta. Unfortunately, it was completely dismantled and it took me and my friends 4 year to restore it. We found out who the first owner was: in the sixties she was a "liberated" woman, working as a secretary in a brewery, driving from an back to work in her Isetta. Note that in those days women were not allowed to subscribe an insurance policy without the consent of their husband. Irene and her husband did not have any children except for her little bubble, built in 1962. She gave the car (him!) a name : "Jerom", the strongest man in the world, a

figure from a very popular Belgian children's comic strip which is also known in the UK (Jethro from "Spike and Suzy").

So Jerom came to live with us. We took him to several rallies in and outside of Belgium. One of our most favorite rallies is the International Microcar rally. The first one we attended in 2006 and we attended all the following rallies, with Jerom...of course.

Jerom has not only won our heart, but also the heart of all the people that voted for our bubble during the past rallies. Many thanks for all your support and sympathy.



The Bristol Microcar Club Rally

As usual the Bristol Microcar Club held their Annual Rally at the Keynsham Rugby Football Club from 2nd-4th July.

Those of you old enough will remember Horace Batchelor constantly advertising his fool-proof football pools winning system "infra-draw" on Radio Luxembourg in the 1960's and spelling out the name K,E,Y,N,S,H,A,M.



The Saturday run out was to Wookey Hole via a predictably torturous route required by all organisers of rallies.

Wynford had arranged with Wookey for all the cars to be parked in the top car park away from the the general public car park. We were met by the green Witch of Wookey who in her off duty moments is know as Fiona Robertson. Barrie Allen decided to have a photo taken with her by the side of his car and thought he would pick her up bodily for the occasion. He thought she was so light she must have been riding her broom at the time. I didn't get a

photo of her with Barrie but did capture her trying to bump start her broom next to my Isetta.

Wookey has come a long way since my last visit some 20 odd years ago and Sue and I thoroughly enjoyed our time there, so much so that when we came out into the car park we were the only ones left. Everyone else had departed an hour earlier for Wells Cathedral where arrangements had been made to park all the vehicles in the Bishop's Garden. We finally found our way there and whilst driving round the Bishop's lawn came face to face with the Bishop and his followers proceeding



to the Cathedral for their Ordination Ceremony.

Wells' claim to fame is that it is the smallest Cathedral City in England and although the Cathedral was closed to the public due to the ceremony, the gardens were still open which were worth the visit, so much so that when we got back to the parking area we were the only ones there again. I think someone is trying to tell me something; perhaps my deodorant isn't as good as it should be, anyway we found our way back to Keynsham without help.

It was necessary to get up early on the Sunday morning as a car boot sale is



held on the Rugby Club grounds and we didn't want to miss any bargains. Many of the car booters were attracted by the site of our cars parked nearby and came over see them.

As is normal, all the cars were grouped together for viewing and judging ready for an afternoon of prize giving.

Early on I seemed to be the only Isetta there and on that basis thought I could be in for a least a third prize in my group, the only problem being that I couldn't judge my own car. Eventually 2 more Isettats appeared which put me out of the running.

Ian Parris

The Berkeley Story by Ian Parris

It all started at the Microcar Nationals 3 years ago. I saw a Berkeley T60 and mentioned to Keith Mellors that I wouldn't mind getting one and would he let me know if he heard of one available.

As we were leaving at the finish of the rally, someone came rushing over and stopped me. He had just heard of my interest in a T60 and thought his neighbour may want to sell his project. I gave him my telephone number but didn't think it would come to much.

Later that week I had a call from the guy with the T60. He had purchased a number of boxes supposed to contain most of a T60 although he had never looked into the boxes to see what was there. He had bought the T60 2 years previously with the intention of restoring it but with a young child and another on the way he realised he would never have time to devote to the restoration.

The guy sent me a couple of photos of the bits of body and the boxes and I agreed to purchase the parts.

The car was in Leeds and as I was going to the Military Tattoo in Edinburgh, I asked if I could drop my trailer off at his house and pick it up with the parts a week or so later to which he agreed. On the way back I duly called in at Leeds expecting to load up the trailer with the parts. Quite unexpectedly I found the trailer already loaded just waiting for me to strap down the contents. You will

realise at this stage I still hadn't seen any of my purchase.



You can see from the photo what I was presented with.

Obviously the next thing was to lay out the parts for inspection to see what I had let myself in for.

Well, what confronted me was lots of rusty or corroded items. Not being familiar with Ber-



keleys, I didn't know how much of a car I had bought but I did know the task ahead would be quite daunting.

Fortunately only six miles away lives Geoff (Bill) Toyer a 30+ year veteran of Berkeleys. What Geoff doesn't know about Berkeleys isn't worth worrying about. Not only that but Geoff is an expert on his lathe has made up parts for me when required.

It was Geoff who convinced me that I had enough parts and patterns to start the restoration of T60 number 98 and could show me where the parts of the puzzle fitted together.

I decided right away that I must not be thinking of a finished car as this could be too far ahead and put me off but think of completing smaller parts which would be ready for final assembly at some date in the future. As most of you know the car is made mainly of GRP and aluminium. The main structural component known as the 'punt' is the complete underside of the car and my punt was not repairable.

Some time in the past the car had been crashed and the front of the punt destroyed and the rear wheel box area broken away. The remaining floor area was so thin it could be rolled up into a tube.

Luckily I was able to purchase probably the last punt made by Phil Turner who had produced moulds of various parts of Berkeleys for restoration purposes.

With good money spent on the punt I was now committed, but at least I would be building on a good foundation.

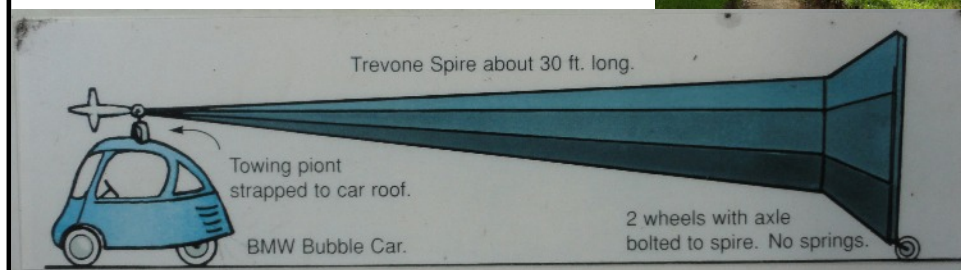
I will continue the Berkeley story in the next gazette, unless of course I am swamped by other articles.....



One of the expeditions from Malvern during the National Microcar Rally was to Avoncroft Museum of Historic buildings. On display is a church spire made of GRP ('fibreglass' as many of the plastic brigade will know it). What makes this most unusual is that the designer Peter Falconer towed a similar spire to the one in the picture from Stroud to Trevone in Cornwall a distance of 180 miles not just behind an Isetta but articulated on it as the picture shows.

This has given me an idea to design a fifth wheel caravan using my Isetta as the towing vehicle. I may need to beef up the suspension somewhat and perhaps add a turbo to the engine. If I can get about 20 bhp from the engine I may be onto a winner.

Ian Parris.



HOW IT ALL BEGAN by Edward Pipon (Part 2)

The body came back from the sandblaster in very good condition and with only a small amount of welding required to the floor area and a new corner piece on the off side wing it was straight in to the body shop for a make over. This left me time to continue on the gearbox and other ancillaries that need to be attended to. As the parts start to filter in from Mike Hurn and David Tadman it was now starting to take shape. The day came to fire up the engine and check the drive line for opera-



tion, all went well. Eventually the call came from the body shop to collect the shell. We loaded the chassis on to the truck and went to the body shop to fit the shell. It could only be described as a total transformation, it was back to the workshop to continue to bolt down all the ancillaries. The Chrome arrived back from Hampshire Chrome and things really started to take shape, with 90% of all the parts ordered having arrived I put in many hours in the evenings putting the car back together. First hanging the door

then re fitting the front and rear screens, then on to the wiring loom, interior trim panels (a little tricky to fit) and the tartan seat. Finally I fitted the chrome bumpers and front and rear lamps. For me this was the first time I had seen the car as a complete package so this was a very exciting time. With lots of little jobs to do and the matter of getting the car re-registered I will hopefully be on the road soon but you will have to wait for part 3 to see how I get on



East Bay Tour by john jensen

I like to drive my Isetta away from traffic and stop-lights. We live in Kensington, a small community in the East Bay, across the Bay Bridge from San Francisco. This side of San Francisco Bay has a long north-south ridge. Our home on Arlington Avenue is at 900 ft altitude, but not the top of this ridge. The streetcar line once went from Kensington south to Berkeley, but the tracks were removed after "the war". Many in the area have a view of SF across the Bay. Our view is blocked by redwood trees that save us from the late afternoon sun. We don't mind.



Often on a Saturday morning I fire up the Isetta and drive down Arlington to Berkeley for a cup of Peet's Coffee at the original Peet's. They preceded Starbucks and they serve excellent coffee and thick slices of cake to go with it. Once coffee'd up, I can get back in the Isetta and head up into the Berkeley Hills to Grizzly Peak, a street that runs along the top of the ridge and climbs to maybe 1400 ft.



Heading southward, I pass the Lawrence Berkeley Lab, once known for developing "the bomb", but used for many more useful research purposes today. As the winding road heads higher, and dangerously close to the very steep drop-off to the right, I sometimes stop at "The Wall". It's a retaining wall alongside a parking strip where motorcyclists accumulate at sunset on Saturday and Sunday after a good day of riding their road-bikes, a

chance to stretch their leathers. The Wall usually has a motorcyclist's name and R.I.P. painted on the face. Riding can be dangerous, especially on this winding stretch of two-lane. In the background to the west is San Francisco, Alcatraz Island, and the Golden Gate Bridge with fog coming in. South on Grizzly from there I'll pass the Redwood Valley Railway to "5 in scale" with live steam locomotives on a 1ft 3in narrow gauge track. They offer a 12min ride through the redwoods, plus a tunnel and a bridge. Taking children there gives me a chance to hear the engines and smell the steam. This size engine is even more common in Great Britain. Some years back they shipped one of their engines and crew to a grand gathering at a similar railroad in England that had more track to get our engine up to speed.

A few miles on there is a turn-off east to Canyon, CA. The descent from the ridge is down a winding road and into a dark damp redwood forest, and through the village of Canyon. Canyon is a cool place to live if you like peace, quiet and smallness. I stopped for a photo at the Canyon Post Office. At the bottom of the





slope we're into rolling grasslands as you move on to Moraga. This is charming up-scale residential-with-pools. Kensington is too cold in summer for pools, but once over the ridge, the summer weather is hot during the day before the coastal fog brings in cool breezes.

Circling northward through Lafayette there is a hillside where I sometimes volunteer to paint crosses or cut grass with my string-trimmer. This photo was taken when the number was only 3000 or so, a reference to American soldiers who have died in Iraq and

Afghanistan. It must be nearing 6000 by now. I once loaded my VW Rabbit with crosses and tried to take them up a steep trail to plant them up on top, but couldn't get traction. A 4WD is required here. My Isetta, with natural positraction, climbs the same hill easily. Sorry, no photo of that.

Mt.Diablo, at 3,700 ft, is one of our major mountains visible near here. My Isetta has been to the top. Mt Tamalpais in Marin is not



as high, but you can see the Faralon Islands 25miles to the West, once visited by Drake to take on seal meat before heading across the Pacific and back to England. My route seldom provides such a good view of the freeway. I am usually passing under it at some point.

From Lafayette there is much open country, parkland and rolling hills north to the Sacra-

mento River. The main railroad tracks from Oakland run along the river. Prior to the construction of a railroad line from Oakland to Sacramento, the river was a busy shipping route from San Francisco to Sacramento and points east on the Transcontinental Railroad. Ocean vessels still move along this waterway. In the river photo you can see the remains of an old steamboat, probably a ferry. There were many docks along the river here during the Goldrush.





This region has beautiful big rolling hills, green in winter from the rain and golden in summer. Cattle-grazing is common here. We also have a lot of deer, coyotes, and a few mountain lions.

Recently, the wild turkey population seems to be growing. The toms are fairly spectacular. Heading homeward on Bear Creek Road one passes horse farms, riding stables and a few vineyards. The speed on this route is 35 to 50 mph, fine for the Isetta. I pass by numerous bicyclists and motorcycle riders, not much auto traffic out here. The Golden Hills and

dark green oak trees are a California theme worthy of painting.

I stop to see a pasture full of goats. They are used to clear hillsides of fire danger in communities or parks where they are more effective than man and machine, and much more



fun to watch. Plus, they also eat the poison oak. Doesn't seem to bother them.

I once had an accelerator cable break along this road. A kind lady in an SUV let me use her cell phone to call Tripple A for a tow, but they never showed up. As it began getting dark I managed to pull the cable out of the sleeve, run it from the carb to the right side window. I drove all the way home like that, steering with

put a rag around my hand, then the cable, and my knee when shifting and my right hand out the window. Terry Parkin is prepared with a motorcycle throttle for just such occasions! His is for long hours of driving, but it would also substitute for a broken cable.

Returning eastward and crossing San Pablo Dam Road, we reach Tilden Park with a ridge to climb over, then a valley, then up over one more ridge and down to our modest home in Kensington. This 40-50 mile tour takes 2-3 hours. I see a lot of nice country, numerous smiling faces, and embrace the pleasure of that little BMW "single" pushing me along safely and reliably. I can barely wait to go again.



IT'S A DOG'S LIFE by Elaine Quinn

Keith had broken down and telephoned me to let his friend's dog out of their camper van as they had also broken down and although the dog had been left in the van with enough food and water for a few hours, it had no toilet facilities for an extended stay. By this time the dog was sure to need to go for a call of nature.

I was told the passenger door of the van would be open and now Jim my other half had typically gone for a walk just when I needed some assistance.

I tried the camper door but found it to be locked but the window was slightly open so I carefully poked my fingers in the opening after making a mental note of how many I started with. I wasn't familiar with the beast and just hoped that I would have enough fingers left to scratch an itch or show Jim a sign of displeasure. Luck was on my side today as when I withdrew my fingers for stocktaking they were all there, just covered in spit and slobber.

Now I knew I was safe I found a piece of wood to help me unlock the door. Success, the door sprung open and out went the dog with a shoe in its mouth taking off across the rally field.

I didn't even know the dog's name, all I could do was shout "dog stop" but it had spotted another dog visiting from Holland and continued without a thought for me.

I followed it over the other dog's owners and asked them with the help of some sign language if they would hold onto our friends dog whilst I looked for a collar and lead. I couldn't find a proper collar but was able to make a makeshift on that would do as a temporary measure.

Now I had the dog secure I had to find the shoe. There was I in the blazing sun being dragged at speed all around the rally field by a dog in search of a shoe.

The other rally goers must have thought they were watching a Carry On film from my antics.

Anyway, owners and dog were finally reunited safely with a chewed up shoe.

Next time I will make sure Jim takes his phone with him, at least I will be able to call for assistance. On second thoughts, maybe I will go for a walk and forget the phone!



Rob Clewes Isetta decorated for his daughter's wedding. Rob has just discovered another Isetta hidden away in a friends garage since 1968



Steve Fay sent in this photo of a plaque on the outside wall of the new Sainsburys Store in Brighton. The store now stands more or less where the Isetta works/Loco works used to be.

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These are new outer sills, copied from factory originals, in a thicker gauge metal. Sold individually or pairs, at £165 each. (Inner sills are also available). Collection or postage cost to be added.

BMW 700 Saloon

RHD Body shell and parts for restoration. Complete with V5C Registration Document. Previously owned by Lord Strathcarron, this vehicle was also featured in a comparison road test article, featured in the BMW700 Brooklands book. RHD versions of these cars are now very scarce. I am open to offers for it to go to a good home! Tel. 07968-048762.

For Sale

Isetta Gazette back copies from May '87 to Dec. '88 No.s 110,113,115-123 incl. & 125. £1 each or £10 the lot + P&P or collect from Derbyshire. Tel. 07825 137468.

WANTED

4 wheeled Isetta 300 left or right hand drive also 4 wheel chassis for Isetta 300. Contact Dave on 0781 4392030

BMW 700 COUPE OUTER SILL EXTENSION PANEL TO REAR WHEEL ARCH

This is professionally made in 18 gauge thickness mild steel (Thicker than original BMW 700 bodywork) and is made to be welded onto the end of the outer sill at the rear of the sill and includes the rear wheel arch up to approximately 75mm above the outer sill height. Price £55 plus postage. Tel. 07968-048762

For Sale

Parts for a 300cc 3wheeler

Brand new bosch regulator, original part still in box. £(offers). Also gearbox, rear axle/chaincase, carburettor (incomplete), cylinder head, cooling shroud, front shockers, wiper motor, speedometer, dynastart (both parts), front hubs, drive shaft and most of an engine (big end went). Tel. 01463 710200 after 6:30PM.

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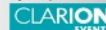
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