

ISETTA Gazette

Issue 96 THE January 1986

ISETTA GAZETTE



THE SADWINS WITH THEIR "BUBBLE-SHUTTLE".

From left to right, Sharon, Dan, Brian,
Leisa the teachernaut, Don Ewen, & Pat.

Full story inside.....

AUTUMN EDITION 2014

The Isetta Owners Club of Great Britain Ltd.

OFFICERS & COMMITTEE

CHAIRMAN Jeff Todd	108 Clee Road, Grimsby. DN32 8NX email:jefftodd1952@gmail.com
TREASURER Bob Crompton	Airedale Boat Club, Canal Road, Crossflatts, Bingley. BD16 2SR email:bargeebob@yahoo.co.uk
SECRETARY Joanne Todd	108 Clee Road, Grimsby. DN32 8NX email:joanneltodd2006@gmail.com
MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY Jeff Todd	108 Clee Road, Grimsby. DN32 8NX email:jefftodd@gmail.com
GAZETTE EDITOR Ian Parris	1 Winston Close, Nether Heyford, Northampton. NN7 3JX email:isetta@ianparris.com
USED SPARES MANAGER Mike Ayriss	29 Oak Drive, Syston, Leicester. LE7 2PX email:michael.ayriss@talktalk.net
TECHNICAL ADVICE Lee Turnham Mike Ayriss	70 Prebendal Avenue, Aylesbury,Bucks. HP21 8LQ email:lee.turnham@talktalk.net 29 Oak Drive, Syston, Leicester. LE7 2PX email:michael.ayriss@talktalk.net
CLUB MERCHANDISE	To be announced
NEW SPARES MANAGER Lee Turnham	70 Prebendal Avenue, Aylesbury,Bucks. HP21 8LQ email:lee.turnham@talktalk.net
BMW 600 & 700 Roger Barker	'Graygarth' The Holloway, Alvechurch, Birmingham. B48 7QA
ARCHIVE/RE-REGISTRATION and REGISTRAR Dave Watson	19 Wellhead Road, Totternhoe, Nr Dunstable, Bedfordshire. LU6 1QS email:d_watson@btinternet.com
WEBMASTER Ian Parris	1 Winston Close, Nether Heyford, Northampton. NN7 3JX email:isetta@ianparris.com

Website www.isetta-owners-club-gb.com

Forum autos.groups.yahoo.com/group/IsettaWorld

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Editors Bit

As I am not normally getting enough copy to fill the Gazette I decided to look back through older Gazettes and reprint interesting articles from those.

The front cover is obviously from a 1986 Gazette with an interesting story inside. I wonder if she ever got a ride on a shuttle?

Interestingly, since writing the above and starting to compile the Gazette I have accumulated too many articles for one Gazette, not that I am complaining but if your article doesn't appear in this issue rest assured it will not be forgotten. I have tried to include the most topical for the time.

You will notice we have 14 new members since the last gazette was published which makes a total of 35 new members so far this year. The club is going from strength to strength with a spares stock of nearly 600 items. We now have a stock of replacement silencers and exhaust pipes.



Ian Parris

Chairmans Chat

It's that time of year again when we hold the Annual General Meeting, full details can be found elsewhere in this issue. As usual it will be at Beedles Lake Golf Club just outside Leicester. The location is about as central as we can get it although some of us travel about 100 miles each way. As usual we need more committee members to shape the direction that YOU want the club to take.

The club is especially lacking social events so if you fancy holding one in your locality we can help with all aspects.

The club will have the usual stand at the Classic Car Show at the NEC from Friday 14th until Sunday 16th November.

Special thanks must go to Dave Watson for coordinating our presence with the NEC authorities and arranging a range of our member's cars. Jo and I should be there on the Sunday, we went last year and it really is worth a visit.

Nostalgia abounds, not just Isetta's, but every imaginable marque is represented.

Again if you can help on any day please contact Dave directly. See you there!

Jeff Todd

What Are Our Members Doing..... (In January 1986)

Our daughter Leisa has progressed in her project to be the first teacher in space. She has attained the goal of being one of the two contestants from Rhode Island to be sent to Washington, where she will be in competition with 118 others from all States and U.S. possessions. The top ten from this group will receive extensive training from NASA, and one will actually make the trip into space aboard the Shuttle. The other nine will be employed by NASA, travelling the country to promote space age teaching programs in all public and private schools. The Washington trip is scheduled for five days. Meanwhile we are promoting all types of publicity for her on a local and state wide basis.

We have a tentative date to attend a practice session of the National Football League "New England Patriots", and take pictures of members of the team around our Isetta. It promises to be a great deal of fun. We have even offered the use of the car as a secret weapon to be used during the playing of a professional league game in the early fall, before we put the car into cold storage for the winter. That is, if we find time to repair the braking system and do a few minor jobs to have in running in top shape. We were going to have it repainted this year, but time has not allowed.....

**I-SETT-A
PRECEDENT**



LEISA Z. SADWIN

**CANDIDATE
NASA TEACHER IN SPACE**

Our excitement is over for a short while. Though Leisa did not make it to the Shuttle as the first teacher in space, she did make it to the top 114, and is now an official NASA Space Ambassador, which is pretty good when one considers that over eleven thousand applicants from all over the country applied for the job! She will be doing extra work for NASA in the state of Rhode Island for the next year, and has been invited to take a VIP seat at the launching of the Shuttle with the teacher on board in January '86. She is now busy taking flying lessons, and completed her first solo flight in August. For the record, Leisa was the youngest applicant for Teacher in Space, and tied for first place as the smallest, but she was recognized by all when she continually wore her specially designed sweatshirt bearing

the logo shown. She certainly was the only Isetta bug in the crowd, which should be good for some sort of recognition.

We have had such a busy schedule that the Isetta remained in the garage until August, when it appeared at an auto show 60 miles from here. The show was directed by David Brownell, Editor of the Special Interest Auto Magazine, published by Hemmings. Not a prize winner, but sure as hell a real crowd-pleaser!

Now we are trying to fashion a rear assembly for the Isetta to make it look like the Shuttle, to be used in forthcoming parades, but we don't want to mar the finish on the car.....

Well, the Isetta has now been garaged for the winter; still wearing the tail and wing structure in at made it look like a bubble shuttle.



The excitement and work involved in the campaign to make Leisa the Teacher in Space, two trips to hospital for a minor heart problem, the further excitement of Brian and I being pictured in a well-known American monthly magazine named Yankee, in a story connected with our business, and the resulting "Yankee Invasion" have kept us on our toes. We are completely "pooped" as we describe it ' In the States - don't know the British terminology, but assume It must be similar. The HMI Club has been disbanded, though another new micro-car club will be formed to take its place. We still belong to the Rocky Mountain Isetta Group and a friend is planning to form a New England group in the near future. We were heartbroken to learn that Marilyn Felling was finally signing off, for we enjoyed being part of her group. We will probably join the new group out of curiosity. Meantime we are attempting to swing as many members as we know over to your direction. Leisa has been named the home town hero by Zayre's and will soon be televised at work, given a plaque, have a portrait done by Sidewalk Sam, and will have her picture on a billboard somewhere in Woonsocket. In addition to her duties of conducting workshops in various parts of the state, and at a national convention next year, she will also be present in VIP seats at the launching of the Shuttle with the Teacher in Space. Brian and I are recovering from national exposure by having full colour pictures of the two of us in the November issue of Yankee magazine.

Over one million circulation! See if you can find a copy.

Regards to all on the other side of the big pond,' Dan and Brian Sadwin.

1961 RHD Isetta 3 wheeler 555 ARU

After having our Isetta for 18 years now and restoring it when we first got it (I was 22 and first restoration I'd done) it was time to do a small article for the club mag.

After the initial restoration and teething problems, we drove to local classic car shows, Sunday drives etc. and started to go to micro car rallies where we have met some wonderful friends of these great little cars.

The car was running and driving well and the last proper time I drove the car was on a 1000 mile round trip and it never missed a beat, (well almost as the brakes overheated and wiper fell off!). Because of other micro cars (Heinkel Trojans) scooters, bikes, houses etc. the poor Isetta took a back seat and got mainly unused but kept nice and dry in my father's garage along with his Trojan 200. We put the odd MOT and a few miles on it over the last 10 years but never sadly really used the car.

Roll on 2014, and we decided to get the little red number (my Isetta) running and back in use. This you would think would be easy as they're such a simple car and it wouldn't need anything doing would it? Sadly due to car been kept across the other side of the town and my leg been in a cast. The small job of getting it running and MOT'd was a little harder than it should have been.

With the engine and gearbox serviced, car cleaned, battery charged etc. it started almost straight away :-)

Due to it not being moved for some time, the brakes were seized and wouldn't free easily so I decided to strip and redo them all. I rebuilt all the cylinders, replaced the hoses and copper pipes and cleaned out the brakes and acquired new drums (thanks to Ray). The steering had also been a bit hit and miss so thanks to the club's used spares a better steering 'worm' was fitted along with some new poly bushes to replace the worn out silent blocks.



At the back I decided to make a new drive shaft to try and take the misalignment out between gearbox and chain drive (it causes drag and wears the drive rubbers out). A pair of UJ's were sourced and I welded up a shaft while keeping the doughnuts on as well. I could now spin the back wheel easily whatever the height of suspension so I was very happy with the result.

Now the car was ready for the MOT and to be used again, or was it!! After bleeding the brakes and setting them, up a test around the block proved them to be OK but the brake lights were not working. A simple £3 brake switch had failed and finding one on a weekend wasn't going to happen easily. Thanks to my father who got one the next week, we were able to fit it and then bleed system again. This seemed to take forever and I started losing faith as the small jobs were being a real pain! At last it was done though and car was booked in for an MOT at last.

The day before the MOT I planned on a test run around the block. The car started easily, sounded good, and all the lights worked. I went to set off and nothing happened. No gears? I'd never heard of an Isetta gearbox giving up as they are pretty well bullet proof. It turned out when I got my head under car it wasn't the gearbox or clutch but the nice drive shaft I'd made had snapped! I blamed my welding but thought it strange as although my welding

doesn't always look the pretty it had always been strong. I removed the shaft (much swearing, cut skin etc. etc.) to find it was a UJ that had failed; I'm glad it failed then and not on the move as it would have caused some real damage. With the shaft replaced with the original one the car could now be driven to the MOT station. (I'll make a stronger UJ shaft when can).

My dad kindly drove to the MOT station and the car passed with flying colours, so great news. I popped out one night and did a 30ish mile test drive. Our little red Isetta drove like a dream and was much better on the brakes and steering than ever before. The new (and used) parts made a massive difference. Next up would be the first rally the car had been to for a good few years since the one at Caistor run by Ray and the micromaniacs.

Due to work commitments etc. I could only manage one night away, so with camping gear loaded off I went for the 40ish mile drive each way. The car drove like a dream and huge smile on both my and others faces as we drove along.

The campsite was great, the people friendly and a great time was had but sadly the Sunday morning was very wet so I took the tent down, getting soaked to the skin in the process and started the drive home. The wipers were struggling to keep up with the volume of rain and one wiper gave up, (luckily the passenger side) the drive home was fun as the winds and rain were very strong and heavy but the little car got me home.

Driving over the Humber Bridge I couldn't see the towers due to the weather but I still had so much fun driving 555 ARU once again. Now it is getting used a little more with some local shows and rallies planned for the year, so hope to see some of you soon :-)

Mark Fisher

BUY AND SELL & WANTED

FOR SALE

- 1 Red Tartan Seat Cover unused very good quality, made in Germany. £60 + postage.
 - 1 Stainless Exhaust Pipe from Engine to Silencer Box unused. £15 + postage.
 - 2 Lucas Rear Light Units unused. £10 pair + postage.
- Roger Hall 01472 826009 Grimsby.

Hello Ian.

I was wondering if you are able to help? I'm hoping to possibly contact a BMW Isetta owner in Devon or the SW that could help me out.

My father had a BMW Isetta in the late 50's early 60's but had to sell it and get a larger car - a Morris Minor - when he started a family. I know deep down that he regrets having to sell his little BMW and I was thinking that as he will be 70 in October, a good birthday present would be to get him a ride in Isetta before he is too old.

If any of your members would be able to help it would be greatly appreciated.

Regards, Ed Franklin, 18, Riga Terrace, Plymouth, Devon. PL3 6BU edfranklin@hotmail.com

ISETTA CLUB AGM

**TO BE HELD AT BEEDLES LAKE GOLF CLUB, 170 BROOME LANE,
EAST GOSCOTE, LEICESTER. LE7 3WQ
ON SUNDAY 2nd NOVEMBER COMMENCING AT 2:00PM**

Inter-National Microcar Rally 2014

The rally was arranged to run over 4 days from midday Thursday to Sunday with a road run on Thursday for those able to get there early enough.

We used the Thursday to get to the rally arriving late afternoon giving us time to settle in before the Friday road run.

Normally cars start out en-masse but this year it was a free for all with the destination to be the York Railway Museum via a 'Park and Ride' on the outskirts of York due to the high cost of parking at the Museum (£9).

Using the 'Park and Ride' was very convenient as for us being a 10 mile run through open countryside keeping us out of York. The cost was very good for those of us that possess a bus pass at £0.80 return (a lesson for some who have a pass but leave it at home).

After leaving the museum it was suggested on the itinerary that we take a ride into the centre of York on the road train which is a direct link to the centre where we spent the rest of the day.

In the evening, as this was a racecourse, the Friday evening was given over to a race night. We have been to quite a number of these, but this one proved to be different. We were expecting the traditional horse racing but were surprised to find it was a snail race with plenty of cheating by the snails.

Saturday's road run was to the Yorkshire Dales via Ripley Castle and Pateley Bridge etc. but as there was an autojumble on the racecourse we couldn't resist spending most of the morning searching for goodies. We went on our own version of the road run later in the day.

Musical entertainment was provided on the Saturday evening which again was well attended.

As normal, Sunday is reserved for showing and judging of the cars. 15 Isettas were on display on the Sunday of all versions, 3 wheelers, 4 wheelers, bubble window, sliders and a Velam.

The results of the judging are as follows:-

1st place Graham Dewhurst RBR 144





2nd place Brian Chadwick 597AEL



3rd place David Carle XOE 23



Restoration of the Year Mike Paxton 651 KUO



LETTERS

Hi Ian

I just received the Isetta gazette in my mail box and was very happy to find it. Thanks. I understood in the Chairman's chat that you needed some story to tell to make the gazette live. So.....ok for me !

I'm 35 years old and am invested in microcars since 2004. My name's Donald Le Bihan. I have the pleasure and honor to have at home some microcars like Rolux, Isetta Velam, Avolette, Messerschmitt, Solyto, Inter 175 A etc....but no BMW. Until December 2013 !



Some months ago, a friend told me he received an email from a guy wanting to sell an Isetta. Three wheels ! In France, very rare.... My friend was not interested, so i contacted the seller. After some discussions about a good price for both, I went to this place. A real temple !!

The car was in a barn and did not move for.....40 years ! After a close up, the car is an "Isetta of great Britain" ! Back to home, the best moment was the discovery of the general state of all elements. And.... cleaning ! I let you see the result :-)



Now, the car has meet its french friend, the Velam !

Thanks to my friend Keith Porter for having found a headlamp, one was missing on mine. I hope i can work on the car soon.

Cheers Donald

"How much Micro Horse Power on show here?" asks Alan Town.



Professor Heinz Wolff and the Isetta Connection

Professor Heinz Wolff is familiar to many through his appearances on TV shows such as the BBC's *The Great Egg Race* during mainly the nineteen eighties. There was also his classic Ali G interview from 1998; look it up on YouTube if you are not familiar with it, you'll find it three minutes well-spent.

But Professor Wolff's contributions to society are far greater than his involvement with the world of entertainment. Credited with coining the term "bioengineering" (look that up too; there are much better descriptions than I could ever muster!) for the field of work that he has primarily dedicated professional life to, German-born Professor Wolff has been one of Britain's most respected scientific brains over the last more than six decades.

In 1983 he founded the Brunel Institute for Bioengineering, based at Brunel University, and it is here that, at the age of eighty-six, he still works today. It is due to some of his more recent work with the institute that Professor Wolff is of particular interest to us Isetta enthusiasts. Through a programme called "Tools for Living" the institute researches, invents, and develops medical instrumentation and technology for the improvement of the quality of life for the elderly ... including personal transportation.

I met with Professor Wolff at his office on the university campus in the large and impressively-named Heinz Wolff building, where he explained all. It is his opinion that design constraints (due to legislation) severely limit the usefulness of proprietary mobility scooters for the elderly or disabled. He believes that there is a need for a bench-seated electric vehicle to enable couples to travel together, and that ideally such a vehicle should have access through an opening front to enable easy entry and egress at the kerbside. (You can see where this is going, can't you?)



Around five years ago, Professor Wolff determined to build a prototype of such a vehicle and, inspired by fond memories of the Isetta that he and his wife shared in the early 1960s, he bought one to modify as that prototype. The late RHD Brighton car was in very good condition and in time, fitted with an electric motor powered by three Lithium Iron Phosphate batteries; it was whirring its way around the campus. The seat was also modified and electrically powered to enable the passenger side of it to slide to the front of the car to provide that super-easy access.

Other projects subsequently took priority and the Isetta was sold on, but Professor Wolff has not lost interest in the idea. Having recently given up driving, after an accident on the campus

in which his car (a Vauxhall Nova, not the Isetta) overturned, but he was thankfully unhurt, Professor Wolff is himself now a user of an electric mobility scooter, and he still passionately believes that there is a future for a bench-seated front entry such vehicle. Through his contacts in the Department of Transport he is lobbying for regulations changes that could facilitate its introduction, and although his institute is not currently actively involved in the vehicle's development, he sincerely hopes that somebody else will pick up the baton ... maybe one of us Isetta enthusiasts?

I am sure that we all hear comments when displaying an Isetta at a show or just parking it in the street is that it has such a neat and clever design. It would be nice to think that Professor Wolff's dream could come to fruition and that a front-entry small vehicle might yet return to our streets, especially if in the service of those whose own mobility is curtailed.

But whatever the future holds for the bubblecar design, from a purely personal point of view, Professor Heinz Wolff's involvement in the world of Isetta has enabled me to get to know a living legend who is also one of the nicest people anybody could hope to meet. Besides his scientific interest, he has an infectious enthusiasm for the same types of cars and motorcycles that we Isetta owners find so fascinating. He and I chatted for a couple of hours, and could easily have gone on much longer. But if you've watched the Ali G interview, you'll be pleased to know that I resisted asking about the definition of infinity, or indeed raising any of the other topics that Sacha Baron Cohen's character brought to the same little office table!



Neal Bircher.

The Club is pleased to welcome:-

Mike Carroll	Gloucester	Steve Robinson	Weston-S-Mare
Brian George	Somerset	Mark Cleaves	Australia
Henrique Marques	Portugal	Michael Grout	Hove
Christian Dean	Minehead	Stephen Nicholson	Northampton
Victor Kerr	Belfast	Simon Couldridge	Northampton
Gaven Armit	New Zealand	Derek Barber	Bolton
Phillip James	Chatteris	Ralph Reid	Perthshire

New Members since the last Gazette

To advertise your items for sale or want adds etc. please email the editor at ['isetta@ianparris.com'](mailto:isetta@ianparris.com)

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BUBBLE CARS ECLIPSE F1 RACERS By David Tattersall

A record number of 11 micro-cars took pride of place at one of the biggest classic car events in North West England, attracting an estimated 25,000 visitors to the Lancashire market town of Ormskirk.

The Ormskirk Motor Fest is organised by the Aintree Circuit Club and supported by the local council and rightly claims to be the "premier free motoring event" in the region and "is one of the few occasions you are able to see a Formula 1 car being driven round streets."

More than 300 cars and motorcycles from all eras of motoring were on show. But the biggest draw was the chance to see classic and vintage vehicles being driven in procession round the town's one-way-road system - a natural circuit which is closed to normal traffic for two hours during the event.

Leading the parade, in two-abreast formation, was the self-styled "Squadron" of micro-cars comprising six Messerschmitts, two Trojans and two Isettas. They shared top billing with two historic Formula 1 cars, a 1978 Williams car and a classic BRM raced by Graham Hill in the 1960s.

"Bubble cars eclipse F1 racers" was the headline in the Classic Car Weekly, which reported that our cars were indeed "more popular" with the thousands of people lining the pavements.



The micro-naut team included: Messerschmitt KR200s Laurence Capewell, Arthur Fish, Ryalwyn Garner, Tim O'Neill, Dennis Shaw and David Tattersall, with Alan Town in his TG500, plus Trojan owners Roy Butterworth and Paul Wren and Isettas Jeff Cummins and Mike Wood.

Alan Town, who organised the micro-car team, said: "This was our fourth

appearance. The first time we were mainly parked on static display like most of the other participants. But then we were promoted to take pole position driving round the town centre circuit. As we all know, our cars are highly popular with the public and being able to see us on the move, two-stroke oil fumes and all just seems to add to the attraction.

"We are lucky to now have almost 30 owners of small cars in our part of the country and coming to events like this often leads us to people who know of other local owners of micro-cars. This year we had a special welcome for new Messerschmitt owner Dennis Shaw, who brought his Messerschmitt KR200 all the way from Rugeley, West Midlands.



Batteries and Regulators 2013

If you remember last year Helen and I took our car HEG 175 over the water to the Dutch Micro Car Rally and, it was so good, we decided to go again this year. The rally was to be held in Vollenhove on the over side of the IJsselmeer Lake or in old language The Zuider Zee. Preparation had been quite intense as our cars' bodywork was in quite poor condition, having been restored around 1983ish, nature was trying to reclaim it using the process of rust which had not been helped by having damaged the rear end some years before, so it was time to bite the bullet and strip it down to the bare metal ready for painting. Stripping off lights, glass, bumpers etc took me just one day, preparation including some body repair panels and painting took five weeks and putting it back together took me five days so I was cutting it fine if we were to catch our Harwich to the Hook van Holland ferry on August 18th, but we did.

Last year I had used my old BMW R1150RT battery, in the car, which at now 10 years old should really have gone into retirement but, why should it be ousted just because it was old, but working perfectly? Now one of the problems with Gel batteries and mechanical regulators is the charge voltage, 14.3 volts is the upper charge limit and old mechanical regulators can drift off into as much as 20 volts causing you to think the farmers have been spraying fertilizer over the fields, but, up in the hills of Yorkshire when I first detected the smell I am pretty sure they don't spray the moorland so it was then I realized the battery was being over charged and I decided to turn on the lights using up the excess power and give the battery a fighting chance of survival, however, it was still giving the Dynastart a hard time which was not good.

Just days before the departure I opened up the Jiffy bag to examine the electronic regulator that I had purchased months before, in fact, written about, here in the Gazette last year. The regulator I had chosen was manufactured by Dynamo Regulators Ltd model No DVR2-S which is specially made for Dynastarts holding the voltage below the 14.3v and also making sure the current does not go above 8 amps so as not to burn out the precious Dynastart itself and as a bonus it fits inside the existing start/regulator box.

After fitting I tested the voltage with a digital volt meter and the highest voltage I observed was 14.1 volts, perfect, it may have gone higher but I did not want to blow the engine up by over revving. Another small job I did to the battery circuit was to fit a battery Cut Out Switch on the negative side so I could 'switch off' should we have any problems.

After rolling the Isetta, full of camping equipment, down my trailer ramps at Parkston Quay car park in Harwich we drove the 500 meters to our night boat and Holland the next morning.



I use a Sat Nav in the Isetta, having planned the route, in order to use small roads but a short section of motorway was used to get around the Haig (Den Hague) then back onto normal roads and we soon arrived at the Spaandam ferry, crossing the river to the very road were our friends live, Dorpstraat, Assendelft, it is the longest village street in Holland being 8 Km (5 miles) long and I counted four petrol stations before we arrived outside her house for coffee and cake.

Leaving Assendelft the Isetta ate up the 86 miles to Vollenhove in next to no time using the pretty roads pre chosen on my computer and down loaded onto my Garmin Zumo 550 Sat Nav so we could enjoy the waterways and the countryside without frantic map reading. We were to have four days in an apartment before the rally commenced giving us time to see some of the area around Vollenhove, and see other rally-goers before the event began but our new Vango tent came into play for the weekend of the rally as the accommodation was booked out during that time.

The Dutch Rally organized by the DWAC Club has a familiar formula based on driving small roads to places of interest followed by the chance to eat and drink with bubble car owners from all over Europe.

The campsite chosen was ideal for our Saturday evening excursion to the annual Flower Festival in the town centre of Vollenhove with special seating arrangements for DWAC participants, well what a show we had, it made the Spalding Flower Festival look like a show put on by amateurs and, although Spalding is wonderful, its just that Vollenhove is so much bigger and more professional with all the floats decorated with Dahlia flower heads.

The winning float was Napoleon and Wellington but I liked the Vacuum Cleaner built in two parts and driven independently by two drivers one in each half of the float joined by a 1 meter diameter hose and if you are wondering how big these floats were? Well bigger than my house in fact several houses!

Sunday was the final day and the last road run of the rally with a visit to an Orchid Farm and a pancake lunch thrown in, it's such a shame the fun had to stop.

All good things must come to an end and on Monday morning, one week after our arrival in Holland, it was time for our return journey to Hook van Holland but we got delayed slightly leaving town as Tin Tin was slowly crossing the bridge out of town that everyone must go over. Traffic backed up for quite a long way so we decided to go back to the campsite as we still had some drinks tokens left from the night before, and then we parked up under the shade of a tree and watched not only Tin Tin but a Coal Mine, yes a Coal Mine, cross over the bridge to be dismantled in readiness for another year.

The new regulator by the way was working perfectly with no smells coming from under the seat and it was so easy to install. I had decided after removing the regulator coils to leave the start relay in place and fix the new electronic regulator into the space left by their removal which is recommended but on second thoughts decided it would be a better fitting to the alloy lid which made a good heat sink, just one hole was all that was needed and one 5mm screw, easy.

Our thanks to the organizers and friends of the 2013 DWAC rally we hope to see you again soon, maybe in England or in Holland.

Mike & Helen Ayriss



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