

ISETTA GAZETTE



AUTUMN EDITION...2021

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	1 North View, Ryhope, Sunderland. SR2 0PE email:bargeebob999@gmail.com
SECRETARY Joanne Todd	108 Clee Road, Grimsby. DN32 8NX email:joannetodd2006@gmail.com
MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY Ian Parris	1 Winston Close, Nether Heyford, Northampton. NN7 3JX email:isetta@ianparris.com
GAZETTE EDITOR Ian Parris	1 Winston Close, Nether Heyford, Northampton. NN7 3JX email:isetta@ianparris.com
USED SPARES MANAGER Mike Ayriess	29 Oak Drive, Syston, Leicester. LE7 2PX email:michael.ayriess@talktalk.net
TECHNICAL ADVICE Lee Turnham Mike Ayriess	70 Prebendal Avenue, Aylesbury, Bucks. HP21 8LQ email:lee.turnham@talktalk.net 29 Oak Drive, Syston, Leicester. LE7 2PX email:michael.ayriess@talktalk.net
NEW SPARES MANAGER Lee Turnham	70 Prebendal Avenue, Aylesbury, Bucks. HP21 8LQ email:lee.turnham@talktalk.net
ARCHIVE/RE-REGISTRATION and REGISTRAR Dave Watson	c/o Ridgeway Furniture Ltd, Unit 21a Chartmoor Road, Leighton Buzzard, Bedfordshire. LU7 4WG email:d_watson@btinternet.com
WEBMASTER Ian Parris	1 Winston Close, Nether Heyford, Northampton. NN7 3JX email:isetta@ianparris.com

TECHNICAL ADVICE 600's & 700's Millstonford Farm, West Kilbride, Ayrshire. KA23 9PS
Alastair Lauchland **email:alastair.lauchland@btinternet.com**

Website www.isetta.org.uk

Isetta World www.facebook.com/groups/267159327250111

I.O.C.O.G.B SUBSCRIPTION RATES

United Kingdom (and members receiving an emailed gazette)	£18.00	Annual Subscription payments should be made by PayPal to isettasubs3@gmail.com alternatively via the Online Spares System by purchasing an Annual Membership Subscription (Renewal Only) item or by Cheque to the Membership Secretary Ian Parris. For Standing Orders:- Sort Code 09-01-56 Account No. 00744809 to Isetta Owners Club of Great Britain Ltd. Ref. Your Name.
Europe	£21.00	
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Editors Bit

This gazette is a bit thin with only 12 pages as I have received nothing to include. It's sad that with over 400 members not one of you could be bothered to write anything for the gazette. The article from Bob Newton was left over from the last gazette and the other is from Terry our Isetta World administrator.

We know there are plenty of you out there working on your cars by the amount of spares we are selling, but none of you want to share your stories with us. Let us know what you are doing, a few words and a couple of pictures will do.

I would like to take this opportunity to remind members that the committee carry out their roles in their own time free of charge to the members. Members occasionally seem to forget this and can be quite demanding of us, especially Lee our spares manager who apart from picking, packing and posting spares hold down a full time job. Please think about this when you make unreasonable demands on him.



Ian Parris

Chairman's Chat

At the annual general meeting in September 2018, I gave up the role of chairman. Chris Skepper took on this role and as you are probably aware he passed away earlier this year.

Elsewhere in this Gazette is a tribute to Chris from our Treasurer Bob. Chris did a fantastic job as Chairman. My sympathy and condolences go to his wife Gill and family. The club is aware that Chris sold his car and its trailer separately before his passing so he knew that they each went to good homes. During the committee meeting in April, I was asked to re-assume the role of chairman until the next Annual General Meeting to which I duly agreed.

I have had a couple of enquiries from members which I passed to the relevant officer within the club and I was informed of a 4-wheel car being sold at auction in Wakefield and I noticed a 3-wheeler being auctioned in Scunthorpe. Maybe these sales have resulted in more members for the club.

Jeff Todd

Chris Skepper Chairman – Isetta Owners Club

It is with considerable personal regret and sadness, that I must advise Members of the passing of our Club Chairman - Chris Skepper

After a long illness, Chris passed away peacefully, with his wife and family by his side, on 13th June 2021 and his funeral took place on 2nd July 2021 at the Church in Little Paxton, near his home.

Chris was a long term police officer who reached the rank of Inspector and after his retirement some years ago, he kindly agreed to become our Club Chairman. His period in office was marked by significant efficiency in dealing with occasional problems and good leadership through the COVID period when we had to resort to online Committee meetings and AGM.

Following a police escort to the Church, the cortege made its way to the Cemetery led by three Isettas one of which was Chris' ex-car. Club members Flavio De Jesus (who now owns Chris' car), Mike Ayriss and Ian Parris travelled to Little Paxton to take part. The Cover photo of this edition of the Gazette shows the cars outside the Church.

The Club has passed our condolences and best wishes to his wife Gill and his family

Jeff Todd has kindly agreed to assume the Chairmanship in Chris' place.

Bob Crompton
Club Treasurer and Company Secretary

Isetta World

An odd, unique Isetta appeared on Isetta World earlier this year with many members enquiring about its history and its whys and wherefores.



I found that it had been built by Ray Berghefer of Laurium, Michigan and luckily I found Ray's story of the car. Ray says ...

"It all started in 1961 when I bought the 1958 BMW Isetta 300 from an Airman who worked for me at the Air Force Station at Syracuse, NY. I heard it was for sale and I bought it.

At the time I was living on Folar Beach Road on Oneida Lake about 4 miles from the base. It was ideal for commuting to the base. I made a set of chains for it and bolted some water skis on the front wheels so that we could use it for getting it on the lake for ice fishing.

It was in the spring of 1964 as I was getting ready to retire from the Air Force and was talking about selling the car. My wife said "Don't sell it! We can take it back to Laurium and I will use it to go back and forth to the golf course" (her friend Rita was going to teach her to play golf). I told her that with the two of you in it there would be no place for the golf clubs. I didn't really want to sell my cute Isetta so I started to figure out how I could handle the golf clubs. There are two very stout pipe bumpers on the back which were the only place that I could mount

something on. I bolted two pieces of pipe upright on them about 30" at the top. Across these pipes I bolted a piece of hardwood about 24" by 8".

About this time my friend Don showed up and seeing my fabrication at the back, he commented " this looks like a good place to carry an outboard motor." With this in mind Don suggested "Lets fix a motor on it and take for a ride on the roads around the lake". So we clamped a 7.5 Johnson on it and started out. I had forgotten that the Isetta at that time had a blown muffler and was quite loud. Well we got many looks, laughs and applause, so it just mushroomed from there.

I had all the pieces and parts that I needed after buying out the remains of an outboard agency in Matydale, NY. I had a bow plate for an aluminum boat, red and green bow lights, chocks and bits and several stern lights. I filled in the open areas at the stern. Mounted the flow plate and tilted in the bow as you see it. Then added the lights. Bronzed the bottom and painted a water line on her. She had a sun roof, so I put a plexi-glass windshield on the top and a stern light up there also.

Next it was about time to give it a name, but we decided that a number was better. So we decided on the EXP I (there has been no EXP II) . When I retired in November 1964 we came across Canada with a truck with a 4-wheel trailer and the Isetta on it . Behind me was my car with the wife, the kids and the dog, and it was loaded down. Behind us was my Jeep towing a box trailer.

While we were crossing Canada on the Queens Highway which (in 1964) was just two lanes, this three vehicle caravan was something to pass. We had CB radios in each vehicle so I told them to fall back and leave a space between us to allow vehicles to pass one at a time. Because as they passed my truck and trailer they would see the Isetta and slow up to my speed to get a better look at it. I thought I was going to cause an accident.

We soon made it to Windsor and Canadian Customs. I showed them my retirement papers, but all they wanted to see was the title to that little car which had quite a crowd gathered around it. We then moved on to US Customs where we were stopped by a young Customs Officer who was trying to show his authority and was going to make us unload the trailer so he could inspect it. I showed him my retirement papers and told him these were all my household goods that I had acquired during my stay in Syracuse. Luckily a Senior Customs Officer showed up and asked what was going on and I told him. He asked to see my discharge papers. He took a copy and stamped it and said to "get going" and that was it.

I planned to buy an Evinrude Agency, but, that fell through so I set up a small boat ride in Copper Harbor called Harbur Cruises. Hence the name on the sides of the car. I had it in several parades and often would park it by the stop signal at

the junction of US 41 and 14-M-26. It was a great advert and would send people looking for the Boat Ride.

The boat business only operated for two summers while in the Winter I drove a school bus. I then took the job of Street Commissioner in Laurium, so I put the car in storage. It was in storage for many years while I was in my boating phase, going to Arkansas two years to operate a cruise boat, spent a couple of years on a research vessel on the Great Lakes, then to the Gulf, Baltimore Harbor, Bahamas, Bayfield Wisconsin, and a stint with the National Parks System in the Apostle Islands.

I finally settled down starting another business in Laurium and it was then that I got it out of storage and built a special trailer for it. Then I decided to sell it by putting an ad in MINUTIA, the Newsletter of The Microcar & Minicar Club . A Dr. (podiatrist) from Cheboygan was up here on vacation and called me to ask the price, bought it and took it away. Well I thought that was the end of the story. Not so.

About three years later I received a call from Don Campbell of CM who wanted to know if it was still for sale. I said "No" and he then asked me if I would build him one like it. I still had enough of the pieces so I asked him if he had an Isetta. He said no but he was going to buy one. I told him to call me when he had one. About a year later he called and said he had a 300 and a 600 Isetta. He said the 300 was too nice to modify but he thought he would like to modify the 600 and would send me a drawing. Well I got the drawing but it was to be a Car/Airplane, with folding wings, twin booms and tails with the engine on top of the car with tractor and pusher propellers. I told him that I probably could do it but that I wouldn't even make one of those for myself.

Think that's the end of it? Oh! No!

... another year or so went by and I got a call from a fellow from down in the Cadillac area wanting to know about the Isetta. Don has him looking for it or to build one for him. I said that I would see what I could find out. I called the Cheboygan Chamber of Commerce and the lady that I talked to was very helpful. She knew of the Dr. and informed me that he died but she gave me the phone number of the present podiatrist. He knew nothing of the car but his receptionist checked some records and found the names and phone numbers of the former podiatrist, which was a great help. I contacted his widow and she did not know what happened to the Isetta.

So sadly I lost track of my interesting and unique Isetta."

Our Thanks to Ray for his reminiscences.

Terry Parkin, Isetta World

www.facebook.com/groups/267159327250111/

IOCOGB AGM 2021 to be held at 14:00hrs
GMT/UTC +1 on
Sunday 24th October via ZOOM

Anyone wishing to join the meeting must advise the Chairman by email of their wishes together with the following information by 1st October to allow reports and link to be sent prior to the meeting.

Members name, email address and country of residence.

Email jefftodd1952@gmail.com

NOTE THAT THE MEETING WILL BE CONDUCTED IN ENGLISH
If you wish to speak, please get the attention of the chairman
by raising your hand who will endeavour to include you.

The Club is pleased to welcome:-

Robert Agnew	Ireland	Masanobu Takei	Japan
Kaspars Dambis	Latvia	Julie Yates	Northumberland
Michael Clement	Pontefract	Paul Keatley	Worthing
Scott Milne	Scotland	Tom Stout	Canada
Kim Ayers	Kettering	Marino Grassi	Italy
Stewart Grant	Nottingham	Dave Mangham	Leicestershire
Andrew Hinds	Orpington	Thomas Hughes	London
Paul McMaster	Co. Durham	Ken Potts	Stockport
Mark Kley	Blandford Forum	Shaun Beaumont	Rotherham
Phil Chant	Bournemouth	John Drinkwater	Altincham
Steve Torres	USA	Joseph Williams	USA
Melanie Seldon	West Sussex		

New Members since the last Gazette

To advertise your items for sale or want adds etc. please email the editor at isetta@ianparris.com

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My Isetta Story by Bob Newton

My Isetta is now out of long-time storage with the intention of returning it to use. Restoration has started, but before I try to document how it progresses, I should reveal a bit of my history of Isetta ownership.

I left school in 1968 and to be honest cannot recall ever noticing an Isetta, although I do recall chasing a Scootercar on my pushbike during my school years. My wife on the other hand was more aware of Isetta's as one of her teachers at school used one as daily transport.

My first sight of an Isetta was noticing what I presumed was a bubble car in a car sale as I was taking the bus on my way to work after leaving school. I noticed it for a few days then it disappeared, presumed sold.



Half way through my apprenticeship, now owning a motorcycle, it was revealed a classmate on my latest college course owned a Dulux yellow Isetta. Apparently, he had bought it the previous year after spotting it in a car sale, it was indeed the same car. His dad had encouraged him as it would be safer than his scooter once he had passed his test, and helped him get it running before painting it gloss yellow.

Well, we had great fun when we found we could slide back the window, release the handbrake and relocate it elsewhere in the college car park, usually front up to a wall. But that didn't stop me begging a lift at times and I have vivid memories of 2 of us sat on the rear shelf looking through the sunroof as he and his girlfriend sat on the seat. I am surprised we were never pulled up, and indeed that the Isetta managed the load as he drove us a couple of miles to a convenient bus stop. Well, that Isetta story is to fade away, although it is to return later.

Several years later, apprenticeship finished and ready to move into the next stage of my life, married to Linda. This was 1975 and unlike these days when getting married means couples should have everything, we sold everything, to enable a house purchase deposit.

In our defence we started looking at terrace properties but ended up purchasing a four-year-old semi.

On the down side my car went as well as my Triumph motorbike to be replaced with a non-running Honda 90S for £10, which after repairs, the valve timing being out after a service by the previous owner, gave us reliable transport.

A few months after getting married we were on the Honda when we got talking to the owner of a Honda monkey bike and during the course of our conversation about unusual vehicles, he mentioned he knew of 2 Isetta bubble cars for sale, so we bought our first Isetta for £30. Hate to admit it, but it spent most of its time broke down as it was pretty worn out.

I can remember Linda and I struggled to push it up a steep hill past the local police station when they came out to cheer us on. Another time it brought the traffic to a stop when it stopped on the main roundabout in Sheffield and the police had to push me off and left me at a bus stop to play about with the spark plug lead which kept jumping off.

I found a replacement engine locally for £4 which once fitted made such a difference never realising the thump thump thump was probably the wear on the big end of the original engine.

Early in 1976, with the Isetta now much improved, but the Honda 90 still our main means of transport, I saw an advert for an Isetta, runner or spares in the Exchange and Mart. We bought it for £30, although it cost £15 to transport it. This is the Isetta I still own today and

has given me so much enjoyment over the years.

Jumping forward a few years, my original Isetta was sold, my spares Isetta was an ongoing project and we were running an MG midget as our everyday transport.

Bubble cars were not taken seriously then and I was surprised when I spotted a notification in the Exchange and Mart that it was proposed to start an Isetta Owners club. So, I sent off a letter and a few months later was a member.

We attended our first rally in the MG and met people we still

know today.

My second Isetta was finished and gave great service over the next ten or more years attending all the national rallies in the 80s.

I owned many other micro cars in this time but for this article will only mention a bubble window Isetta and a BMW 700, how I wish I would have kept them both.

Bob Newton

WANTED

WANTED Isetta 250/300 for restoration. Call Tim Cherrett on 07921192362.

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- Politely decline home, pet and travel insurance. Patiently explain that you only need agreed value classic car insurance. To get off the phone, promise to get a quote for your home "in the near future".

- Go out to the garage, pull off your car's cover, snap several photographs. Email photos but hear back that "the photos are too dark" or "we need six and you only sent five".

- Cough up a £15-50 "certification" fee, on top of your policy premium.

- Wait on hold half an hour while their staff reviews the information. Lose the connection. Ring back, get transferred to three wrong departments. Get put on hold again.

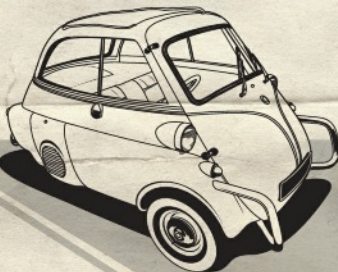
- The Agreed Value certification finally arrives. You begin looking forward to repeating the entire tedious, maddening process, fee included, if you want to increase your value again.



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