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The Isetta Owners Club of Great Britain Ltd.

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Editors Bit

Now the 600 is declared finished, it's getting many outings. Not only shows but transport when we go away in the motorhome.

The problem with motorhome holidays is, places to stay are usually nowhere near the places you are looking to visit, this is where our little cars come in.

Bessie, our Isetta has taken us about 10,000 miles around the country while we leave the motorhome behind on campsites,

Now it's the 600's turn. It's able to carry far more than Bessie, and gives us a greater radius from the campsite.

It is certainly getting a lot of attention wherever we go and helping to keep the traffic behind us at a leisurely pace.

Now back to my usual request, I have no articles going forward to the Winter Edition so there may not be one.

If I should get insufficient articles to produce a gazette I will hold them over until I have enough.



Ian Parris

Chairman's Chat

It's that time of the year again for the Annual General Meeting so on with my usual rant. The committee are not getting any younger so we need more members to ensure the continuity of the Club to preserve our beloved cars into the future.

My son who is 47 and brought up with classic cars like Lotus Cortinas and Escort Cosworths has indicated that he will take on my Isetta when anything happens to me. He already has a Subaru Impreza which I gave him after owning it for 3 days myself – too hard a ride and far too noisy. So come on let's have some more and younger members on the Committee.

Details of the AGM are published elsewhere in this Gazette.

I must also use this space to thank Roger Hall from the nearby village of Holton-Le-Clay who turned up unannounced a few Saturdays after my mention in the last Chairman's Chat about having an A frame made by a coded welder friend of mine. He turned up with an A frame he had made himself which he no longer needed having sold his Isetta. Thanks again Roger.

Finally, can I thank the Committee who in their separate ways have ensured the Club continues to go from strength to strength.

Jeff Todd

Isettas and the MOT

All UK Isettas are exempt from the annual MOT test by virtue of their age (there is a rolling exemption for vehicles first registered more than 40 years ago). However, you still have a legal duty to keep your car roadworthy if it is used on a public road. The most obvious way to do this is by a regular inspection from someone trained to do so – likely via an MOT test; though exempt, you can still voluntarily submit your car for test... if, that is, you can find a convenient test station which does class 3 MOTs. Class 3 represents 3 wheelers with a kerb weight of under 450kg. This includes the Isetta. There are relatively few (and getting fewer) test stations who find it economic and feasible to equip themselves to test Class 3. So you may be completely stuck, or have to travel a considerable distance.

This is where this article may help you. It will explain in basic terms the outline of what to check, and how to check it, yourself. It is not a substitute for an inspection by a qualified person with years of experience, nor can it be as technically detailed as the MOT guide or Inspection Manual (DVSA publications which are available online but which may be largely incomprehensible to the lay reader). It is important to emphasise that an MOT is not a substitute for a full service or preventive maintenance. Many drivers mistakenly use the MOT as their annual car 'health check' – but this is a flawed approach, as the test examines only statutorily testable items, these being the issues that are potentially a risk to road safety. For example, it does not check the oil level, thus it would be possible to pass an MOT one day and have a seized engine the day after. However follow this sequence and, though there's no certificate when you've finished, and necessarily there are some items omitted or truncated, you may have a decent chance of detecting issues and of keeping your car legally roadworthy if you are unable to get a Class 3 MOT.

You will need pen & paper, tape measure, tyre tread depth gauge, a torch, a prodder/screwdriver, a big lever bar or crowbar, and a jack – a trolley jack will be easiest and quickest but not essential.

Topside:

Check that the registration number and VIN match those on the V5. Are both front and rear number plates present, fixed, legible, and the characters are normal height & font and not mis-spaced to try to spell something else. Put a chock at front and rear edges of the rear tyre.

Unscrew the petrol filler cap and check that the sealing washer is in place. Check that all the lamp lenses are present, are the correct colour, and not broken. Check that the wiper blade rubbers are not split. Are there any areas of external sharp edges which might cause a hazard to pedestrians.

Is the seat fixed down; is the battery demonstrably loose so that it might come out if the vehicle overturned. Unscrew the master cylinder cap - look at the fluid - is it at the right level and apparently uncontaminated by dirt. Replace the cap. Sit in the driver's seat. Mirror in place? Test the horn button for correct operation. Turn on the ignition; check that the wipers (with screenwash if fitted) will effectively clear the driver's view. Is the windscreen undamaged – no big cracks or score marks within the driver's view of the road.

Turn on the sidelights – get out, walk round, check that both front sidelamps & both rear tail-lamps work and that the number plate lamp does what it is supposed to. There should be a steady white-only light from the front, and a steady red-only light from the tail lamps. Put a weight (or get an assistant) to press on the brake pedal – check that both brake lights emit a steady red light at a higher intensity than the tail lamps, and do not interfere with the other lamps by dimming or extinguishing them. All lights should be free from

flicker. Reach in and switch the indicators to left, then right, checking each time that the respective pigs-ear lamp flashes appropriately (neither laughably slow nor ludicrously fast) while showing only an amber light; check also that the dashboard turn-signal lamp operates. Again, use of the indicators should not cause other lights to dim significantly. Now switch off all the lights, turn on the fuel tap, and go round to remove the external engine cover. Any sign of loose/chafing wiring? Peer under the back end, using a torch, to check for fuel leaks along the whole run from tank & tap to carburettor. Ensure the tank fixing straps are solid and firm.

Go back to the driver's seat, press the brake pedal and hold it down for 15 seconds – does it stay firm (OK) or slowly sink (not OK!). Start the engine. Let it stabilise for a moment, then when idling steadily go back out of the car – temporarily block the exhaust with your palm for a couple of seconds – if there is only limited pressure on your palm and you hear exhaust gases hissing as they escape somewhere else, that is likely via a leak (not OK!). Are the exhaust mountings intact. Are there massive smoke clouds (not OK!). Forget needing to do an emissions test – cars of this age don't need one (those registered after 1 August 1975 do, with a few exceptions). Look underneath again with your torch – any continuous or seriously dripping oil leaks from engine or gearbox?

Headlamps. I suggest that these are checked with the engine running so as to avoid flattening your battery if it is a little weak. Checking aim is a somewhat difficult task without the correct calibration equipment, but you can have a good go by doing the following: Are the reflectors in decent uncorroded condition? Tap each pod with your hand to see whether the headlamp unit or reflector is insecure. Turn them on, and ensure they are set to dip beam. Drive/push the car so that its headlamps are approx. 600mm (2 feet) from and parallel with a wall. Alternatively hold a black board steady at the same distance. Do both headlamps aim at the same height? If not, then the best you can do is to adjust one to match the other, (1) ensure that the top of the beam's 'hot spot'/peak lit area is nearly horizontally parallel with the headlamp centre but not higher than the vertical distance from the ground to the centre of the lens, (2) ensure that the beam has dipped to the left, i.e. the imaginary line from lens centre to wall/board has the beam peak lit area slightly to the left of centre for both lamps. Finally, test that they both light up on full beam and that the 'full beam' warning light on the dash illuminates.

Switch off the engine and turn off the fuel.

Underside:

Look underneath, with the aid of the torch, at the places where the body is fixed to the chassis – any corrosion of the body sufficient to cause a hole (however small) within 30cm (1 foot) of the mounting area (prod them to be certain).

Look now at the areas where the chassis meets the body, where the brake master cylinder is fixed to the chassis, and where the suspension and steering gear are similarly fixed. Any chassis corrosion near those places? – same severity & distance limits and method apply as above.

Are the engine/gearbox mountings firmly fixed and intact. Is the flexible transmission coupling crack-free and intact on its various segments.

Now you need your jack. Do not crawl under the car while any part of it is supported on the jack.

Jack up the rear chassis (not the suspension) so that the wheel hangs approx. 2-3" off the ground. Release the handbrake. Rotate the wheel slowly while looking carefully at the tyre's tread, and at both side walls. Is the tread of uniform depth (minimum 1.6mm) across $\frac{3}{4}$ of the tread width, all the way around. Is there differential wear on either edge of the tread. Is the tyre manifestly underinflated. Are there any bulges (not OK!), or any cuts in the tread or sidewall deep enough so you can see the cords (not OK!). Is the sidewall

cracked (representing age deterioration). Put your levering bar/crowbar between centre bottom of tyre & floor, and work it up & down so that the wheel moves an inch or so up & down while you are looking in turn at each of the suspension joints i.e. where the spring meets the chassis, where the shock absorber meets the chassis at the top, and where it meets the spring at the bottom – look for any lost motion which might suggest the bushes are worn. Are all the wheel nuts present and tight.

Use your torch to look carefully at the brake pipe, flexi hose, and the brake cylinder. Is the pipe corroded; is the hose chafed or worn at any point along its length; any sign of a leak? Get an assistant to stand at the front (ask them not to sit in, that could destabilise your jack) and then reach in while firmly pressing down the brake pedal by hand, and keeping it down. Meanwhile look again at pipe, hose, cylinder – any sign of a leak or any bulging of the hose when pressurised. Check that the handbrake cable & linkage does not look chafed/worn/loose.

Let down the rear, and chock the tyre at its front and rear so that the car will not move when you jack a front wheel. Move to the front left. Take off the hubcap. Are the wheel nuts all present and tight. Work the steering wheel to L & R slightly – there should be no more than 2" of motion at the circumference of the steering wheel before the road wheel starts to move. Look again at the steering column top bearing and bottom casting while moving the steering wheel back & forth and side-to-side – is there any motion of those components that should not be there. Jack up, by the chassis not the suspension, so that the road wheel is approx. 2" off the ground. Spin the wheel – does it feel smooth, or lumpy or rough (brakes binding or wheel bearing worn, respectively). Do a similar inspection of the tyre as before, using your torch to better illuminate the tyre. Get the assistant to press and hold the brake pedal – look in the same way and for the same issues as before on pipes, hose, cylinder. If it is a LHD car then look at the master cylinder for leakage and security of mounting, then work the handbrake up & down looking for loose fittings & lost motion of the linkage. Hold the wheel with your hands at the 12 & 6 o'clock positions – try to rock it in & out top-bottom to check for kingpin wear. Now grasp it at 9 & 3 o'clock and try to move it side to side back & forth – any movement before the steering starts to move? (possible wear in track rod ends). Put your levering bar/crowbar under the centre bottom of the road wheel and lever up & down while looking at & feeling for excess lost motion of the suspension joints.

Let down the left wheel and move your jack to the right front. Repeat the processes & checks described above, checking wheel, steering, brakes, adding the master cylinder and handbrake if on that side. If a steering damper is fitted check, from the front, its attachments. Check that the type (crossply or radial; not the make – that doesn't matter) & the size of tyre are the same on both sides.

Remove all your tools. Replace the engine cover. Replace the hubcaps. Ensure the handbrake is on and remove the chocks on the rear tyre. Have a rest! Review the notes you made on your findings.

The final test is that of the brakes. You cannot effectively do a rolling brake test. However, see if you can find a local gradient (not steep, max 16% or approx 1 in 6, and check that the handbrake holds without running out of clicks at the end of its travel; then while driving the car at no more than 20mph on the level you can check that when braking it stops in a straight line without excessive pulling to L or R.

Keep your inspection notes so that you can compare the findings of next time with those from now.

Good luck. The inspector.

Dear Editor (Ian)

I feel the need to write following your justifiable gripe of insufficient copy for the gazette from the membership.

I too was once a committee member for 8 years as Regalia Secretary with my wife. What members may not realise is that all of the committee members on page 2, run the Isetta Owners Club; as volunteers. They spend a lot of their own time keeping the club running, providing an informative, fun club and sell new and old spares that we all need to keep our beloved cars on the road as well as a regular Gazette.

As mentioned in the summer gazette, there are over 400 members in the club, surely a few lines to the editor on experiences, humorous times or mechanical repairs; that we all would relate to and appreciate.

I have spent many happy hours with committee/non committee members over a long period and all have been friendly and approachable, especially when it comes to Isettas.

Don't be shy, put pen to paper, or finger to keyboard (as we do now), the latter makes the editors life easier too!

A question asked and posted in the gazette by one person may be on the lips of a few members out there. This could put a burning question to bed on a common issue.?

I know that back in 1978 - too long ago now; being the first Derbyshire member, the question I asked was, "What are the four tapped holes for in the engine blower case?" A reply came back in the next issue.

Also I remember that a long time ago the committee gave a short overview of themselves to try and give an impression of approachability!

As I write and pretty much to the day 5 years ago, I parted with my beloved Isetta after 45 years of ownership.

Upon purchase in 1973, I bought like you, a badly corroded 1960 LHD Isetta, then just 13 years old. All for a weeks wage then as an apprentice electrician of £15, this was my first car. It lay in a shed at my parents house until after I got married, had children etc/etc. Sound familiar. One day my children saw the car and asked, "Whats that Dad"; sometime in 1987 after 14 years of ownership. Needless to say, this was the catalyst to pull my finger out and get it restored. I tackled everything apart from upholstering the bench seat.

Stripping the car down, shot blasting the chassis, welding in new steel that I fabricated except the front wings, respraying and of course an engine/gearbox/transmission/suspension r ebuild. This took 8 years and a first time MOT pass.

Thanks to the committee at the time for supplying all of the necessary parts and some useful information through the club.

The car won several awards in shows and I took it out as often as I could, weather



permitting. (Dry weather owner!). Until one day directly after an MOT, I decided to go for a run and stretch her leg out of town

Just 2 miles from the garage and with a fresh MOT, I decided on a clear road to make a right turn at a crossroads indicating with adequate time. Mirror, bus behind, looked out of the window LHD, flasher working all OK; just about to turn the wheel to turn right and the bus behind overtakes at speed on the crossroad!! A few seconds later and I would have been cut up by the bus.

Needless to say, since then I have become very cautious driving the Isetta as they are very vulnerable in todays traffic even on a familiar route.

So some time later and only a few more miles on the clock; with a heavy heart I decided to part with my beloved Isetta.

I visit it nearly every year since, just to make sure it's OK. The main consolation is that instead of being locked away in a dark/damp and cold garage away from view, it now sits with BMW in one of their historic collections, where it is enjoyed and admired on a daily basis. What could be better!

So a sad end for me but a happy outcome for the Isetta. Yes I shed a tear as it was taken away for the last time.

So once again thank you committee members for providing me with some wonderful memories and of course spares and advice.

Attached is a photo of the day the body awoke from its shed in 1987 and saw the light for the first time in 14 years, yes I had hair then!, also as it is now. (The oil absorbent cloths on the floor always make me smile)

Goodbye and Goodluck.

Bob Hensley



The AGM of The Isetta Owners Club of Great Britain

Will be held on 15th October at 2pm at Beedles
Lake Golf Club, 170 Broome Lane, Goscote,
Leicester. LE7 3WQ

All members are welcome to attend.

Isetta World

The IoC's Forum on Facebook

[Facebook.com/groups/267159327250111](https://www.facebook.com/groups/267159327250111)



In these days of exorbitant fuel prices, any car as economical as an Isetta can be a target for low-life opportunists thieves, so I suggest you print out these instructions and leave them prominently on the seat...

“Dear Thief,

Welcome to my Isetta. I imagine that at this point (having found the door unlocked) your intention is to steal my car. Don't be encouraged by this; the door lock tumblers sheared off in 1978. I would have locked it up if I could, so don't think you're too clever or that I'm too lazy. However, now that you're in my Isetta, there are a few things you're going to need to know. First, the battery is disconnected, so hot-wiring my ignition switch is not your first step. I leave the battery disconnected, not to foil hoodlums such as yourself, but because there is a mysterious current drain from the 63-year-old wiring circuitry that I can't locate and/or fix. So, connect the battery first. Good luck finding where it's hidden. And remember to refit the battery cover or you may find your pants on fire.

Now, you could try to hot-wire, but the ignition switch's tumblers are so worn that any flat-headed screwdriver or pair of scissors will do. Don't tell anyone.

Once you've figured that out and try to start the car, you'll run into some trouble. The car is most likely in Reverse gear, given that the handbrake cable froze up sometime after MoT's became unnecessary. So, with one foot on the footbrake you can begin the ritual of finding Neutral (or what you think might be Neutral). Commence by pressing the clutch down with your other foot before you try to crank the engine. (I don't want you running into my other car in the driveway.) This is doubly necessary because a) you are gambling on being in Neutral and b) my Isetta's dynastart is too lazy to crank the engine plus the clutch/transmission input shaft assembly with any success.

With the clutch pedal depressed, the engine should turn over just fast enough to get things going. But first, to get it to fire up, you'll need to operate the fuel tap and the choke. I'm not telling you where they are – you'll have to find them yourself. Having found the choke, if you don't do it right, the car won't start before the battery gives up the ghost. Consider yourself forewarned. If you've followed

along so far, the engine should fire right up. Don't be fooled – it will die in eight seconds if you haven't got the choke right. Repeat until it will run without choke.

When you have the engine running you may now attempt to select a gear. This is as tricky as a Rubik's Cube so some explanation follows... This is an Isetta. It has its engine and gearbox somewhere behind you and the gearchange has tortuous floppy linkages formed loosely in the shape of your lower intestine. Manipulating the gear lever will deliver vague suggestions to these rods, akin to hitting a bag of gears with a stick. When you eventually find what you think is First gear it may be Top gear, maybe not. (They say German engineers don't have a sense of humour), so just try all possible positions and combinations thereof until you are ready to launch the vehicle into motion. This will entail you conquering the clutch pedal...

The clutch. Beware. The clutch is either in or out. Its transition between in and out can only be described as instantaneous. Like a bear trap snapping shut around your ankle. The car will leap forward, forcing you backwards, lifting your foot fully off the pedal, hastening the clutch's release and compounding your risk of neck injuries. Headrest ? You must be joking ! Don't blame me – you have been forewarned.

Eventually you may get the car moving. Do not become emboldened by your progress, as you will quickly need to shift to another gear. Ouija boards are more communicative than the Isetta gear lever which you will be trusting to aid your efforts. Depress the clutch fully and move the lever from its secure location in first gear. Now you will become adrift in the zone known to Isetta owners as "Neverland" and your quest will be to find Second gear. Prepare yourself for a sequence of adventures accompanied by crunches and lurches. Do not worry about damaging the gearbox's synchromesh cones 'cos Isettas don't have any. Having failed to find Second gear you should then retreat immediately to where you think Neutral was found . This is a safe place, no real damage can occur here, but alas, no forward motion will happen either. From this harbour of peace, if you can remember where First gear was you can start again and re-attempt to find Second, but you may just want to go for any "port in a storm", given that the traffic behind you is now cheering you on in your quest with vigorous horn-honks of support and encouragement. At this point most novice Isetta drivers pull over to the side of the road and pretend to be answering a mobile phone call to a) avoid further humiliation; b) allow traffic to pass; and c) gather the courage for another First gear start. You will probably choose to do likewise.

After taking a break, if you are brave enough to persevere, you may be lucky enough to remember where Neutral was and re-engage First gear. This is where the car mocks you for your lack of skill, but sometimes it is the only path forward. Once you are ready to again try for Second gear, I can offer some advice. One trick that works is to declutch the transmission, pull the lever from the first-gear

position, enter into the aforementioned Neutral zone, and then rapidly wig-wag the shift knob side-to-side along a lateral axis. If you move the knob quickly enough, the transmission will be out-smarted and not able to anticipate your next move. It is at this time that you should brace yourself, let the clutch out and if fortune favours your efforts you will prevail. Surprise is your best weapon against this wonky part-“H”, part-“K” transmission change pattern.

The move to Third gear should be straightforward, as you are only left with two possibilities at the unexplored extremities of the change pattern. But did I mention the “H” and “K” might be actually mirror images ? By now you should be out of my neighbourhood and on the main road. 3rd gear will be good for 30-ish mph, so I suggest you just stay there. Trying to find Fourth gear will lose so much speed that you’ll need to re-select Second - if only you could remember where it was.

If it is night-time, and by now it most likely will be, you will need to turn on the lights. Suffice to say that once you get them lit, you will find that the factory’s pre-focus beams from the 1950’s will only illuminate sufficient roadway for travel below 25 mph. Since you are still in Third , this might or might not be a problem.

By now you’ve certainly noticed the smell from the clutch which you have now cooked. You’ll feel less dizzy if you open a window. Don’t search for a window-winder ‘cos there isn’t one. When you find the fiddly window catch you’ll maybe find that the driver’s window is too stiff to move, so you’ll have to lean over (it’s not far) and attempt to release the other fiddly catch on the passenger’s window. Or instead, simply open the driver’s door slightly and drive along, as many often do. Once the clutch vapours are exhumed from the cabin, you should start to feel a little better. There is a rag behind the driver’s seat that you can use to wipe the asbestos soot off of the inside of the windshield.

By now, you will probably be encountering traffic lights. Try as hard as you can not to use the brakes as they will either throw you forward violently at the slightest touch, or swerve the Isetta one way or the other. Or both. It’s a lottery. Since you can’t effectively stop the car without drama, use this to your advantage and don’t try. Remember: You certainly don’t want to have to go back into First.

It may be at this point that you consider abandoning the car to avoid further calamity / embarrassment. There is a convenient Shell station right before the Motorway slip road. The last bloke who stole my Isetta abandoned it at this very spot and it was rather convenient for all concerned parties. I suggest you ditch the car there and scope out a nice, simple Mondeo to heist.

Terry Parkin, Isetta World,
www.facebook.com/groups/267159327250111/
(Adapted from an article by Norman Garrett)

My New Project by Phill Tetley

After finishing my latest project the restoration of a Messerschmitt KR 200, I was looking for a new project. Searching around I could not find anything that wasn't too far gone or was too expensive, but when speaking to my friend Garry Longstaff from the Heinkel Club he told me of a container of Microcars brought over from South Africa by Pheonix Motorcycles in Smethwick.



Of course I was very interested in what they had acquired. I phoned the director of the company Andrew Fitton to find out what was available. From what he said there seemed to be quite a lot to choose from including Gogomobiles, Messerschmitts, Heinkels and Isettas.

At the time I did not particularly want a right hand drive Isetta, but in all that he had was a 1957 left hand drive, four wheel, bubble window Isetta.

Perhaps this would make a a good restoration to tackle and so a deal was struck and I arranged for it to be transported back to Whitchurch.

The first job was to remove the body and check just which parts were needed and it was a lot. The engine was seized, there were no brakes, all the steering joints were seized, no operating rods or levers for the gears, no handbrake mechanism on the rear hub and no cables so a comprehensive list of parts were going to be needed.

As it was a German built car the brakes were ATE not Girling, this was the first challenge as the club only kept parts for the Girling system. The front brake cylinders had the same size seal as a mark 1 Mini so no problem there, but the master cylinder had to be ordered from Germany. The rear brake I converted to a Girling system these parts were much easier to source. In all I made four trips to Smethwick to find parts for the engine, gears and steering. The handbrake came from a Mini Cooper with a Heinkel brake cable which fits perfectly. There was no wiring





so I made a new wiring loom with all the correct colours so, out with the multimeter and hey presto amazingly everything worked first time.

Because the front suspension had a lot of up and down movement on the hub, I had Phosphor bronze shims made to size (only to drop the hub on my head trying to fit it on my own) and so another item crossed off the list.

I had been working on quite a few different things in between, I have not

mentioned including the rear suspension which proved a problem. But now it was time to sort out the interior, new panels had to be made and the mouse eaten seat covers repaired and the rusty frames sorted. To the internal panels I applied a sound deadening material first then covered them in a grey vinyl.

The Isetta now starts, stops and drives. Just got to sort out the body work where it was damaged



in the container and was more comprehensive than I first thought on most of the panels. So watch this space to see how I get on with some body filler and hopefully a good paint match.

One thing I was a little worried about was getting an age-related registration number on the Isetta but with the help of Dave Watson from the club this was sorted out for me. With the NOVA certificate, some photographs and forms filled in there were really no problems except I had listed it as a tricycle instead of a saloon, but a very nice lady from the DVLA corrected my error and a V5 registration came through without any more problems.

One thing I haven't mentioned is the invaluable help I had from Lee Turnham and Mike Ayriss for sorting out most of the new parts I required from the club, I am very grateful for that help.

Phill Tetley

HARRIS MANN

August 14th saw the sad passing of prolific car designer Harris Mann at the age of 85. For decades surely every street featured a Harris Mann artwork thanks to his contribution to the appearance of so many vehicles, from manufacturers such as Ford (Escort, Capri etc.), BMW, Bentley, and Subaru. But it was at British Leyland that he produced his most famous work when as chief designer he was responsible for a multitude of designs, most notably the Princess and the Triumph TR7 – both cars whose striking futuristic ‘wedge’ appearances were beyond exciting to the likes of ten-year-old me and my car mad mates when they launched in the mid-1970s!



So, what's this got to do with Isettas? Well, I first met Harris in around 1984 when he bought a 1957 Heinkel Perle moped from me which he wanted as he'd owned one in his youth and been very fond of it. I next saw him when he brought that moped to a National Microcar Rally (one of the Burford ones if my memory serves me correctly) and years later after meeting at another car show he and I developed a friendship due to our shared interest in quirky vehicles. I help out on the Isetta stand at the Classic Motor Show at the NEC each year, and for

many years a visit by Harris for chat and a wander around the show has been something to look forward to. Having had a good exploration of our Isettas, Harris would always move on to the other microcars and had a particular fascination for Heinkels - until recently owning a very nice Heinkel Tourist scooter himself.

At the last show in November 2022, he for some reason wanted to have a look at BMW 600. We didn't have one on the stand, so I took him over to the Silverstone auction where the ex-Stirling Moss car was on sale.

Many of you who attend the NEC will have come across Harris without necessarily knowing who this affable humorous gentleman was. The world has lost a man whose contribution to the field of automotive design was immense, and the micro-car fraternity has lost a friend.

Neal Bircher.

Well, That Just Happened

'Well, that just happened' is I think an American saying, so here is what happened. I have been having fuel problems with the 600 silting up the filter bowl when using the reserve part of the tank. I thought I had cleared all of the silt by using the reserve setting periodically and removing any silt from the sediment bowl.

Today we took the 600 to MK Museum Classic Car Show on the hottest day of the year.

The drive down should have been an easy drive 20 miles straight down the A5 but the A5 was closed due to road works.

I decided not to use the official diversion as that included using the M1 Motorway. I knew there were a number of different ways to get there so chose the one I thought most suitable, what a nightmare drive that was down narrow lanes with potholes aplenty.

Anyway, we finally reached our destination and had an enjoyable day.

Many cars left early due to the heat and lack of public participation and we decided to do the same.

I decided on a route along main roads with less chance of disappearing down a pothole.

After about 10 miles the engine started missing a beat, symptomatic of fuel starvation so I selected the reserve tank. The coughing and spluttering got worse until going up a hill to some roadworks and temporary traffic lights we finally stopped second in the queue. I could barely keep the engine running whilst waiting for the lights to change. When the lights changed I limped over the lights into single file along the roadworks only to come to a standstill with a line of traffic behind me. People behind me became aware of my predicament and jumped out of their cars and started pushing me up the hill, only to meet oncoming traffic as by this time the lights had change for traffic coming from the other direction.

The oncoming traffic managed to move over for me to proceed past until I could get into a private drive.

As I jumped out and looked around I could see the problems I had caused, 200 metres of traffic from either direction facing one another on a single carriageway, I fled up the private drive so didn't see how all these vehicles resolved the situation, but when I emerged the chaos was over.

I still wasn't sure whether I had fuel starvation, I thought it may be the HT coils as they were very hot.

Luckily I am covered for recovery so called the RAC to attend.

Half an hour later rescue arrived. The guy had 10 litres of petrol so I used the lot which would allow me to use the main tank rather than reserve if the problem was fuel related. Sure enough the engine fired up straight away and off we went followed closely by the RAC the last 10 miles home.

The lesson I have learnt from this adventure is keep the tank topped up and carry a spare can of petrol until I am convinced the last of the silt is out of the tank.

I am still rather worried about the very hot HT coils, I must monitor these closely.

Ian Parris.

Your Gazette Editor.

FOR SALE

Reluctant sale of my 1961 three wheel Isetta, right hand drive. Manufactured in Brighton and owned since 1994 with a mileage of 44000 miles. Has a weekly run out in the spring to autumn months. Has always been garaged. Huge file of information including factory repair manual and Isetta Gazettes from 1996.

Please call 01953 884937 (evenings if possible) Norfolk £15000 Ono



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