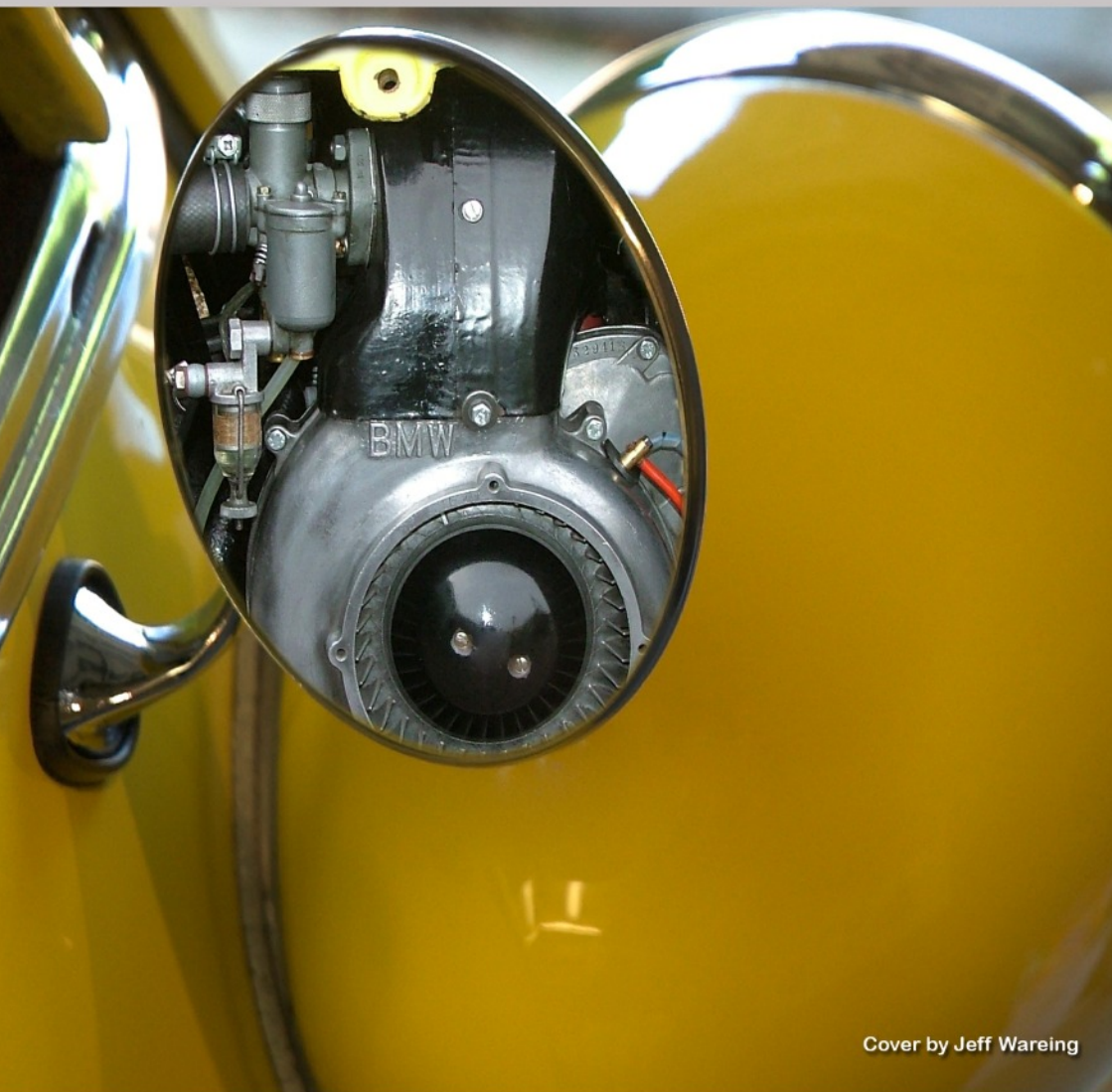


ISETTA

Gazette

SPRING EDITION



Cover by Jeff Wareing

The Isetta Owners Club of Great Britain Ltd.

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I.O.C. SUBSCRIPTION RATES

United Kingdom	£16.00	<u>Credit Card Payments. IMPORTANT</u>
Europe	£19.00	Please ensure you give the Membership Secretary the full card number, the expiry date and the 3 digit security number from the back of the card above the signature strip
N & S America, Africa, Middle East	£22.00	
Australia, New Zealand, Japan	£23.00	

Editors Bit



As you should all be aware by now, Jeff Wareing has passed over his role as membership secretary to Fred Parker (contact details inside the gazette and on the web site). I would like thank Jeff for the work he has put in and to let you know he is still active as you can see from his cover pages of the Gazette he is still happy to supply. I guess a new rally season is about to start and I hope we have better weather for it this year. I don't want to go bog snorkelling again as I did at last years nationals, even though I have invested in a pair of wellington boots. Seeing the prices that Isettas are now fetching, I am thinking of putting my money into them rather than the bank. It looks like the return on mine Isetta is better than the bank is prepared to offer.

For some of you, this may be your last 'Isetta Gazette' because you haven't paid your subs for 2009. Check your cheque books or call our new membership secretary Fred Parker. (contact

Chairmans Chat

Well we have had our dose of snow for the year, but more promised next week!!

Good memories of hard Yorkshire winters in the 70's with 4 or 5 inches of snow on the ground and driving the "Ladybird" to work. As some of you will have found, in deep snow, the back wheel on a 3 wheeler Isetta will follow one of the 4-wheel car tracks so that you proceed crab-like along the road with the likelihood that when you put the brakes it will either "flop" over to the other track or spin 360 degrees. Always good fun, if a little disconcerting to the traffic coming towards you !

Well enough of reminiscences of when we woz young(er)

Ian is rapidly making himself a name as Gazette Editor and is proving very effective at hassling me and others for their contributions. One of the best features is the cover, which in recent times has come from Jeff Wareing, utilising another of his interests in photography – Thanks Jeff.

Talking of Jeff, after a number of years of sterling work as Membership Secretary, he has decided to step down from that post and indeed the Committee. I can only thank Jeff for the very hard work he has put in, his great contribution to the Committee and the regular and substantive reports he has submitted to me and the Committee on the membership position – Thanks Again Jeff.

I am delighted to welcome Fred Parker who is picking up the Membership baton and has already been dealing with some of your applications. Fred will henceforth be the main point of contact for all Membership matters and his address appears inside the front cover.

On a financial note, the Club has now de-registered from VAT and has implemented the price rises identified in the last Gazette. For any VAT-registered corporate members, please note you will now be unable to re-claim the VAT on your membership subscriptions.

Lee Turnham the Club Registrar has recently undergone emergency surgery – we wish him a speedy and full recovery.

There has been talk on Isetta World of the demise of Hans Rothkegel's operation in Germany as a source of spares. The Club has enjoyed a good reciprocal relationship with Hans over many years and indeed he is the sole source of some of the Clubs spares. We, like others, are not sure of the current position but hope that Hans reappears as a trader in Isetta parts. As an insurance policy we are looking to see if the Club can separately source some of the parts which Hans has supplied hitherto.

Looking forward to a warmer Spring and Summer – I will try to get to a few rallies this year, albeit in my "new" secondhand Piaggio Ape 3 wheel truck!!!

Happy Bubbling

Bob Crompton

Restore your breather valve

by John Jensen

At this point in time, if you can afford an Isetta, you can probably afford to purchase the excellent after-market brass breather valve. I'm not sure where it is made, England probably, but British, German and American suppliers may carry it. It's "free-market capitalism" at work, to our benefit in this particular case.



A few days ago I searched for a new brass breather valve that I believed I had safely secured in one box or another. But, because of my greed, I do have several boxes of Isetta parts and inside each one are many plastic bags. It's a mess. Not being able to find that brass breather valve, I looked at two old original valves, fairly beat-up from the process of impatiently pulling them out of the timing case with large electrical pliers.

I selected the better of the two to rebuild. I still have an original rebuild kit from Kaye Whitnah, a devoted St. Louis, Missouri Isetta enthusiast from the fifties until his passing. He was an illustrator and machinist and sold Isetta parts. This sketch was part of a breather-valve rebuild kit he used to offer. Thanks, Kaye. From the top down is the insert, wafer, spring and outer shell.



I had the two-piece shell of an original breather-valve, plus a new spring and new spring-steel and fibre wafers. I like fibre, because fibre doesn't rust, even though the steel breather-valve does. Kaye used stainless.

The breather-valve forms a chamber with the wafer inside that permits crankcase fumes to exit very briefly. The chamber has a hole at each end and the wafer flutters back and forth between them, sealing at each side. When the piston comes down, the wafer is pushed outward and seals the outer hole. Then the piston rises, and the wafer is sucked inward to seal against the inner hole. The wafer is round, but it has four flat elements on the periphery that allow fumes to slip around the wafer when it is moving from one side to the other. A very gentle spring helps to keep the wafer parallel to each extreme sealing position. The result is that piston blow-by has an opportunity to escape the crankcase chamber so that the oil-seals on the crankshaft do not leak oil from extreme crankcase pressures.

The breather-valve lets extreme pressure and oil mist escape, but not much dirt to enter. The crankcase environment and the oil must be kept as clean as possible. The breather-valve has a machined exterior shell with a sheet metal insert, also a wafer of flat spring-metal inside and a gentle stainless wire spring that pushes the wafer to the inside orifice, not that either side would make much difference, but exhausting fumes receive preference.

To remove the valve unit, notice that the aluminium case next to the valve has been peened to lock the valve into the timing-chain-case. You will need to insert a flat-blade screwdriver into the channel around the valve to wedge it out of the case recess. Heat might help, but still you may damage the valve or the case. When you get it out, the sheet-metal insert must be removed. Use your ingenuity. Then true the case and the sheet-metal insert as best you can.

The next procedure is to use a fine wet-dry paper, like 320 grit, to smooth the face of the sheet-metal insert the fibre wafer will press against.

You may have to flatten this piece if you have damaged it, then proceed with the sand-paper wet and on a flat surface to achieve a smooth flat circle for the wafer to seal against. The opposite side is a circular metal lip.

Use your ingenuity to make this lip flat and smooth so the wafer also seals on that side. Once the opposing surfaces are in good shape for sealing, install the spring and wafer, and assemble the unit. I chose to use Loctite to hold the two steel items together, plus a very slight peening or distortion at the lip.

Once the Loctite has set, you can clean the unit so you can try blowing and sucking to verify its ability to seal at each side. Loctite seems to have a sweet taste. The piston will provide much more pressure than you can with your mouth. If there is slight leakage, this may not be important. At least the breather will buffer the airflow. That's the concept.

I put Loctite on the outside of the breather body and the periphery of the aluminium recess, then pressed the breather into position. I doubt it will ever move without a lot of heat and force.



This is the aftermarket version in brass. It should last a lifetime.

Your breather tube is destined to drip some oil regardless, but the breather valve should minimize oil loss. Even if the breather eventually fails to function, you might still enjoy several thousand more miles without much more than a drip.

Bits and pieces (not by the Dave Clark 5 but the Ian Jenkins 3)

Some 6 or 7 years ago on the IOCGB bulletin board an offer was made for a chassis only FREE to collect from Bristol. I hitched up my trailer and shot off in hot pursuit. It was quite hard to find the address (pre-SATNAV) and turned out to be LHD with front suspension units and some steering parts. I brought it back wrapped it in polythene and put it by the shed on its side. During the next few years some wrecks came and went including a bumper bundle of running gear from Cornwall bought on E bay- in the days when a bargain was possible!- 522 VHU my Red delight also from our bulletin board was sold. Then came the IOW serious wreck written about in a recent issue. Some parts were Ok but still a body eluded me. One appeared on Ebay but disappeared almost as quickly. Following a thread on our board I enquired



about 'a fastest body' this led to a journey past Gatwick and the purchase of a LHD body and door,

The body is well known and was parked next to me at a show or was it the National?? It used to have fast engine and different running gear this was all removed. So it is now partly reunited with a more traditional approach to bubbling. I plan a clear of the shed which I am confident will provide almost all that is needed to save another little car.

When I have finished my own rebuild I plan to let someone else do the one made up of 'bits and pieces' **Ian Jenkins** Abingdon
If you are desperate to get rebuilding send me an email!!!

ian@surroundings.demon.co.uk

Isetta World News ...

Happy 3rd Birthday to Isetta World !
It is now three years since our
Chairman Bob's first posting on
Isetta World on February 28 2006
and since then around 5,000
postings from members world-wide
have discussed and debated huge range of
Isetta-related topics.



A recent enquiry from a member asked "Any book suggestions for someone who likes Isettas?" Thanks to the response from Isetta World contributors we were able to put together a list of 31 books about or including Isetta information. the list is still growing, but here are the results so far ...

(In no particular order)

The Cassell Book of the Isetta (1951) by Sydney F Page
Isetta Restoration (1991) by Prof John Jensen
Isetta Gold Portfolio compiled by R M Clarke
BMW Isetta und Ihre Konkurrenten (1986) Schrader Motor series
Isetta ein Auto Bewegt Die Welt (2004) by Seehusen ,Schweitzer
The Book of The Bubblecars (1964) by Cyril Ayton
Bubblecars (1997)– a Concise History by Mark F Herbert
The Bubblecars and Microcars Family Album (1994) Sparrow
From Cyclecar to Microcar (1981) by Mike Worthington-Williams
Deutsche Kleinwagen (1991) by Hanns Peter Rosellen
Kleinwagen Small Cars Petite Voitures (1994) von Mende and Dietz
Microcar Mania (1995) by Chris Rees
Micro and Mini – Car Buyers Guide (1995) by Bill Siuru
Microcars (1999) by Tony Marshall
Microcars at Large (2007) by Adam Quellan
Motorroller und Kleinwagen (1986) by Rheinhard Lintelmann
The Macro World of Micro Cars (2004) by Trant and Williams
The Three-Wheelers Almanack (1997) by John Cleeve Graham
Three-Wheelers -The Complete History of Trikes by Chris Rees
Microcars Stories (2005) by Jan de Lange
A – Z of Popular Scooters and Microcars (2007) by Mike Dan
Micro Trucks (2008) by Norm Mort
Kleinwagen International (1990) by Walter Zeichner
Microcars Volume 1 (1992) Compiled by Trevor Adler also Microcars Volume 2 (1993)
Compiled by Trevor Adler
BMW Isetta 250; Das Jahrhundert-Ei (1995) By Halwart Schrader
BMW Isetta Factory Repair Manual (reprint) by Veloce Press:
Bubblecars and Microcars (2003) by Malcolm Bobbit
ISETTA BMW ISO VELAM 1953-1964 (1993) by R M Clarke
MORE Microcars (2001) by Tony Marshall
MORE Bubblecars Family Album VOL 2 (1994) by Sparrow
Of course, this is an incomplete list ! If you know of other books deserving to be included here, please email details to IsettaWorld@aol.com. Thank you.

Isetta World is an Internet forum produced and maintained on behalf of the Isetta Owners Club of GB Ltd

Isetta World is produced and maintained on behalf of the Isetta Owners Club . **Membership is free** .

Isetta World has a World-wide membership , from Alaska to South America ; from Scandinavia to Africa ; from Europe to Australasia .

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

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

Membership of Isetta World is moderated for the protection and security of members and has been 100% successful in avoiding spam , spoofs , and unwanted content .

To visit **Isetta World** , go to

<http://autos.groups.yahoo.com/group/IsettaWorld>

and click on "**Join Now**" . Please include your IOC Membership number to speed your processing .

Terry Parkin , Moderator

Automotive Enthusiasts Should be Aware of Asbestos Risk

When people mention asbestos, we often think of a hazard of many years ago that we no longer need to be concerned with. However, even as most asbestos products were banned in the late 1970's by the Environmental Protection Agency and Consumer Product Safety Commission, many of these products still exist in industrial equipment, home construction, and yes, even older auto parts. Knowing where you may encounter these products and how to handle them can prevent a potentially life threatening exposure to asbestos.

Asbestos was used in thousands of products before production was halted. Asbestos proved to be an efficient and inexpensive insulation material. It was also very durable and its fibres could generally be included in all construction compounds. Among the more common uses of asbestos was in brake pads and friction linings in automobiles built prior to 1980.

Obviously, brake pads and brake linings generate a great deal of heat as friction is generated. The asbestos in these linings counteracted this heat and kept the pads intact and resistant to the temperature increase. Intact asbestos products do not pose a significant hazard. However, when they are modified or disturbed, they often release harmful fibres into the surrounding air supply.

Older brake pads and linings likely contain asbestos and should be treated as such. If modifying an older vehicle it is important to note if the brake pads appear very old or damaged. In these cases, it is much more important that they be handled with the appropriate protective equipment. In some cases, if the material is very compromised, it may make sense to speak with an asbestos consultant to determine a course of action.

In recent years there has been a rising incidence of [mesothelioma](#), an aggressive asbestos-related cancer, in former auto manufacturers and auto repair workers. In most cases these cancers are directly attributed to occupational asbestos exposures. Options for [mesothelioma treatment](#) and therapies for other asbestos-related health complications are extremely limited. Most patients face a prognosis of between 6 and 18 months.

Luckily we don't employ asbestos in auto parts anymore and health complications in auto workers related to asbestos exposure should not be a problem going forward. But these materials are still in older vehicles and should be approached with extreme caution. Serious health conditions related to asbestos exposure are entirely preventable if people are aware of the materials they are working with and how to handle them. See www.maacenter.org

I Never Wanted to Own an Isetta

At the risk of losing my membership of the Club, I have to be honest and say I never wanted to own an Isetta! It's all down to a flash-back I had a couple of years ago where I recalled seeing a Trojan in my youth and wondered what it would be like to have one. I was coming up to retirement and thought that this might be the new hobby for me.

I am the last of that generation which not alone serviced their cars, but would also dabble in the more challenging tasks like replacing brake pads or even a clutch. My earliest introduction to auto mechanics was when in the early 60' my late brother bought two old 1950's Ford Anglias, one with a good engine and the other with a good body. So, with a couple of spanners and a good lump hammer we created a hybrid that served us well for many subsequent years. (Pity we did the hand-painting on a warm summer's evening when all the gnats had come out).

Anyway, back to how I have an Isetta. Following my flash-back, I decided to advertise for a Trojan in that club's magazine and within a couple of weeks I got a call from a James Dudley here in Dublin. He said he had good news and bad news for me. The good news was that he had a Trojan. The bad news was that he also had a Messerschmitt and Isetta and he was selling all three as a "job lot".

Imagine the delight on my wife's face when, having tried to dissuade me from taking up this new hobby on the grounds that we barely had room for our own cars, I arrived home with not one but three bubbles. Imagine her further delight when we discovered that the Isetta, in its excitement at finding a new home, left its oily calling card on the newly paved driveway. Well, I am glad to say that the counselling has worked and we are still together: the kids, the cat the three bubbles and, oh yes, the still suffering wife.

And now to the mechanical challenges of my new three-wheel friend, I have to say it was handed over to me in PMO. But shortly after, while putting it through its paces, I heard a pop and found I had a significant oil leak. The source baffled me so I decided to put the Club to the test and contacted Mike Hurn. What a joy! Mike enthusiastically walked me through the symptoms and quickly diagnosed the rubber seals on the valve tubes and sent me a new set.

No problem dismantling the engine –taking things apart has always been a unique skill of mine. Putting it back together? I quickly realised I should delegated that to my son Niall who had worked a couple of summers in a boat yard servicing engines.

Oh the joy of having it back together again, but BANG and we had another massive leak! This time a piston ring was broken. (One just can't get good staff anymore – although Niall did remind me that it was I who compressed the ring).



So, it's back to annoy Mike again. In goes the new ring – Niall insisting to do the compression this time. Engine starts the first time, and BANG yet another huge oil leak. Now I don't care what he says, but it was Niall's fault this time. He hand tightened the head without a torque wrench and the head gasket blew.

Eh, eh.....Mike, it's me again! So, Mike is called to the rescue and we are back on the road.....with a petrol leak this time. Who do I call on this one? You guessed it - Mike, who has sent me a new internal cork washer for the petrol tap.

So here I am, never wanting an Isetta, and boy, has it challenged me. But you know, it has been great fun and the real reason why I decided to "bubble" in the first place. There is probably as much, if not more, enjoyment under as there is in them. And with people in the Club like Mike prepared to give so generously of their time, I am truly hooked. I don't think I can say the same about Niall who takes all the blame and my wife who finds the oil stains on the carpet.

Damian McCarthy

(PS: The Isetta is 300cc right-hand-drive and was registered in the UK in 1960 No PSK 364. It was imported into Ireland in 1994 and its current registration is 60-D-20).

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

Scottish Microcar Club Spring Rally

Over the Sea to Skye

April 13th - 15th at Morvich Caravan Club Site, Inverinate, Kyle IV40 8HQ Tel 01599 511354 Full details from John Ducker Tel. 01855 821354 email johnducker@tiscali.co.uk

Enfield Pageant

23/24/25th May North London This is a 3 day show with 70+ clubs, 300 plus stalls and 32,000 expected visitors. For more information contact Greg Moore on greg@classicfix.co.uk

The XII International Microcar Rally - Manresa Spain

6/7 June in Manresa For enrolment tel. 00-34-93-875 1820 before May 7th or write to:- **Classic Motor Club del Bages**, PO Box 338, 08240 Manresa, Barcelona Spain. Email classic@classicmotorclub.org www.classicmotorclub.org

Heinkel/Trojan Club AGM/Rally Weekend

19/20/21 June at The Bubble Car Museum, Byards Leap, Cranwell, Lincs.

Cars in the Park

4/5 July Classic vehicle event by The Rotary Club of Lichfield St Chad at Beacon Park in Lichfield Staffs. For further details see www.carsinthepark.com

East Anglian Microcar Club 2009 Rally

July 31st - August 2nd at Stonham Barns, Stonham Aspal, Suffolk. Further details contact Dave Arnott 01362 691068 or email barchetta595@aol.com

Ee By Gum !

T ' National's going to YORKSHIRE !



The **2009 NMCR** will be based at historic **RIPON**

in the **Yorkshire Dales**

3rd-6th Sept 2009

Organised by
The Micro Maniacs



EDITORS, WEBMASTERS, ENTHUSIASTS, MICRONAUTS
Please Contact

Jim Jamieson Terry Parkin
Jim.Jamieson2@virgin.net lsettaWorld@aol.com

and we will send you regularly updated info
It'll be a reet grand do !

An Italian Connection ?

In 1976, as part of my then-early career in Aerospace, I had occasion to go to Italy and specifically Turin, to visit the aerospace arm of FIAT, namely a company called Microtecnica. After the business day was over, I drove north from Turin up towards Aosta and the St Bernard pass. Turning off the main drag, I took a rural route which ended up at a major snow slide, where I had to turn around and largely retrace my steps.



Along the way, particularly in the small villages, I noticed a large number of small three wheeler trucks being used for everything from general carrying, refuse collection, street sweeping and landscaping work.

The following day, I was advised by my hosts at Microtecnica that the little trucks, called Ape's (said Apay) were made by Piaggio, who at that time still made seaplanes and, of course, they made and still make Piaggio Vespa scooters. For those not fluent in Italian, like me, Ape = Bee and Vespa = Wasp.

I was also very roundly told off by my hosts for venturing "off piste" into the worst Avalanche Alley in Italy !!

Although I was intrigued and attracted by these little trucks, my visits to Italy largely stopped and I did no more about it. I had had an Isetta in the late 60's and in the 1980's, when the family were young, I acquired another and then another, one of which I still have today, albeit in bits. Another set of stories altogether !!

Visiting northern Italy, on holiday, a few years ago, my Ape interest was reawakened and I started to keep an eye out for the little trucks on E Bay and elsewhere. Around the beginning of 2008, I realised that there were many more for sale in Italy and Germany at (then) more rea-

sonable prices, but that not every seller was willing to sell to GB.

By the autumn of 2008 I had bid on one or two in the UK and in every case I had been outbid. I formed the view that the vehicles were still generally cheaper in Germany/Italy, but not by as much as when the pound was stronger.

In late November I tried to bid on a very attractive Ape in Modena, unfortunately due to a vagary of EBay it would not allow my bid even though UK bids were enabled. I tried to bid by E Mail but was not successful.

While visiting friends in Bury during the week-end of 6/7th December I was on EBay tracking an Ape in Kaufbeuren about 40 miles west of Munich and as it was getting near to its "Buy It Now" price and it looked to be in reasonable condition, I bought it.

Then ensued a very difficult 36 hours, as the seller went completely silent at a time when I wanted to book flights because, of course, we wanted to drive it home. In the end, on the Sunday evening I asked German friends to ring the seller Josef on the Monday, in German, as we surmised (rightly) that he had little English. In the event, Josef's English friend Michael rang at 07.15 on the Monday morning and assured me about the sale in general.



He was however appalled at the thought that we would be driving it back to England. He told me that they had serious snow (6"), that it was a long way (900 miles) and that the Ape was roadworthy but not tested or taxed in Germany. I knew the first two points from the Web but the latter two decided the matter, it was to be a trailer import !

So on the Monday and Tuesday, I booked ferries, obtained European breakdown cover, withdrew enough cash from savings for the Ape,

checked passports and agreed with my ever helpful workshop landlord Bruce that I could borrow his fabulous 4 wheel trailer. Oh and by the way I changed the clutch on my 1.8 Focus (b*****d of a job) as it had started to slip over the weekend – No personal pressure then !!

On the Wednesday, having packed the car and hooked on the trailer we got underway with a boxful of “stuffers” for Ian’s Gazette envelopes, to keep you all aware of Club matters and down to Ian’s house in Nether Heyford. Leaving there refreshed, thanks Ian, a little after nine, we made Dover by 01.00 including a 30 minute micro-sleep. On to the 02.15 ferry landing at 04.30 local time, an hours driving and then some serious sleep for a couple of hours.

Thursday in Belgium dawned cold, bright and



dry and we made good progress into Germany. We really like the Rhine and had decided to follow it down as far as we could. The first night saw us stay at a delightful inn at a little place called Lay, which is actually on the Moselle about 5 miles west of its confluence with the Rhine at Koblenz .

The following day we followed the Rhine down through Mainz and finally cut across to the north side of Lake Constance (Bodensee in German). Heading east we finished the day, again in a delightful inn, in a small town called Guzenberg about 1.5 hours away from our destination.

So the great day dawned when we were going to see “our” little Ape, we had by now got quite attached to the photos at least, but were still a little worried about what reality may hold. We rang Michael and agreed that we would meet up in Kaufbeuren about 12.00 and he would pilot us to Josef’s workshop about 5 miles from there. Meeting him with no problems, we made our way to the workshop to be met by a couple of

50cc moped engine and is a little smaller physically than the 200cc TM model which we had come for. That said the Ape 50 is more popular in Italy, indeed it has a cult following !

The next sight was of our powder blue TM sitting prettily in the winter sun (can a truck be pretty ??) . All our hopes were fulfilled, it had a few dings and scrapes as befits a 17 year old truck but overall it was complete and driveable. A short test drive, a little hagggle and a handshake sealed the deal and we loaded the Ape on the trailer.

Michael had recommended that, as a bit of light relief from driving, we made our way down to Mad King Ludwig’s castle, Schloss Neuschwanstein about 40 minutes away. We were late in the day getting there, so we had to drive up to the Castle gate, a bit steep, rather than take the horse drawn carriages. Down on the snow-covered car park, we got stuck for a while but nothing serious and we were soon on our way. It did however show the wisdom of not driving the Ape.

We had been told to stay away from Switzerland on the return as there was a probability of some form of import duty on the value of the Ape, so we headed back towards Bodensee and stayed near Lindau at the eastern end of the lake.

The next day saw us heading towards Colmar and then into France heading broadly for Rheims. We stayed at, but were disappointed by, a hotel near Nancy, which led us the following morning to head for Luxembourg, rejoin the Moselle and then into an area called Little Switzerland which was delightful. On through Belgium, then back into France, past Lille and eventually at the end of a very long day, Calais.



Early morning ferry saw us land at Dover to the only formal challenge we had all trip. A "Border Control" officer asked me the purpose of our trip, to which I responded that it was to pick up the little vehicle on the trailer. At this point, with a smile on his face he said "Any particular reason why, Sir" and waved us on. It is worth noting that as the Ape is more than six years old, there is no VAT liability.

Having picked up a fair quantity of beer in Calais, we made our way to Romney to pick up an EBAY cooker, at which point the Focus was definitely down at the back end, then on to the Midlands in surprisingly light traffic, until an accident ahead of us on the M1 caused a diversion.

Home again then, after 1900 trouble free miles, with an Ape that deserves restoration but which will run well in the meantime. We "winged" all our accommodation and while it was slightly worrying some evenings, we found accommodation every night ok. Every small town in Germany seems to have at least one small hotel in the region of 80 euros B&B for two with evening meal around another 30 euros. In France, chain hotels such as Ibis and Formula One provide no frills accommodation and seem to be the best bet.

The likely way forward is that, as we are very busy in 2009, we will run the Ape "as is" this year and then go for a restoration in 2010.

As it stands today, I believe the jobs I have to do to make the Ape road legal in the UK are:-

- Fit left hand dipping headlights
- Fit a rear fog light
- Convert the speedo to read miles per hour
- Fit seat belts

At this point, I have to get a vehicle inspection by the local Transport office, before I can get a Registration Document. After that I assume it is as simple as MOT, Insurance and Tax.

However, this process is unknown territory for me as yet, so I have already had a gentle arm twisting from Ian, for another article about it, when I have finished.

The Italian Connection ?? – Both Piaggio and Isetta originated in Italy. Both, strangely, were, or are, made in other places as well – Isetta in Germany, France, UK and Brazil - Piaggio in India.

Bob Crompton

BUY SELL AND WANTED

Parts for Sale.

Head for 300cc. Has guides, good threads in plug hole, exhaust etc. £45. Front hub flanges with studs £20. VDO speedo £20.

WANTED Messerschmitt body tub in restorable condition. Tel 01463 710200

BMW Isetta 300+ 1960 LHD 3 wheeler - Pea Green. Excellent condition. MOT 12 months - taxed Jan 2010. Spares + purpose built 'tilt' trailer. £6500. Sale due to new project. Phone for more details. Derek 01969 624493

WANTED

LHD Isetta 300 Plus. Brighton Built 3 wheeler. Must be original and in very good condition.

Also Messerschmitt KR 200 body tub and boot section. Must be in restorable condition or better. Tel 01463 710200

INSTITUCION BENEFACTIVA
 LOTERIA NACIONAL DE COSTA RICA
 Junta de Protección Social de San José
Autos Antiguos
Costa Rica
 1957 BMW Isetta
 CLUB DE AUTOS ANTIGUOS DE COSTA RICA
 PREMIO MAYOR
C\$50,000,000
 CINCUENTA MILLONES
 DÉCIMO
SORTEO N° 3869 - VALE C\$300,00 I.V.I.
 4 CUARTO 7 SIETE 1 UNO 000 CERO
DOMINGO 12 MARZO 2006
 2 EMISIÓN • DOS 2

Sent in by George Blau who's Isetta is featured on the Costa Rica National Lottery tickets. Do we win the Isetta or c50,000,000

Transportation 2008 style Taking the Tango Queen to New Zealand

As many of the readers of the magazine already know, I spend the winter months here in Nelson in South Island New Zealand. There are many classic cars out here (as there are classic people) and early next year I will be writing about these in more detail. However last year I decided that being out here without my own classic was too much a wrench so I made arrangements with a close friend to import one of the two BMW Isetta Motocoupe cars that I own to New Zealand. The first step in such an undertaking is the internet or dub, dub, dub land as they refer to it out here.

I researched the regulations and found that the Isetta falls into two if not three of the allowable import of vehicles categories. These are cars over 20 years and denoted a classic, LHD car over 20 years old and denoted a classic and Tricycles.

I then set about finding a suitable carrier. I know they are small but imagine the licking of all those stamps! So it had to be a container job. Again the internet helped and I found a company that would deal with this.

Next big decision; what to take in terms of spares? The Tango Queen and Rudolf are supported by an excellent spares network in the UK, the Isetta Owners Club and the Bromley Bubble Company being the main ones. However there is nothing in New Zealand so I had better sort this. I went through my collection of spares and selected an engine, gearbox, clutch and final transmission that were in good nick and supplemented these with an array of consumables, (spark plugs condenser, cables, coil etc.)

Another big decision followed, ..shall I take a trailer as well? I use a trailer to take the Isetta on long trips. This because although they will happily do a hundred plus miles each day I can't, travelling in these tiny cars for five hours is like being inside a cement mixer.

I have two trailers; I decided to take the newest and best.

Final checks with the container company, all was well, I could also put other things in the car they said, so in went the posh golf clubs,

shoes and a trolley. I sent them the cheque for the transport of the trailer and the car £1600, and the insurance in case of maritime disaster £300.

Other preparations included removing the number plates from the Tango Queen. It had original 1959 three number and letter plates, -sellable I thought! Also I had some of the spare parts remanufactured, the starter motor I was taking for one. Finally, getting two spare tyres for the bubble.

On a cold rainy summer morning September I took the Tango Queen (now full of spares) on the trailer to the container loading depot in Barking in East London. It was easy to find as the company sent me detailed instructions including Goggle Earth maps and photos of the approach roads. The car was then checked for damage. signed in and then taken off to be loaded into its own 20 foot container. I was taking a lot of empty space to New Zealand as well.



A tear or two formed in my eye. Would I ever see the Tango Queen and all those spares and my Golf Clubs ever again I thought as I drove home.

The Tango Queen's journey to New Zealand was to take several months. The container went via Singapore then Japan then Auckland before arriving in Nelson.

On the allotted day I phoned the port,- the container was not there.! Several anxious days followed as I tried to track down what had happened to the container. It transpired that the shipping arrangements had changed dramatically, many more changes of ship

had occurred and that the container would arrive, but in few days time.

Five days late it arrived. Now the fun started. First the Customs needed to examine it and determine how much GST (or VAT as we know it) was due on the items. Official valuations of the car and trailer were required; no one had told me that. The car was easy as I had a formal valuation for that, but the trailer? Good job I had kept the bills I had paid for building it.

There was snag however, although the car trailer and spares were on the Customs manifest the Golf Clubs, shoes and Trolley were not. The Custom's folk were not happy. They thought I was trying to smuggle them in. More emails followed back to the UK get the container company to explain to the Customs that they had said it did not need to be included. After grovelling apologies and the sacrifice of 180 dollars they forgave me and said I could have my clubs and trolley.

Next MAF needed to check the car and the trailer and the goods for dirt. This is because New Zealand is very strict on the import of stuff which may contain foreign seeds or bugs. *I had cleaned the bubble and the trailer and all the items very carefully*, however MAF decided that my Golf Shoes were not clean enough so cleaned them for me and charged me 25 dollars for doing so.

3 days had now elapsed since the car had arrived, I had not seen it, just paper, paper and more b... paper.

I was telephoned by the port loading officer. The paperwork was now complete I could go down to the docks and remove all the loose articles ready for the car and trailer to be taken off to be checked for compliance to New Zealand road rules and for the issuing of the number plates.

I had contracted the AA to do this and they were all ready to come down to the port to collect the car and trailer and transport them to their workshop.

It was now 4.50pm on a Friday. I got to the port and loaded the contents of the bubble into my 4x4 a Mitsubishi Challenger (I call it "the truck").

I phoned the AA, - they were sorry but they could get the trailer until Monday. The Nelson Port man was not happy. They did not

want the responsibility of having the car and trailer there over the weekend. " You've got a hitch on your truck" he said "Why you don't take it now to the AA yourself!". So that's what I did.

I arrived at the AA to be greeted by Lisa. She is the main receptionist and when I had called in earlier to book the car and trailer in for this process she was fascinated by the idea of the bubble car and had booked the first trip on the road once it was street legal. She explained that they would look after the trailer and car over the weekend and would start the checking etc process on Monday.

On Monday morning first thing I went to the AA to put back onto the Isetta a few things I had removed before its transportation, the wing and interior mirrors, the steering wheel and the gear lever. I had taken these off as they were at risk of damage.

I also took down oil and other things to give it a quick service.

After two hours I had completed the work on the car and tried to start it, the battery was still partially charged but not enough to start it. So a loan of a starter box and away it went to the cheers of the checking team in the workshop.



The trailer was the first to be checked. It failed! First it did not have a security chain fitted and second the light socket was not the NZ standard. I was down hearted. In the UK I knew who to get to deal with such things but who could get here? Typically of the folk here Lisa said she knew someone and a local phone call later I was off to a ship engineering company for them to do the work. What surprised me was that even

though it had failed it was given a registration plate (trailers here have their own registration and road tax, called Reggo here) and are subject to a regular MOT type inspection.

I hitched it up to the truck and took it to the workshop. Three hours later they phoned to say the work was done. I took it back to the AA where it was inspected again and passed not just the check but also it's WOF (MOT).



As the trailer is brand new it only has an annual WOF check, this lasts till its 6 years old then like cars here its every 6 months.

At 5pm on Monday I drove the trailer home leaving the Tango Queen ready to be checked on Tuesday.

9.15am Tuesday Chris from the AA calls; "Dave we have a bit of a problem, we have put the Isetta's details in the computer and its didn't fit any of the categories, and also can you tell me the kerb side weight and carrying capacity of the car." The weights thing was easy as I have the manual for the car, the other bit was down to them, so I had a coffee and calmed down.

I suspected there was going to be some sort of problem as when I looked up the regulations in the UK myself it fell into each of three categories. Chris phoned again "The regs

show that at present it will need seat belts, though heaven only knows how you can fit them, I will get back to you later" he said. Depths of despair set in and also partial annoyance as there are at least two other Isettas on the road in New Zealand.

Seven anxious days followed where we made many phone calls to the various parts of the departments of transport – finally we had a decision – it was a motorcycle and side car so it didn't need seat belts.

The testing of the car then started – unlike the MOT in the UK, the car is stripped – the brakes and shoes examined in great detail. The news was not good, quite a number of things will need to be done before it's allowed on the road here.

The list includes:

- New Brake Linings - the existing ones are not stamped made in New Zealand
- New wheel bearings – one side are a bit noisy so both have to be done
- The 2 plain bearing bushes fitted to the front brake back plates must be replaced
- The 2 track rod end like joints attached to the front brake back plates must be replaced
- A King pin bearing has to be changed – it has some minor play in it

The big problem though is the wheels – in particular the wheel spacers fitted to the car to allow it to use radial tyres (rather than the original cross plys) – these are not allowed in New Zealand so I either have to go back to cross plys or have new wheels made.

Looks like an expensive new year – **To be continued.**

David Marsh

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National 2007

J F Wareing