

# ISETTA GAZETTE

SPRING EDITION 2016



# The Isetta Owners Club of Great Britain Ltd.

## OFFICERS & COMMITTEE

<b>CHAIRMAN</b> Jeff Todd	108 Clee Road, Grimsby. DN32 8NX <b>email:jefftodd1952@gmail.com</b>
<b>TREASURER</b> Bob Crompton	89 Westcotes Coventry CV4 9BE <b>email:bargeebob@yahoo.co.uk</b>
<b>SECRETARY</b> Joanne Todd	108 Clee Road, Grimsby. DN32 8NX <b>email:joanneltodd2006@gmail.com</b>
<b>MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY</b> Jeff Todd	108 Clee Road, Grimsby. DN32 8NX <b>email:jefftodd1952@gmail.com</b>
<b>GAZETTE EDITOR</b> Ian Parris	1 Winston Close, Nether Heyford, Northampton. NN7 3JX <b>email:isetta@ianparris.com</b>
<b>USED SPARES MANAGER</b> Mike Ayriss	29 Oak Drive, Syston, Leicester. LE7 2PX <b>email:michael.ayriss@talktalk.net</b>
<b>TECHNICAL ADVICE</b> Lee Turnham Mike Ayriss	70 Prebendal Avenue, Aylesbury,Bucks. HP21 8LQ <b>email:lee.turnham@talktalk.net</b> 29 Oak Drive, Syston, Leicester. LE7 2PX <b>email:michael.ayriss@talktalk.net</b>
<b>CLUB MERCHANDISE</b>	<b>To be announced</b>
<b>NEW SPARES MANAGER</b> Lee Turnham	70 Prebendal Avenue, Aylesbury,Bucks. HP21 8LQ <b>email:lee.turnham@talktalk.net</b>
<b>BMW 600 &amp; 700</b> Roger Barker	'Graygarth' The Holloway, Alvechurch, Birmingham. B48 7QA
<b>ARCHIVE/RE-REGISTRATION and REGISTRAR</b> Dave Watson	19 Wellhead Road, Totternhoe, Nr Dunstable, Bedfordshire. LU6 1QS <b>email:d_watson@btinternet.com</b>
<b>WEBMASTER</b> Ian Parris	1 Winston Close, Nether Heyford, Northampton. NN7 3JX <b>email:isetta@ianparris.com</b>

Website [www.isetta-owners-club-gb.com](http://www.isetta-owners-club-gb.com)

Forum [autos.groups.yahoo.com/group/IsettaWorld](http://autos.groups.yahoo.com/group/IsettaWorld)

## **I.O.C. SUBSCRIPTION RATES**

United Kingdom (and members receiving an electronic gazette)	£18.00	<b>Annual Subscription payments should be made by PayPal to <a href="mailto:isettasubs3@gmail.com">isettasubs3@gmail.com</a> alternatively via the Online Spares System by purchasing an Annual Membership Subscription (Renewal Only) item or by Cheque to the Membership Secretary Jeff Todd.</b>
Europe	£21.00	
Rest Of World	£25.00	

Registered Office: 46 High Street, Gargrave, Skipton. BD23 3RB Company Reg. No. 2527362

## **Editors Bit**

---

I have had to cut down the gazette this time to 12 pages because I am getting no articles sent in to print. I think most of you are happy to read articles but no-one wants to write anything. I know I go on about this all the time but you only get out of the system what you put in.

On another subject, Lee can hardly keep up with the orders coming in for spares. We have spent thousands of pounds obtaining or manufacturing spares and have well over 700 lines to choose from keeping Mike busy doing all the donkey work.

As usual this year we have had to send a number of reminders to members to renew their subscriptions. We do not have direct debit facilities but I think this can be done via PayPal, I will be looking into this for the future.

On another note, I sold on the Isetta I finished last year as I needed the space to fit in a car I spotted and fell in love with at my local garage whilst having the MOT done on the Isetta. It is a Chesil Speedster which is a replica of the 1956 Porsche 356 Speedster. The Isetta and the Berkeley moved up the garage a bit and the Triumph motorbike relegated to the other garage giving me just enough space to fit the Chesil in. It's a bit tight but it works.

**Ian Parris**



---

## **Chairman's Chat**

I have been ordered by she who must be obeyed that the Isetta must be brought home from its rented lock up garage this year. First of all though I've got to clear enough space in the garage at home to accommodate it and work round it. Next job is free off the brakes, after all it must have been in the lock up for 15 years and pushed in and out half a dozen times at best during that time. Then there's the absence of any compression to address; it was towed into the lock up and has never run during my ownership. Finally there's the dreaded MOT test and hey presto we have a usable car and we can consider restoration.

All the above should be possible especially as I am about to change jobs which should mean I've more time to spend on the car.

So come on all you Isetta owners with cars in the garage just sat there, if I can do it so can you.

The club spares service goes from strength to strength and we have all the parts you would ever wish for thanks to the combined efforts of Lee, Ian and Mike. Give them a challenge too!

**Jeff Todd**

## Extract from the Micro Car & Scooter Club Australia

### BRITISH BUBBLES STILL RULE ...(SORT OF )

(This article was written for 'Best of British' in response to another reminiscence). Far away in The Antipodes. I enjoyed Gerald Rickwood's reminiscences about his Heinkel Kabine way back in the late '50's. My own microcar days date back to the same period, beginning with a Messerschmitt KR200 which took me to and from The University of Sydney in weathers fair and foul, and also served with attendant gymnastic difficulties as the vehicle in which my fiancée and I somehow did our courting.

Many years later after becoming boringly 'normal', I found myself hankering after another 'bubble-car', ideally a BMW Isetta. This desire was in no way hindered by my weekly viewing of the gorgeous 'Gina' of 'Heartbeat' fame, and her equally gorgeous ,(well, nearly so) red Isetta which she drove in the first series. In 2003, at the Sydney Motor Show, my eyes fell upon a bright yellow Isetta on display and soon to be auctioned. It wasn't red...it wasn't Gina's...Gina didn't come with it...but I HAD to have it!!

Although a mature, indeed pre-geriatric 62 year-old at the time, my enthusiasm was of adolescent effervescence at the auction, and I KNOW that the auctioneer did his clever best to ensure that the little yellow beastie became mine ... and it did! When I blithely announced that I intended to drive it home, a distance of some 25 kilometres from inner Sydney to the suburban outskirts where I live, the auctioneer expressed grave concern.



The Isetta had not been driven for some time, was not in the greatest shape or condition, and no-one, least of all myself, knew how to drive it. This dilemma was solved by the auctioneer generously arranging for the tiny Isetta to be delivered, at no cost to me. As the sole occupant on the tray of the longest low-loader semi-trailer I have ever seen. Its fame, at least in our street, began that day.

It's now been restored, (more than once) has appeared in a magazine ad and in many car shows and displays, is loved and/or laughed at by children of all ages ...and I continue to refuse all offers to part with my 'Rollende Ei' (Rolling Egg) as it is called.

Amazingly, although it was built and first registered in 1957, I appear to be only its third owner in its more than 50 years of pattering along. A proud British-built 3 wheeler version, my 'Rolling egg' was built in the old loco carriage works in Brighton and was first registered in November 1957 to a Derek William Jones who resided in a caravan park in Moss Side Lane Rixton Warrington. By September 1976 it had travelled 24,390 miles and received a Test Certificate from A.R. Morris (Crewe) Ltd.

It was brought to Australia in about 2001 by some brothers who tried unsuccessfully to restore it before deciding to auction it ...to ME!

When it is not taking me (and sometimes a grinning but embarrassed mate) for a coffee or two, my Isetta relaxes in my garage alongside its new friend my 1959 Heinkel Kabine ,made in Dundalk Ireland...but that's another story. **Graham Sims**

## Love, Sex, Bubblecars, and Reliant Robins

On the Isetta stand at the NEC in November a number of people asked me why I hadn't written any articles for the Gazette recently. Well, thank you for noticing. The reasons are two-fold: first of all, my creative focus for much of 2015 was on completing and publishing the novel *Love Sex Work Murder* that I had been working on for years; and second, I've run out of ideas for things to write about! But, cajoled by Ian Parris into penning a couple of pages for this Gazette, I can use the former of these reasons to resolve the latter. (In other words the book can give me an idea for something to discuss.) For, in the said novel there is a piece where two people are arguing over whether a Reliant Robin is called that – "Reliant Robin" – or whether it is "Robin Reliant". And that is a (vaguely) interesting question.

We three-wheeled car enthusiasts all know that it's "Reliant Robin" but why do so many others – particularly journalists – think otherwise? Well, I have no idea why, and a quick trawl of the Internet suggests that nobody else does either. And also, why is it so annoying when people say "Robin Reliant"? And what's more they apply their warped thinking to all Reliants, whether Regal, Rialto, or anything else, they are all "Robin Reliants" - even the poor old Bond Bug gets roped in sometimes. It can come from owners of the things as well. Have a look at eBay and see how many people selling one have the name the wrong way around!

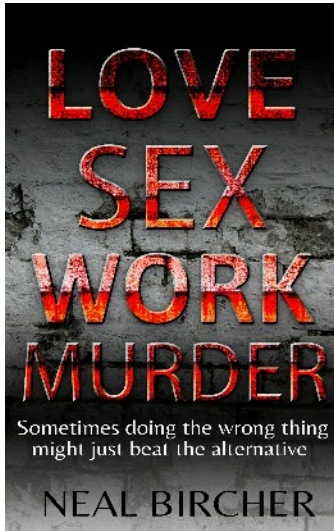
We in the world of Isettas have an equivalent, albeit not quite as obvious. Everyone learns at the age of six how to use an apostrophe, so why do people randomly stick one in the plural of Isetta, so that instead of "Isettas" it becomes "Isetta's", which looks plain daft? And it's not just us funny little car people who are affected (that's the cars that are funny and little, not necessarily us) by such crimes against the English language: How often do you hear people verbally replacing the "o" in Aston Martin with an "i", turning it into "Astin". *Top Gear* once referred to those who get Robin Reliant wrong as "grunting thickos". Funnily they have not, as far as I am aware, applied the same judgement to Astin wrongdoers – quite possibly because Jeremy Clarkson is a serial offender in this respect. Have a listen, even for those who don't already find him irritating, his pronouncement of Astin/Aston should have you grinding your teeth!

Incidentally, the photo here is of my parents' Robin in 1985, and it's flanked by my brother and his girlfriend. The damage to the wing was caused when he rolled the car on their first date! Thirty years later and they have been married for twenty-five years. The Robin was soon back on the road but my brother didn't drive it again; he bought himself a Fiat 126 because it had four wheels!

Back to the novel, if you'll indulge me for just a moment. I know that a number of my Isetta friends have bought it, and I thank you for that. It got as high as number 3 in an Amazon sales chart over Christmas, which was beyond my wildest dreams. Actually, that's not true, as my wildest dreams would have had it at number 1 for about a year, and a blockbuster movie would be on the way by now! But I really do appreciate every purchase, and all of the positive feedback. If you don't have it yet, and might be interested, do have a look on Amazon. It's just 99p on Kindle and it's £7.95 for the paperback. Either way, I get 24p each time it sells. So, in answer to the first question everyone asks, no, there is no money in it. As for the second question, yes, I am working on







the next one. And as for the third question, no, I don't have any idea how long that will take me!

Anyway, it's January 1<sup>st</sup> as I write this, and we are all I am sure looking forward to another year of Isetta fun. As an ordinary member of the club I'd like to take the opportunity to thank everyone who contributes their time and effort to see that the club continues to exist and to serve us Isetta drivers. So a huge thankyou to everyone on the committee, all who make the NEC stand happen, everyone who does anything else, and everyone who sends in material for Ian to publish in the Gazette. If you've not written in with your own experiences or opinions yet, then please do so, it'll save the readership from having to suffer my offerings quite as often!

Have a great 2016, and I'll hopefully catch up with many of, as always, at the usual shows over the course of the year. Just don't say "Robin Reliant" or I might turn nasty!

*Neal Bircher.* (neal@bircher.me.uk)



Clearing the garage during our soggy winter, I found this most evocative copy, revealing a photograph taken of London's Thames South Bank.

It was from I believe, an Auto-Car Magazine Edition, highlighting their Comparative Test article in 1958.

I recall the two cars were mentioned as "freshly imported BMW & Messerschmitt demonstration models from Munich & Regensburg, respectively".

Should I trace the script of the test, I will pass on, Or maybe, another Club Member can supply us all the test's detail, please? Certainly, London & our Cars are much changed these days. Alan Town

# The Dreaded Wheel Wobble!!!

By Mike Ayriss

Has it happened to you? Well I have only ever had it happen to me once I was driving our Red three wheeled car which was shod with 4.80 x 10 cross ply tyres and I still remember the occasion vividly! I can see it now I was climbing up over the Belgrave Gate flyover and heading down to the "Golden Mile" except of course it was not called the Golden Mile in the 1970s. Now the planners didn't quite get it right when they designed this concrete panacea to solve traffic congestion and the two lanes into one caused all sorts of problems in heavy



traffic in fact it snarled it up even more, so the planner did the cheapest of things and painted out one lane with heavy white lining, simple, it was now of course a single lane flyover! What's this go to do with Wheel Wobble or put another way Steering Shimmy? Well when steering shimmy starts the wheels feel like they are wobbling and bouncing all at the same time and no matter what you do either by speeding up or slowing down, the only, only thing you can do is stop, and lucky for me the council had created a refuge all the way up and down this fly over for me to stop in. I did bit of research

on the problem that in those days was not so easy with no internet to help me out so I turned to the Isetta Club for help.

BMW and Isetta at Brighton knew about his problem and had in fact sold a retro fit steering damper kit consisting of a Chassis Bracket, Damper Unit and a Track Rod Clamp I was very lucky as Brighton had already welded a bracket to my RHD chassis during manufacture so it was the simplest of jobs to install, just a matter of bolting the damper in place. Was it worth it? Well I never had steering shimmy again and I do not really know what caused it in the first place however talking to an Isetta owner from North London at The National Micro Car Rally held in Burford that year he explained to me that it happened to him every day on his way to work, if a wheel touched some



heavy over banding it happened. So there it was as far as I was concerned, heavy white lining on Belgrave Flyover had caused it that day back in the 1970s.

Isetta's are a joy to drive so please don't let this tale put you off driving them but be warned and fit a damper now and don't worry about driving on the Belgrave Flyover because they pulled it down this year!!

A Damper Kit can be purchased from the Isetta Club Online Shop in fact they sell each part individually look them up on [www.isetta.org.uk/opencart](http://www.isetta.org.uk/opencart)



# BUY AND SELL & WANTED

## Queenstown Coach & Trim

Classic car trim specialist offering retrimming service encompassing all aspects of classic and modern re-upholstery.

- Complete retrims
- Hood repairs
- Headlinings
- Seat repairs
- Carpets etc.

All work is carried out to the highest quality and at very competitive rates

PLEASE CALL:

0207 622 4734 or  
0207 720 8600

EMAIL [jdjosephs@hotmail.com](mailto:jdjosephs@hotmail.com)

92 QUEENSTOWN ROAD  
LONDON SW8 3RY



10%  
DISCOUNT  
TO CLUB  
MEMBERS

YOUR GAZETTE  
NEEDS  
**YOU**



# LET'S HAVE YOUR STORIES

### The Club is pleased to welcome:-

Margaret & Tony Leach  
Clive Eales  
Rodney Lindoo  
David Robson Rose  
Jeff Loveland  
John Blasé

Poole  
Northampton  
USA  
High Wycombe  
Ripple Kent  
Guilsfield

Ray Fowles  
Paul Lucas  
Carlos Martinez-Almeida  
Andrew Chandler  
Steve Isaacs  
Tanveer Chaudhry  
Dorchester  
Stocking Pelham  
Madrid  
Southport  
Frampton  
Stockport  
**New Members since the last Gazette**

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

The Isetta Owners' Club of Great Britain Ltd. will not accept liability for any loss or damage resulting from articles, features, adverts or any other material published in The Isetta Gazette.

Copyright The Isetta Owners' Club GB Ltd.



## Dutch Rally 2015

We have been to the Island of Texel just once before in our Bubble Car and the vivid memory of sitting in the car watching rain bounce off the road is still with us, so with that in mind I decided to try and reserve a wooden Trekker Hut for the duration of the Rally.

The Dutch Rally is organised by the DWAC Microcar Club and it moves the rally site from province to province every year, so over the years since our first rally in the 1980s we have visited most of Holland. Texel is a little like the Isle of Wight with tourism playing a major part in its prosperity which can be defined I think into three areas, cycling, nature and parachuting or put another way just a nice place to go for a short break away from the hustle and bustle of every day life.

Our journey started by towing our four wheeled Isetta HEG 175 to Harwich on the Essex coast before taking the Stenaline night ferry to Hook van Holland in the Netherlands the start of our 90 mile drive to Den Helder in the north.

Driving the Isetta with our entire luggage for a 10 day stay can be challenging, add the tent and the other camping equipment and its cosy camping because, as you may have guessed, I did not manage to



reserve a Trekker Hut for every night of our stay. So it was to be three nights under canvas for us. I worked these days over the rally period so we were in the thick of the fun so to speak. I like driving the Isetta, and as you Isetta owners already know it is the Rolls Royce of Bubble Cars, so we get a nice comfortable ride but "speed" it just isn't built for, so with that in mind I planned a route into the trusty Garmin Satnav to use small roads as much as possible. However you really do have to use the motorways around Den Haag the capital of the Netherlands, but it was only for 18 miles or so before dropping onto the small quiet roads once again. Crossing the Spaarndam Ferry to Holland's longest village of Assendelft we drove the 4.5 miles of Dorpstraat (village street) passing its 5 petrol stations to our friends house for lunch.

Den Helder came into sight and the Ferry Port our final water crossing of the day to the island of Texel greeted by, yes, you've guessed it, rain and lots of it!!



With no stopping for the rain, we disembarked ship and headed for the campsite De Krim in the village De Cocksdorp located in the north of this small island. The rain between the showers had eased by the time we arrived in the camp site reception only to start again in earnest marooning us for over an hour while the storm passed by. I took the opportunity to ask if they had any Trekker Hut vacancies for the tent period of our stay, and yes we got one for Sunday night so one less day under canvas in what I suspected would be changeable weather.

The DWAC Organisation is always very well organised, and Thursday evening had us driving to the beach for a sunset walk of around a mile or so followed by a meal in the beachside restaurant Faro 2.

Friday was the start of the Weekend Rally with the “Deelnemers” arriving from Germany, Belgium, UK as well as Holland of course, something like 200 in all. As we were travelling light we opted out of the guided “Wadden Walk” on what we would call mud flats mainly because we did not have “old shoes” with us so headed for the sand dunes at the south end of Texel to be presented with a landscape that reminded me the film “Ice Cold in Alex”. It was a good job we had packed lots of water-proofs to explore the wonderful scene that the wind and sand created, did I say Texel was known as the Windy Isle?



Friday night was the traditional BBQ to get everyone together in one place with a professional “BBQ company” doing the cooking for us this year but as per normal it had more food than we could eat even though we tried hard!

Saturday was Rally day and a change from the normal format of a “Ball and Arrow” route system because the Texel VVV (tourist info) already had an Island Tourist Route mapped out with special signs at junctions to guide us around. The traditional DWAC treasure hunt was still part of the day with all sorts of clues to tease our brains like “How many pot animals can see at number “6”. Well I count 12 then, I am not sure as that horses head may be a wooden one, you get the idea!! Anyway it was back to the campsite for our evening meal in the “Posher” of the campsites two restaurants only to be told there way a delay of one hour due to a fire in the kitchen.



A short speech by the DWAC organisation thanked all for coming in three languages it was full of apologies for the delay, something that was beyond their control of course but you know it didn't really spoil the evening at all, just made us enjoy the food a little more because we were hungry. My friend said to me before we left for the trip “Do try the Texel Beer it's rather nice”, well I have to report he was right and I think I tested all of them!! Sunday arrived all too soon and another dry day along with a drop in the wind that allowed the parachutists at Texel Airport to entertain us for the rest of the morning.

Driving to the Airport would have taken us around five minutes but all the cars set off together for a short drive through the countryside, quite some sight I have to say. A hundred or so “Bubbles” parked up “air side” of the runway fence whilst their owners enjoyed coffee and Dutch apple cake outside the restaurant in what was now clear blue skies.

Did I tell you how organised the DWAC was? Well back in the campsite reception there was a large form written 3 languages for you indicate what parts of the weekend you intend to take part in, and, Helen indicated everything apart from the “Wadden Walk” or so we thought. “Oh there you are Mike and Helen” said Ada “its time for your aeroplane flight please go and

pay"! Pay, but we haven't booked a flight have we? Yes and it is very soon if you don't go the Club will have to pay for it! Well we like flying and the 15 minute trip was a great experience with us reminiscing about flights in Auster Aircraft when we were children. My flight was from Skegness and Helen was a little closer to home and actually from the Auster aircraft factory runway just a mile from her family home, happy days remembered!!

I later looked at the DWAC form and noticed if Helen had put a 2 in the column next to aeroplane flight which was "Tandem Parachute Jump"! What would you have done then I asked Helen? "It looks like I would have been jumping out of an aeroplane doesn't it"!!!!

Sunday evening for us meant breaking camp and moving into a Trekker Hut for the last night of our stay and what a good choice we made with the rain beating down all through the night but by the time breakfast was over the sun came out for our drive back to Hoek Van Holland some 90 miles away and all day to do it in.

Thanks must go to the DWAC Organisation for yet another great rally and to our Isetta HEG 175 which gave us and a lot of other people lots of smiles per mile.



**Mike and Helen Ayriess 2015**



**Recently advertised on Ebay**





# CLASSIC CAR INSURANCE?



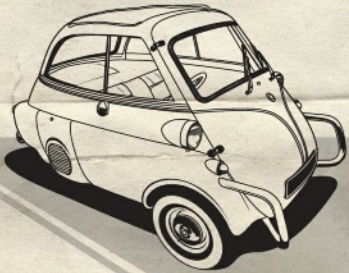
## THE HARD WAY

- Ring an insurance broker that's not Hagerty. Spend half an hour explaining why your classic isn't just "an old banger".
- 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.



## THE EASY WAY

- Call Hagerty. 0333 323 1383.
- Go for a relaxing drive.



**HAGERTY.**  
CLASSIC CAR INSURANCE

HAGERTYINSURANCE.CO.UK

### **Hagerty International Ltd. Good news for club members.**

The club has agreed a discount on insurance premiums for club members insuring with Hagerty International Ltd. By quoting our club code CCI0C members will receive a 15% discount on their premium.

Telephone 0333 323 0989 email: [www.hagertyinsurance.co.uk](http://www.hagertyinsurance.co.uk)