

www.isetta.org.uk

No 370

ISETTA **GAZETTE**



SPRING EDITION 2018

MAGAZINE OF THE ISETTA OWNERS CLUB OF GREAT BRITAIN

The Isetta Owners Club of Great Britain Ltd.

OFFICERS & COMMITTEE

CHAIRMAN Jeff Todd	108 Clee Road, Grimsby. DN32 8NX email:jefftodd1952@gmail.com
TREASURER Bob Crompton	1 North View, Ryhope, Sunderland. SR2 0PE email:bargeebob@yahoo.co.uk
SECRETARY Joanne Todd	108 Clee Road, Grimsby. DN32 8NX email:joanneltodd2006@gmail.com
MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY Jeff Todd	108 Clee Road, Grimsby. DN32 8NX email:jefftodd1952@gmail.com
GAZETTE EDITOR Ian Parris	1 Winston Close, Nether Heyford, Northampton. NN7 3JX email:isetta@ianparris.com
USED SPARES MANAGER Mike Ayriss	29 Oak Drive, Syston, Leicester. LE7 2PX email:michael.ayriss@talktalk.net
TECHNICAL ADVICE Lee Turnham Mike Ayriss	70 Prebendal Avenue, Aylesbury,Bucks. HP21 8LQ email:lee.turnham@talktalk.net 29 Oak Drive, Syston, Leicester. LE7 2PX email:michael.ayriss@talktalk.net
NEW SPARES MANAGER Lee Turnham	70 Prebendal Avenue, Aylesbury,Bucks. HP21 8LQ email:lee.turnham@talktalk.net
ARCHIVE/RE-REGISTRATION and REGISTRAR Dave Watson	c/o Ridgeway Furniture Ltd, Unit 21a Chartmoor Road, Leighton Buzzard, Bedfordshire. LU7 4WG email:d_watson@btinternet.com
WEBMASTER Ian Parris	1 Winston Close, Nether Heyford, Northampton. NN7 3JX email:isetta@ianparris.com

Website www.isetta.org.uk

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

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

United Kingdom (and members receiving an emailed gazette)	£18.00	Annual Subscription payments should be made by PayPal to isettasubs3@gmail.com alternatively via the Online Spares System by purchasing an Annual Membership Subscription (Renewal Only) item or by Cheque to the Membership Secretary Jeff Todd.
Europe	£21.00	
Rest Of World	£25.00	

For Standing Orders:- Sort Code 09-01-56 Account No. 00744809 to Isetta Owners Club of Great Britain Ltd. Ref. Your Name.

Editors Bit

I have included a copy of the original document declaring the birth of “Isetta of Great Britain Limited” released on 3rd April 1957 which makes interesting reading.

I am so disappointed that we the committee have attempted to put on a 40th anniversary bash for the members to celebrate this milestone but only 3 members other than the committee have bothered to respond out of approximately 300 members. It’s unbelievable that with such a flourishing sale of spares nobody seems to want to participate in anything. This also carries through to articles for the gazette, in consequence there are only 12 pages in this issue.

I understand this if an issue with many of the club magazines, they are also desperate for articles to print so no member input = no gazette output.

Anyway, things are looking up for my restoration, it’s only been with the bodywork guys for 10 months and they have already rubbed a bit of it down, at this rate it should be in paint in 2 or 3 years. I just hope I don’t have to restore the chassis again before I get the body back.

Ian Parris



Chairman's Chat

Don’t faint but I’ve actually ordered a brake master cylinder to commence repairs to my Isetta. As soon as I have a rolling chassis I will make a start on why the engine has no compression so watch this space for more earth shattering news.

But what has prompted this sudden surge of motivation, was it her indoors who suggested some movement or is it the proposed change in MOT legislation from May 20th when vehicles over 40 years old will no longer need one. Maybe a bit of both I think. Come on if I can do it so can you!

With my membership hat on, thanks to all members who have renewed so far this year and those who haven’t will soon receive a final reminder that this will be their last Gazette. You have been warned. It’s really easy and quite painless to either send me a cheque payable to IOCGB or use the club’s PayPal account isettasubs3@gmail.com (all in lower case).

Jeff Todd

NOT FOR PUBLICATION BEFORE
April 3, 1957.

April 2, 1957.

THE BRITISH MANUFACTURED B.M.W. ISETTA

In a blaze of light, one of the most revolutionary ventures in the history of British motoring was to-day officially inaugurated at the Dorchester Hotel, Park Lane, London, W.1.

Speaking to more than 200 dealers and motoring men gathered from all over Britain for luncheon, Mr. R. J. ("Ronnie") Ashley, ex-B.O.A.C. captain turned manufacturer, announced in detail his plans to produce forthwith in Britain six essentially British models of the B.M.W. Isetta now the rage both on the Continent and in the United States.

He already has an order from Canada for 1000 of them.

"The cheapest four-wheeled motor-car manufactured in the world to-day" he called it.

Though the Isetta has so far been made only in Germany to Italian design, Mr. Ashley's venture is to be an entirely British affair, providing employment for British firms and British labour, and boosting British exports.

From the moment production begins, 54 per cent of the components will be of British make. They will be 100 per cent British-made just as soon as British industry can provide them.

(more)

It was a blue and gold occasion at the Dorchester. Blue and gold Spring flowers, blue and gold on the menus. For "Ronnie" Ashley, a restless, pioneering, modern Elizabethan spirit, has the conviction that blue and gold are his lucky colours. He has used them in all his ventures.

And as proof of his confidence that the Isetta, a motoring David, can surely challenge any Goliath of the road, Mr. Ashley cited his Canadian order, which calls for delivery before June this year - in the next two months in short.

"From the considerable number of enquiries we have received," he added, "it will surely not be long before we receive orders from the remainder of the Commonwealth, for which we have an exclusive licence."

He continued:

"Manufacture in this country will commence on April 15 and will take place in a former locomotive erecting shop at Brighton Locomotive Works.

"The production line incorporates two moving tracks and is thought to be one of the world's most suitable plants for mass producing miniature cars.

(more)

"The models that are on view to-day are basically manufactured in Germany but we have incorporated all the British equipment which in any way differs from its German counterpart so that you can see exactly how the new motor-cars will look."

Six models were on show for inspection on an illuminated dais; all of them for the first time in Britain.

Biggest surprise was two commercial vehicles, one a pick-up truck with a fabric top, the other a small, all-metal, delivery lorry, each with a carrying capacity of 500 lbs including the driver. Their main specification is that of the standard motor-car except for the body. In addition to the van space there is additional load space alongside the driver in the separate compartment provided.

The truck in particular is highly popular on the Continent and will certainly prove a versatile light delivery van for home and overseas buyers, above all those in British Colonial territories, where roads are not up to European standards and at which Mr. Ashley is especially aiming.

Mr. Ashley also announced that his Company, of which he is Chairman and Managing Director, will be called "Isetta of Great Britain Limited". Hitherto it has been known as "Dunsfold Tools Limited".

Correct designation of the new cars will be "British-Manufactured B.M.W. Isetta". Deliveries to the home market are due to begin in May. Later a seventh model - an invalid carriage - will be produced.

E N D

If it does not feel right it probably isn't

My first ever drive of a secondhand Bubble in 1966 (priced £35) felt great and a deal was struck. No surprise looking back, it was only 6 years old. My interest was re-ignited in 1999 and I bought a red Isetta from Weston Super Mare. A vicar was in the process of burying it, when it was saved by the seller. It drove quite well but the engine compartment was forever covered in oil which seemed to get on the rear tyre - making it very slippery. The fault was a very loose valve guide. There was another irritation - the steering felt smooth for the first half turn of the wheel - then a bit stiff and not quite right. Investigation and much poking and thinking revealed that the cotter pin (which is meant to lock the kingpin) was not. A previous owner had drilled out the cotter pin badly. The hole left meant that although the cotter looked to be tight, it was not tight on the kingpin so allowing the kingpin to turn about one eighth of a revolution. Quite a tricky fix but a road test confirmed that all now felt well.

Never managing to have one of anything, I ended up on the edge of Bodmin Moor at a very damp garage where a builder had forced a door open to find a yellow Isetta inside. Despite apparent worldwide interest it was just me, a trailer, and cash - and another deal was struck. After years of standing in a very wet garage, a clean of the points and new fuel, it was into life straight away. After brake cylinder rebuilds it stopped, steered and moved but it never felt right. There was a drumming and vibration from the rear. Rubber drive couplings changed - no improvement. Slight oil leak from the hub so wheel off, hub off backplate off - all cleaned. New seals and gaskets and during re-assembly I noticed that the rear wheel was a front wheel. In my pile of Useful Junk, I found a rear rim. One tyre change later and a road test confirmed no vibration and the Yellow Peril too felt all right.

My Messerschmitt that did not 'feel right' is an article by itself but I learnt to look carefully for previous accident damage which on British cars is usually the nearside front.

So if you drive a Bubble, and it does not feel right - put on your old clothes and fix it. Share your odd and obscure faults (and their solutions) to help others.

Ian Jenkins.

The Club is pleased to welcome:-

Alan Spencer	West Kingsdown	Edwin Ewan	Stonehaven
Mark Yates	Tamworth	Lawrence Andrew	London
Nishimura Koshi	Japan	David Taylor	Essex
Paul Midgley	Leeds	Wesley Armstrong	Stockton onTees
Ronald Jordan	Tiptree	Ian Thomson	Hindhead
Keith Hallett	Cheshire	Paul Bussey	Bishop's Stortford
Brian Davies	Bishopston	Idris Lewis	Rhayader
Anders Andreasson	Sweden	James Hartnell	Northampton
Peter Wilson	Stowmarket	Michael Anderson	USA
Brian Matthews	Swinton	Constantinos Combos	Cyprus
Brian Mallyon	Canada	New Members since the last Gazette	

In memorium – David Jones

In February 2017, my father, David, passed away after a four-year battle with pancreatic cancer, a truly evil disease if ever there was one. He was 79.

I want to tell you all about Dave's long involvement with the Isetta.

In the 1950's and early '60's Dave's mode of transport, in common with most working men, was the motorbike (a BSA 250cc twin) and sidecar, in (or on) which he transported himself, mum, me in a carry cot, two Collie dogs, (Titch and Fly) shoved into the nose of the sidecar, and a week's holiday equipment. It was cheap, but it was beginning to be a struggle to fit everything in, so he went and bought himself a white, rhd, three-wheeler Isetta (496 EDV). Dad's plan was two pronged (and Dad invariably had a plan!), a bigger, more robust vehicle in which he could pack more into, but not get wet anymore; and to teach himself to drive as he only had a full motorbike licence. In the Isetta he could drive, become competent, and then take his test later.

One of my earliest memories is when Mum & Dad drove down from Devon to see their parents, who lived in Cornwall. I was about 9 months old as I was still in the carry cot, on the parcel shelf. They opened the door to set off back home, and my Grandfather's Samoyed dog, Sam, got in and plonked himself down on the parcel shelf (and me). I can remember Mum & Dad at the door, trying to encourage the dog to vacate the car, and the dog settled down and ready to go for a drive (and with no intention whatsoever of getting back out!)

Mum tells the story also of Dad being a bit nervous of the "Eeek, Eeek" Isetta horn, so he fitted a somewhat larger one. Driving down the narrow Devon lanes and coming to a bend, he pressed the horn button to warn others that he was approaching. "BAAAAWWWWW!" went the horn, and then, as they pattered around the corner, there was a group of walkers pressed tightly into the hedge. They must have thought some juggernaut or pantechnicon was hurtling down upon them, rather than a little Isetta.

Dad also told the story of driving from Devon to Essex to see his brother. The roads were clear, and he was following a large lorry. The car was purring, his foot was hardly on the accelerator, and yet he was doing nearly 50mph so he thought he'd pass the lorry. Watching his speed melt away, he realised the power of slip streaming, and try as he might, he couldn't catch that lorry again.

There used to be a quaint village petrol station in the VERY rural Devon village that we lived in, and Dad once called in to fill up with fuel. He came in to the forecourt at quite a lick. There, in front of him, with its bonnet up, was the "Major" in his Triumph spitfire. He was just topping his engine up with oil when Dad came barreling in, misjudged the braking distance, and bashed into the back of the Spitfire which moved forward several feet. Dad

said the stream of oil from the can went up the Triumph windscreen and across the roof whilst the Major was frozen with shock. Luckily no damage occurred to either vehicle.

Dad sold the Isetta to a garage in South Brent in 1964, and bought a "proper" car, an Austin A55. As I grew up, all that was left of those days was a copy of Cassells book of the Isetta on the book shelf, and some canned stories.



Leap forward to 1982. The family had moved to Yorkshire, and I was cycling to and from work. On a garage forecourt, for sale, an Isetta! The first I had seen in nearly 19 years. 129 CUU came into my life. Paid the money, took her home. It's only when you get these things that you realise what's wrong with them. The kingpins were very worn. Now Dad was an engineer of some note, and when he wanted to design something to do a job, well, he just went and did it. Homemade spring compressors took the suspension towers off, and then a hydraulic press, modified, pressed the kingpins out, although it was then and only then that we realised that the top bush was blind as it shot off and ricocheted around the garage for a bit, just missing Dad's nose as he was bent over it.

The VDO speedo head was seized and he fixed that too (in fact, the article he wrote on how to do it is on the IOCGB website.) Dad was also quite fed up of the leaky swing arms. He came up with "Dave's gunge" (also on the web site) to prevent the oily patches on his drive. In 1982 we drove down to Burford for the National. We were camped behind that pub in Nether Westcott(?) when the hurricane struck that night. My friends, Paul and Chris', tent collapsed under the wind. They lifted their Trojan and shoved their tent under it. Chris spent the night in the Trojan; Paul moved in with me and Dad. "If we're going in for tiered living, bags me on top." Was Dad's response to a rather tightly packed tent. I can remember someone's tent, only one guide rope still in, beating itself to death in the wind, and the next morning, someone's toilet tent in the top of a tree.

I passed my driving test, and used my Isetta to go to and from work. One day, driving home, it stopped. Not for any Isetta related illness, but because someone had poured sugar into my petrol tank. They must have had quite a laugh, but it was a full tank of fuel, I was a poor student, and I couldn't afford to lose it. Dad salvaged the fuel and fixed the car. First, he drained off the fuel, and then shoving the hosepipe into the fuel tank, rinsed it all out. Took the carburettor off and washed that too. Then reassembled it all. With the fuel that he had drained off, Dad reasoned that there is not much water in petrol, and so any sugar cannot dissolve properly, but forms a sugary syrup, which clogs the jets up, so he third filled a demijohn with water, and then put a third of petrol in. Agitating it vigorously, the sugar dissolved in the water, and the cleaned petrol floated on top. Siphoned off almost all but the last ¼ inch of petrol, and then tipped the rest in the demijohn away. And repeat. I think we lost a pint of fuel in total.

Dad moved to South Wales in 2000, and became keenly involved with the church bell ringers in the church opposite his house. The bell ringers complained that their bells were always stiff to ring. Dad, engineer head on again, researched some bizarre grease that sailors put on the anchor chains on the front of ships, reasoned that if it could still do its job with the sea washing all over it, he'd bet it would do its job in a church tower, obtained some, slapped it around the ropes and pulleys, and it's still doing the job, years later.

In 2012 Dad had the symptoms of jaundice. Yellow skin, and lethargic. The pancreatic cancer was diagnosed. He had a major operation where it proved impossible to remove all of the tumour, but radiotherapy and chemotherapy followed and all looked like it was going great. Then the cancer returned with a vengeance. Dad set me three tasks. He wanted his grandfather clock fixing; he wanted to hear his church bells ring one more time (the bell ringers had folded due to lack of numbers); and he wanted them to laugh at his funeral. I was able to get the bell ringers from a neighbouring church to ring the church bells on the very day Dad died. Even though he was well out of it on morphine, the smile on his face when they began to ring the quarter peel made it all worthwhile. He died just 6 hours later. Paul, my friend, fixed his grandfather clock, and, on the day of his funeral, I told the gathering my father's favourite story, The Bricklayer by Gerard Hoffnung. It only got a muted titter, but, given the circumstances, Dad wouldn't have complained.

Richard Jones

BUY AND SELL & WANTED

Isetta 300 LHD NFX 578

I would dearly love to renovate this bubble but just do not have the space and time. I would want it to go to an enthusiast who will do it justice and have the time needed to bring it back to life. It's a three-wheeler LHD, 300cc.

I am happy to consider offers around £3,000, all parts are there and I will include the repair manuals and Isetta books I have if offer is near that.

It is stripped and the chassis has been shot blasted and powder coated but has a kink in the front right, this has been repaired but I have purchased a front half chassis, which can be used to repair properly. It has new master cylinder and flexible brake pipes. New brake shoes are also with it. The Kingpins will need replacement (new set included).

The Body requires new floor, cills and front wheel arches. Rear of body is rusty but strong. There is a lot of filler which will need investigating! It should be sound enough to renovate.

Front door good, as is engine cover. All glass is there but rubber has deteriorated.

Engine ran 10 years ago but will need checking as stood since then. Gearbox and rear drive the same. New doughnuts bought.

It is obviously better to see it first hand to appreciate the condition and the hard work needed.

I am in Cornwall and pictures are available on request. Any questions by email

Barry Lawrence

barry.r.lawrence@btinternet.com Home: 01209 861115

Mobile: 07484 821184



"Wanted help with re-building a 250cc engine. Ideally someone within a reasonably driving distance of Surrey. Please call Richard on 0781 853 0789."

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

PRINTED BY THISTLE PRINT LTD TEL: 0113 2040600 EMAIL: sales@thistleprint.co.uk

A little ditty from one of our members.

Oh our little bubble car, your so very small and neat,
after much loving restoration work, you'll surely look quite a treat.

Your body work was battered worn out & very bent
but it was way back in '78 out on the road you last went.

So on the internet we went
replacing all that is bust and bent
those years of dirt & grease & grime
that's been slowly added over time.

Replacing pistons, valves & springs
And endless other engine things
like engine mounts and rubber seals,
ensuring it rolls along on all three wheels

So fixing this and mending that
replacing all that's old & tat.
Body parts that need re- welding
ensuring old and new are neatly melding.

With sliding windows, sunroof slides,
carburettor, clutch cable glides.
Seats now beige look very neat
their restoration quite a treat.

When all of this is done and dusted with monies all well spent
You will surely do us oh so proud & look just heaven sent.

Fittings now are all restored and right
making sure everything is watertight.
With body work of a lovely Turkish blue,
it really is quite the stylish hue.

We'll take you on a journey as along the roads we will roll and run
you will give us loads of pleasure & years of tremendous fun.

Your sure to be head turning
even though your quite the age
but as they say in all the books
don't judge us just upon our looks.

So as we drive about the place & journey here and there
your sure to be head turning as people stop & stare.

By Margaret Leach 2017

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.

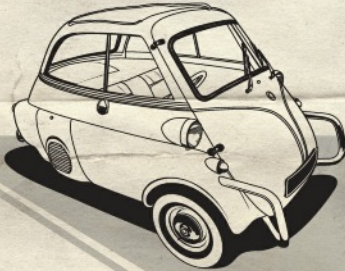
- The Agreed Value certification finally arrives. You begin looking forward to repeating the entire tedious, maddening process, fee included, if you want to increase your value again.



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 CCIOC members will receive a 15% discount on their premium. Don't forget, laid up cars can also be insured.

Telephone 0333 323 0989 email: www.hagertyinsurance.co.uk