

ISETTA **GAZETTE**



SPRING EDITION 2021



BMW 600



The Isetta Owners Club of Great Britain Ltd.

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Editors Bit

It has been a long time since I have had too many articles to go into a sixteen page gazette but this time, perhaps because of lockdown, I have plenty. I have increased the gazette to 24 pages and still have articles to put in the Summer Edition.

I hope the authors of those articles are not too disappointed that I am saving those for the next edition, it's quite a juggling act to make sure I have enough to fill a gazette. Don't think I don't need any more articles because I really do, so keep them coming.

My '600' restoration is keeping me busy, however many jobs I complete the list of things to do doesn't seem to get any shorter. I will have five whitewall crossply tyres for sale soon, 4 4.80 x 10 and 1 5.20 x 10 as I will be going for radial tyres. They are obviously quite old and possibly not suitable for road use but good enough for display vehicles. If anyone is interested please get in touch.

Some things are not available for the '600' so I have to adopt and adapt. The air cleaner cover is not available but I found a small milk saucepan that is just the right size, all I have to do is remove the handle and drill one hole in the base and I am sorted. It's things like this that I enjoy.



Ian Parris

Chairman's Chat

Well, here we are a year in to Covid restrictions but that hasn't stopped many of you working hard on those restorations which has kept Lee and Mike busy with spares supply and advice. Many thanks to both on behalf of myself and members. Many thanks also to Ian for his work with new members registrations and the Gazette which has been packed with articles which you have been sending in during the lockdown here which I hope filled some of your lockdown time with good memories of your Isetta experiences over the past years... keep them coming.

Not to forget other Committee members, Bob keeping the Club accounts and finances in good order and Dave planning and then unplanning shows at the NEC but still finding time to exhibit his Messerschmitt at the RAC, gaining a top award at the same time.

Chris Skepper

Peaches and Cream by Ray Glendinning

Possibly the latest Isetta to be put back on the road in the UK, why Peaches and Cream? Well the car is nicknamed after the colours that Keith Porter, the owner had chosen to have the car sprayed, in an off white over a peach colour to the lower half.

2012 saw the arrival of the German built four wheel left hand drive sliding window Isetta to the creative clutches of Keith. The car had had a new floor and inner wings plus various other bodywork repairs carried out in Germany by someone who unfortunately did not do a good job of it, in fact it was a bit of a mess, so Keith had to have most of the repairs undone and re welded to get the correct layout and measurements.

While the car was being repaired and painted and for some time after, Keith kept himself busy dismantling, replacing and repairing each and every component that an Isetta needs. This for most renovators would be expected and normal but during this period Keith moved house which required a great deal of alteration and rebuilding. Again, Keith does not do things by half hence taking three plus years to complete, so Peaches and Cream had to be rested up in storage. During this period though a poorly looking Messerschmitt also seemed to have found its way into the large brand new garage but that's another story.

After a further couple of years due to work and other commitments Peaches and Cream came to me to fit out and finish, in effect I had the easy part. The best solution was to take my car to his garage and bring his to mine, saving me a- round 10 miles each time. This meant that I could just pop out to do some works as and when.

The engine fitted was about seven years ago tested on my test bed frame along with the rebuilt Dynastart so after some fettling it fired up, a big help and relief.

The German wiring loom had to be altered to accommodate two rear brake and side lights preferred in the UK as opposed to the single centre and brake light. One thing I would say is that I prefer the UK spec looms as I am not a fan of the terminal blocks and connections required to install the German spec. Here are just a few of the many dozens of rebuild photos.

So keep an eye out in 2021 as it will be out and about at rallies and shows.



BMW ISETTA BUBBLE CAR for sale.

LHD but Brighton built.

Dismantled and in need of major restoration but mostly complete.

The chassis has been blasted to remove all surface rust and then powder coated in black. It's in great condition and ready to be built up. Some items duplicate such as doors, cylinder heads, gearboxes and rear swinging arms. Some items will need to be sourced. The second last photo shows all the glass safely bubble wrapped. Unfortunately no paperwork. I contacted the club about this and they said that it would not present a problem when the time came to register the car. Considering the price of restored cars this is a very worthwhile project which I am only selling because it is becoming increasingly obvious that I'm never going to get around to doing it.

For transportation this will easily fit into a large van.

Viewing welcome whilst maintaining social distancing.£1850 or best offer. David Longmoor, Woonona, fillpoke Lane, blackhall, Hartlepool TS27 4BS. Tel 07436277000.

MEMBERS LETTERS

I would like to thank everyone that has helped me in my rebuild of my Isetta 300 first I would like to thank Lee Turnham, Ian Parris, and above all Ken Bell from Essex who worked untold hours helping me.

I now have the vehicle on the road, thank you all for your help.

RON JORDAN

The Club is pleased to welcome:-

Ian Morrell	Taunton	Andrew Biggs	Essex
Gabriel Bobocea	USA	James Little	USA
Nick Gould	Edinburgh	Steve Moyle	Oxford
Kate Higgs	Croxley Green	Jørgen Madsen	Denmark
Steve Edwards	Wrexham	Graham Coutts	Canada
Andrew Chandler	Southport	Steven Watts	Bristol
David Sloan	Dumfries	Andrew Weightman	Nuneaton
Annie Leftly	Hitchin		

New Members since the last Gazette

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

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Klunk click every trip

Well it's too cold to work in the garage so I thought I would put pen to paper and tell of my annoying klunk.

Having just finished a rebuild on my green and cream Isetta whilst out in the last rallying season which seems a very long way away now I developed a klunk well not me but my car. It was coming from the left front side, just to say the car is a right hander. Not all the time but when on a bumpy road or rally field and was quite a pesky noise to find.

I checked the wheel nuts first, all tight, then took off the drum and inspected the bearings and checked the seating of the brake shoes all fine. Another road run and it's still there although it was less noticeable when I had a passenger in. Next I tried standing in the doorway and bounced up and down but that did not activate the klunk. So drastic measures I strip down the suspension that's got to be the problem. Not the easiest thing to do but with a spring clamp over the turret a few cuts to the knuckles it's off, spring intact, shock absorber is all in order, put it back together Bri and let's see if that fixes it. No such luck. The season seems to have flown by I'm off to the Bath rally along with my klunk.

The rally field had a very bumpy entry / exit road and old Nelly gave out some real loud klunks and left a couple of other guys scratching their heads along with me. We had a great run out to a café with a museum attached to it, it was a hot day and having done the museum we were all seated outside eating fantastic ice creams. Now I know for certain people were talking to me but that klunk was on my mind when I suddenly jumped up and said to the wife I won't be a minute and started to make my way over to Nelly. As usual all the cars were commanding attention but while it's on my mind I don't want to get into conversation with anyone so I just float around waiting for them to move on. It seemed an age but was only probably only a few seconds before I could get to her. Now fingers crossed I lifted up the matting and there it was in the left hand corner the 13mm bolt which holds the body to the chassis, was loose and sticking up about ½" Out with a spanner job done in 30 seconds I was like a school boy running back to the misses telling her we are going now. Leaving the car park NO KLUNK job done. Simple

Brian Chadwick

Isetta World

The IOC's Forum on Facebook
[Facebook.com/groups/267159327250111](https://www.facebook.com/groups/267159327250111)

Isetta Tyre Types, Sizes
- and ** Pressures **.



There have been some questions recently on Isetta World's Facebook page concerning tyre types and sizes suitable for Isettas, so I put on my boffins hat and spent some time examining the topic in detail in the hope that 2021 might see Microcar Rallies back on the agenda.

Firstly, we can say with certainty that all UK Isettas were originally fitted with crossply (aka bias-ply) tyres. What we can't say with certainty concerns tyre sizes and recommended pressures because the contemporary official BMW publications contained variations as follows ...

The Isetta Maintenance Manual issued to their Dealers by BMW contains the table ...

4-wheel – tyre size 4.80 x 10 Front and Rear; pressures 15psi Front + 14psi Rear.

3-Wheel - tyre size Front 4.80 x 10; Rear 5.20 x 10 ; pressures 16psi Front + 24psi Rear.

An Undated addendum shows RHD 3-Wheeler with 4.80 Front and rear, and rear tyre pressure as 28 psi.

The British Isetta Owners Handbook shows 4-wheeler 16psi all-round and 3-wheeler front 16 psi and rear 28 psi.

Another Drivers Instruction Manual, official BMW ref 112/2.59 shows only the 4-wheeler, with 17psi front and 14 psi rear.

So even the BMW Factory themselves seemed to be unsure of what to recommend. Strange – as they are usually so precise. However, all that is fairly academic, because there are very few suitable 10 inch crossply tyres available currently in UK . But for those who insist on authenticity, Heidenau manufacture 4.80 x 10 and these are available at around £90 each from specialist sources, including The Vintage Tyre Company, who were very prompt and helpful with my enquiries.

<https://www.vintagetyres.com/shop/tyres/heidenau-p30-480-10-57j>.

With the popularity of Japanese Kei cars some countries are also able to supply Coker tyres in 4.50 x 10 size. www.cokertire.com

Note - (Note – those 5.20 x 10 crossply tyres which are produced by **Camac** and are widely available are for **trailer use only** (confirmed by Vintage Tyre Co), and have construction and compounds unsuitable for

Isettas. Personal experience has confirmed that they are not suitable (in my opinion not safe) for Isettas. I once tried a set on my Isetta and they understeered badly on dry roads, and had negligible grip on wet surfaces.)

So we are almost compelled to use radial tyres, with their advantages of better grip and longer life but be aware - some cars may need thin spacers (available from Isetta Spares) to prevent these tyres rubbing on the Isetta's front suspension towers (but mine don't– and as far as I know no-one has yet discovered why some do and some don't !).

So, looking at Radial tyres, 145 R 10 Dunlop SP44 Weathermaster and 145 SR 10 Dunlop SP Sport Aquajet are currently available by mail order from suppliers such as Longstone Tyres at approx £160 and £130 each respectively – (The Dunlop SP Sport Aquajet is also available in 165 x 10 which might suit the rear of 3-wheeler Isettas if you like the “wide” look.)
<https://www.longstonetyres.co.uk/classic-car-tyres/bmw/issetta.html>

More widely available via your local Tyre Dealers are Falken Sincera 145R10 at about £30-40 each. I have used the Falkens on my own car for many years and have found that they last well and give excellent grip in wet and dry conditions (and up and down various Alps). I have recommended them to many other Isetta owners and all have been pleased with them.



You pay your money and you take your choice – but I'd say that the SP44 would probably not look right on the front wheels of an Isetta, although it might have been useful on the rear at the Coniston NMCR.

Camac also produce 145R10 radial tyres, but I have no experience of these so cannot comment or give guidance

Recently, there have also been other 145R10 tyres appearing on the market from brands such as Nankang, Milestone and King, but not much is known about them, apart from glowing reports from their Suppliers, whose sole purpose is of course to persuade you to buy them. So Caveat Emptor and make sure they are not trailer tyres before parting with your cash.

The next issue is what tyre **pressures** to use to accommodate the apparent difference in volume and size between 5.20 crossplies and 145 radials. There is a formula, sourced from a former employee of Avon tyres, with steps as follows ...

1. Calculate rim diameter in mm (10inch = 254mm)
2. Calculate/measure overall diameter of tyre (in mm). Do this for original size AND the proposed replacement size.
3. Calculate the internal volume of each tyre -- NB take tyre aspect ratio into account – expressed as a percentage of tyre width.
4. Calculate the percentage difference between the two volumes and apply it to the original pressure to give the new required pressure.

Don't panic - I've been kind and saved you the trouble – I have done the appropriate calculations and have discovered that there is no significant difference in volume between the original 4.80 crossplies (typically 100% aspect ratio) and the 145 radials (nominal 80% aspect ratio) so the calculated increase required in pressure would only be a nominal 1 - 2psi, and even the various Isetta manuals disagree by a similar amount.

BUT... (#1) the radial is not only a different nominal size, BUT(#2) it is also a completely different construction and... BUT(#3) because of variations in radial materials and ply orientation there is no hard and fast rule or formula or industry standard which can be used to calculate the pressure increment required when changing from Cross-ply to Radial. Bugger !

I found only two tyre specialist dealers who were prepared to venture a guess at the pressure increase needed when changing from Crossply to Radial; one said increase by 0.3 to 0.6 bar ; the other said 2 – 4 psi, which amounts to guesses which don't even overlap. (4psi = 0.28 bar).

So, to be precise, the bottom line is – a Squidgeon more pressure than the BMW factory manuals say.

For what it is worth, on my LHD 3-w Export with Falken 145R10, I use 18 psi front and 28psi rear. It's only a best guesstimate – but it works just fine for me. A friend with a RHD 4-wheeler uses 20 psi all-round in his 145R10 radials and has had no tyre problems in 20 years.

I wonder what pressures this HighZetta uses ?



Terry Parkin , Isetta World www.facebook.com/groups/267159327250111/



Isetta World - Tourist transport in Cordoba, Argentina

FOR SALE ISETTA 300

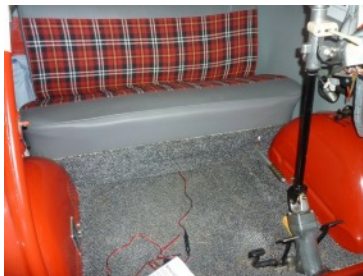
Stripped and rebuilt by me
chassis powder coated
Gear change bushes replaced
Parts and cables replaced as required
Offside windows are plastic
Luggage rack is stainless steel
Extra shock absorber on rear suspension
New petrol tank fitted
Mud guard added over rear wheel
Scissor jack and wheel brace



Spares: 4 old rear springs

Contact

**Derek Cole
5 Priory Close,
Nounsley, Hatfield
Peverel, Essex,
CM3 2NN
01245 381152
£14000 ono**



Tony Marshall **1946 - 2020**

In December 2020 the Isetta Club lost one of its founding members who, along with several other like-minded people had the foresight, in 1978, to create the Isetta Club here in the UK.

You may not have heard of Tony Marshall but we are all benefiting from his work and determination to help preserve the funny little cars we love so much.

Tony was our first Editor from 1978 to 1982, producing some 50 newsletters, and in those days it was an onerous task typing on a wax sheet, beforehand, cranking the Roneo machine to print each Gazette, inserting into envelopes before filling up the local post box with a couple of hundred copies of these printed sheets.

Retiring from Editor in 1982 didn't stop his input into the Club as Tony then took over as Spares Manager and I can say, from personal experience, he saved my first trip to the German Story Rally, in 1983, by driving some 40 miles, to meet me, with the essential spares I needed for my very noisy engine, accepting only a cup of coffee, as a thank you, for his drive across London.

Whilst all this Isetta work was going on Tony instigated the first National Micro Car Rally in 1975 (formally known as The Burford Rally) which of course is still held every year somewhere in the UK. The legacy of this Rally allowed Bubble Car owners to "Network" and form friendships throughout the world long before the internet allowed instant information.



With the help of his wife

Lynne, who was also editor of the Isetta Gazette for some years, he wrote and published two Microcar books simply named Microcars and More Microcars, containing pictures and information on cars, some I have never even seen in real life, such was his passion and knowledge he shared with others.

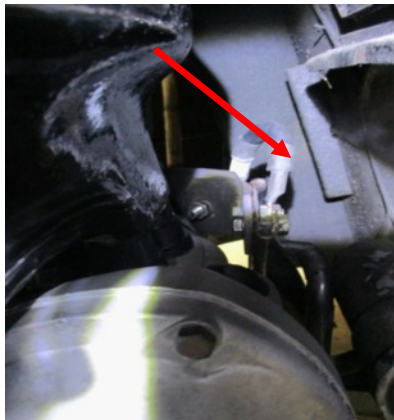
I think we all, at some point, were all touched by the small Bubble Cars, dashing about the streets in our towns and cities and, I know for me, it was the Messerschmitt KR 200 that started my journey into these unusual machines and so it was for Tony with his mother and brother owning one but, in this photograph, we see Tony sitting next to an Allard Clipper. We know Tony has left us but his legacy will remain with us forever.

Mike Ayriss
Feb 21

Major Maintenance September 2020 by David Marsh (Cont.)

20. Remove any 2nd earth strap (car body to chassis) next to chassis to engine mount earth point.

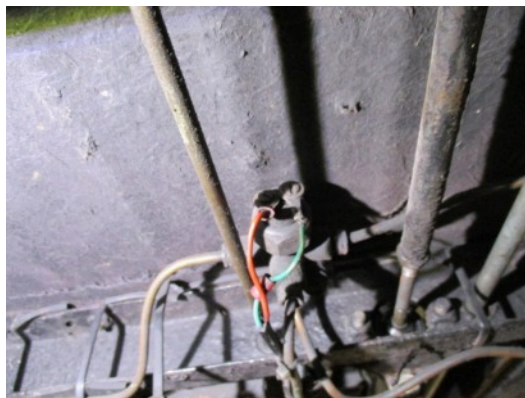
21. Remove body to chassis bracket in engine bay opening (it holds the "bonnet" in place).



22. Disconnect the brake light switch wires (from underneath car from front) Green to Right and Red to Left side of switch.

23. Pull brake light switch cables back into car through hole in floor.

24. Remove the rubber matting around the Master



25. Remove the horn – note position of wires from the front as grey LHS yellow green RHS.

26. Remove the 4 machine screws holding the steering column to the pedal unit.

27. Place a cardboard tube or masking tape around the shroud to the door closer – if you don't you will scratch the paint as once the steering wheel is removed the dashboard will drop onto the shroud and if you open the door it will remove the paint.

28. Remove the bolt holding the steering wheel to the Dashboard.

29. With wheels straight ahead. Remove steering wheel by unscrewing this from the Pedal assembly.



30. Disconnect horn wire from steering column.

31. Underneath front of the car disconnect pedal linkages to pedal unit disconnect at closest link to the pedal by removing split pins – Throttle, Brake and Clutch

32. Remove the pedal cluster 4 bolts



33. Remove the 4 bolts holding the towing eyes and Cow Catcher bars to front of vehicle at the floor.



33. Remove from inside Both Front wheel arch's the brake line securing brackets.

34. Disconnect Gear Change rods – remove split pins.



33. Disconnect Fuel control rod at Tap (remove split pin) and remove rod to safe place



So now you are ready for the big lift. Before you do that it's well worth making sure you have thought about where you are going to put the body and also on what. Some 4x2 sleepers are useful as it keeps the body off the floor and also makes it easy to pick up again.

Also ensure you have some hand tools close as you may well find that you have forgotten something as you try to lift it – I did - I didn't remove the earth bolt at the battery totally.

Your lifting team should be at least three – one at the back and two at the front and a spare body ready with the tools Just In case. The time taken to do the prep for the lift was about 5 hours* – Some folk would think this a lot of effort to just get started – Believe me it's not. The rest of the task as you will see in Phase

two was so much easier and also enabled a better quality of workmanship. * I suspect that you could easily beat this time if you tried hard!!



For Sale Isetta 300 (Reg 1957) restoration project.

Selling my Isetta restoration due to work commitments. I have been restoring for the last 10 years. Chassis powder coated and rebuilt with new king pins , bushes, shockers etc, engine rebuilt and running (well was 7 years ago). Lots of new parts fitted. Body was repaired last year costing £2k. Body now ready to be fitted to chassis, all parts trial fitted and then stripped again to get painted. All original parts are here. Spares included are 3 new tyres, new wiring loom, spare gear box (that i have stripped and rebuilt) and engine from a donor car not touched. More photos if required. Open to reasonable offers as not sure of value in this condition.

Contact Marshall Lawrence Mglawrence@outlook.com



Part two of My Search for a BMW 600 by Alastair Lauchland

A lack of any other likely cars advertised anywhere in Europe prompted me to look in the opposite direction. The survival rate of BMW 600's seems to be higher in the States than it does in Europe and the condition of survivors tends to be better so I made some enquiries with reputable shipping companies and found that they could collect a car from a seller, transport it to a port and handle the export process. Prices would obviously vary depending on where any car was located in the States, but the shipping part from the east coast of America to the UK (7 different ports) was going to cost around \$1000, which was significantly cheaper than the cost of road transport across Europe even allowing for the import duty to be paid when the car arrived in the UK.

With costs established, I started looking in the States, but again ran into the same issue that I'd encountered before, where many of the cars that "seemed" to be for sale had in fact been sold months or even years ago but the online adverts had never been taken down. I did however find what appeared to be the Holy Grail to someone wanting to restore a car, a totally original 1958 car with 24,000 miles recorded, and still bearing a Pennsylvania State registration plate dated 1964, suggesting that the mileage might well be original. The body appeared to be sound and there didn't seem to be any alterations to the car. It looked 100% original. The only fly in the ointment was the fact that the listing stated that the car was sold on "Bill of Sale" only – no Title (the equivalent of our log book). The price of this car was higher than the Greek skip that I had enquired about but as the price of the Greek car had been constantly rising and the cost of transportation from Greece was considerable, overall, it was a much more original and desirable car that in the long run would probably cost a lot less to buy and restore.

I made enquiry with my shipping agency contact and was told that they could apply for Title on my behalf if the dealer wouldn't do it. She however stressed that sometimes dealers simply didn't want to do the work because they'd have to pay the State fees for the production of a new Title so I should push them to apply.

The dealer's address was an "Auto Mall" in Pennsylvania and from the photographs on the website, it looked enormous. It wasn't some corner lot car dealer and that gave me a bit of confidence. I'd decided by this stage that after my Greek odyssey that perhaps while working out as more expensive, buying from a dealer may well offer more financial protection, so I'd decided to limit my searches to dealers....unless....

I did some research and found that the Mall, was what it says on the tin. The car dealership had bought over an entire empty shopping mall and it displayed cars in street settings inside and within the various shop windows – novel.

I sent an email enquiring about the 600 listed but my enquiry went unanswered. I repeated the exercise on three further occasions that week and each time received no response. I decided to give it one final try at the beginning of the following week and finally received a reply from the "President" of the company, no, not the orange one, but on reflection probably not a million miles away.

I replied, asking several questions about the car. My paragraph of questions was met with a one line answer. I asked some more questions and received the same again,

all at the rate of one email reply per day – really frustrating, especially with the time difference involved.

I had assumed that someone rejoicing in the title of President would be too busy to deal with customers and that he'd simply have batted my enquiry down the chain of command to some keen young salesman who'd have both my email address and telephone number that he'd use to pester me. The President however didn't do that, unfortunately neither did he take much interest in making a sale. My shipping agent had told me, if there was no Title, then I should ask for a Notarised Bill of Sale (signed by a lawyer) and a letter stating the vehicle had been abandoned in the State of Pennsylvania and that the company had a right to sell it. With this and the last State-issued registration plate she thought there was a good chance of gaining Title for the car from the licensing authorities. I relayed this request to the President and got quite nippy reply saying that the car hadn't been abandoned but offering no explanation as to why the car had no Title.

My shipping agent then told me, that if that was the case, he must have a Bill of Sale from the person he bought the car from and that I should ask for a copy of that.

I'll insert here, that by this time, I'd enlisted the help of a BMW 700 owning friend in the States and had asked him to phone the dealership on my behalf and ask a few questions that I wasn't getting answered by the President. He spoke several times to a salesman and got the story that the car was part of a collection of 500 cars that had been bought, some with and some without Title. Between us we started to build a picture – but it was no thanks to any of the one-liners from the President.

While asking for a copy of the previous Bill of Sale, I asked for the chassis number on the car (I could see in the photos that the chassis plate was missing from the engine bay). I even provided him with the location of the chassis number on the front frame tube.

In his reply the President provided a weird and wonderful combination of letters and numbers, more in keeping with a modern car chassis number. It certainly bore no relationship to a BMW 600 chassis number – and once again there was no mention of the previous Bill of Sale.

I tried again and this time he gave me a BMW 600 number but again no mention of Bill of Sale.

I asked if the number he'd given me was the engine number or the chassis number or both. He couldn't tell me. I asked for a photograph of the number so that I could see where it had come from. Then the number changed to a four-digit number that bore no relationship to any chassis number that BMW produced. THIS time, he told me that his partner had bought the car "several years ago" (really????) and they had lost the Bill of Sale.

It was time to walk away. So much for buying from a dealer with large premises!

I did subsequently email the President again commenting on his apparent lack of interest in making a sale and commenting on the level of cooperation shown to me and telling him that I'd expected better. He replied telling me that "he had bent over backwards to help"!!! The difficulty experienced in getting information out of him made me ponder the question - Do American chlorinated chickens have teeth?

Although by this time, I was beginning to feel rather worn down by the sellers that I'd encountered, I had no intention of allowing my enthusiasm to be snuffed out by the

displays of scheming and apathy that I'd so far experienced and I decided to back-track to a car that I'd first seen a few weeks previously but dismissed because some restoration work had already been carried out to it. Buying someone else's stalled restoration isn't in some cases ideal because it can mean a lot of time being spent checking over the quality of the work done to simply give you peace of mind that nothing has been bodged!

This car was being sold by an Italian dealer. I sent an email enquiring about the car while at the same time doing some research into the company selling it. My researches came up with the fact that it was a long established company and I found many glowing reviews from buyers. The reply I received from the company owner also seemed promising. First of all, he communicated in perfect English which was a great relief as my knowledge of Italian doesn't extend much beyond the word Pizza!

Without prompting, he provided me with dozens of photos of the car and went on to volunteer the story of how he had come by the car. The car had been bought a few years earlier by an Italian working in Texas at the time and he arranged for it to be professionally restored unfortunately his work brought him back to Italy before the restoration had been completed and he shipped the car and the unfitted parts back with him. On his return to Italy, the restoration stalled because he couldn't do the work himself and couldn't find a restorer that would accept liability for work previously carried out. He subsequently bought another classic car from the Italian dealer in question and the BMW 600 and parts were taken in part exchange.

The dealer provided me with photos taken during a bare metal restoration in a professional coachwork along with receipts for all the work that had been carried out and for the parts bought for it. The previous owner had also supplied an Excel spreadsheet listing all of the parts that still needed to be bought for the car, along with their prices. The only comment I'd make concerning the latter was that with a bit of research I quickly established that prices had increased somewhat since the list had been compiled.

So far, each car that I'd considered had been more expensive than the one before and once again this has the case with this car however, all of them had to be put into some sort of context. The Greek "shed" was the cheapest on the face of it, but when a list of parts required was made and the time it would take to find them was considered, it was quite obvious that it would be a long term project, that once started would commit me to quite frankly unknown expenditure. The American car required far less expenditure as I was sure that practically everything on it could have been restored but nevertheless it still needed a body off, bare metal restoration and experience has taught me that in all probability issues would have surfaced somewhere along the line. The Italian car (says he neatly sidestepping the Spanish scammer) had, as I've said, the highest asking price of all three the cars that I'd considered BUT the quality of the professional restoration was high and most of the parts that were deemed in need of replacement, had already been bought, so it was a case of working out the likely cost of getting the other two cars to the stage this one was at, to see how this one fitted financially, making allowance for the fact that I'd have done all the work on the other two myself rather than paying a professional to do the work.

Unusually however there was one additional consideration I had to take into account and that was that I was still recovering from Covid-19. It had left me very tired and run down, to the point that a couple of hours of light work was leaving me exhausted for

the rest of the day- what is now being termed “long Covid”. Hopefully things will improve but how long will it take me to recover enough to get involved with serious full-on bodywork and mechanical restoration work? That’s anyone’s guess at this stage because doctors won’t even offer an opinion. A large project might remain just that, for some time to come. On the other hand, once all the remaining necessary parts are found, this car offers what could be, more or less an assembly job and if I’m being honest with myself, that might just be what I need right now, allowing me to spend a couple of hours tinkering in the workshop whenever I feel like it over the winter and still perhaps have a completed car ready for the road next Spring. Being brutally honest with myself (unusual) starting with something like the “skip” would probably be over-facing myself the way I feel at the moment – a case of aspiration over physical ability. Will I get the same level of satisfaction out of the restoration? Long term, probably not but that’s got to be balanced against the fact that I’ll get to drive it sooner and the psychological boost that that it’ll provide, after a pretty awful 2020.

Anyway, getting back to the search, the only slightly adverse comment I could make about the dealer selling the car was that his email replies to my questions also came at the rate of one per day, the same as the American, which was at times frustrating. This could be excused however because his replies were comprehensive and he offered information freely. I suppose when you’re running a business you have to set aside some time each day to deal with emails and then move on to other work that needs done rather than sitting at a desk all day battling emails back and forward.

I asked the dealer to supply me with a quote for transporting the car to Scotland and he said he would guess at a figure of somewhere about 1000 euro. I rather doubted this because once the lorry delivering the car reaches the UK, there’s still an additional 500 miles each way for the lorry to reach where I live in Scotland compared to a car being delivered to someone living in Kent. I wonder perhaps if Greeks and Italians don’t realise the length of the UK? Again I sought some Shiplly quotes. This time, the shorter distance by road from Italy was reflected in the prices quoted, but they still ranged from £2138 and £2700.

I’ve never had reason to use Shiplly for car transport before and somehow the idea of doing so now rather worried me. Shiplly are really only a portal to allow you to get quotes from transport companies based all over Europe. The car I was thinking of buying wasn’t exactly cheap and how do you know if the company quoting is reputable and their vehicles and equipment is up to the job? I decided that my preference would be for the dealer to organise transport, reasoning that they probably used car transporting companies regularly and if they were the client, they would have a vested interest in checking basics such as insurance etc.

I put this to the dealer and ask how negotiable his price was. He replied the following day telling me that the business was closing for their summer break in two days time, so he wouldn’t be able to get me a transport cost until he re-opened. I decided to chance my arm and I made him an offer with the cost of transport to my address to be included in the price. Rather surprisingly, he agreed, provided I could pay a 20% deposit within in the next two days. It was done the same day – before he had the chance to seek quotes and before he found out that Scotland was further away than he’d imagined! I think perhaps the attraction of a final quick sale before the holiday shut-down was too strong for him.

The one downside to this however, was that a fortnight was a hell of a long time when you're not the one on holiday. All sorts of things started going through my mind. He had sent me a contract and had acknowledged receipt of the deposit but would he refuse to honour it when he received his transport quotes? I was also to pay the balance around the date the company re-opened after the holiday but I noticed the Pound was falling against the Euro and I started to worry about the cost (to me) of the car rising. I paid the balance a few days before he re-opened and as luck would have it, the Pound had re-bounced and I ended up actually saving £100 on the expected price – “every little helps” as the supermarket advert says.

On the day that the business re-opened, the owner sent me an email acknowledging receipt of the balance of the purchase price and told me that his staff had boxed up all the parts for the car and he sent me several photos showing them packed securely inside the car. Within a couple of days, he got back to me telling me that the car would be transported in a closed transporter, which had been a concern for me as the car had no glass fitted because it still needed a headlining and it has to be fitted first. The transport company being used was one of the biggest in Italy and specialises in transporting top end sports and executive cars. I was glad mine wouldn't be mixing with any of the lower classes on its way here!

My car was safely delivered a couple of weeks later in the company of 3 Lamborghinis and a Ferrari!

I could continue and bore you all to tears with tales about my search for parts for the 600 but after taking up a large chunk of two issues of the Gazette, I'll refrain. However, as the Club spares scheme really no longer caters for 600s or 700s (dig, dig) and the Gazette no longer has a “for sale/wanted” page, can I end with a request for anyone reading this that may have any BMW 600 (or 700) parts for sale, to get in touch.

If there's a moral to my tale it must be:

1. Don't catch Covid-19.
2. Try not to get bored if you're confined to home because boredom costs money.
3. If you're looking for a car from outside of the UK and can't view it, be suspicious of everyone and don't feel apologetic about doing so.
4. Trust your instincts and do your homework.
5. Don't give up!

Keep well and stay safe

Alastair Lauchland

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As a postscript, the “Greek Shed” is still being advertised on German eBay – 5 months after my interest died and the Pennsylvanian car has been sold to an American buyer, who no doubt could work round the “no title” issue and probably checked the engine and chassis numbers for himself.

The Trailer

I had been considering, for a number of years, a new trailer, with facilities to sleep inside on arrival, at our destination, but I always put it to the back of my mind, after all, I do like driving the Isetta and have done so in the UK and Europe, on many occasions, so what changed you may ask? The National Micro Car Rally Grasmere September 2017!

We have been to some wet Rallies over the years, 2011 was a particularly wet weekend, causing all sorts of problems getting in and out of the Rally Site and one of our first rallies at Burford in the 1970s was rain showers all day but, overall, nothing like Grasmere, so did something have to change?

I had a criteria, in my mind, of a small unit with a pop-up roof that would fit inside my lockup garage, with the car inside, so a sort of Russian Doll, but I had a problem! The low up and over Garage Door really prevented me doing this so I needed a rethink?



I tried searching trailers, on Google, but I came across nothing in the UK, to meet my new criteria, which was now a little taller than my original thoughts but, I still got nowhere, so I tried in another language and came across “The Taurus” trailer, in Germany, which ticked so many boxes I had to have a serious look, but I could find no one in the UK who sold them.

The Taurus Anhänger website was pretty good and the measurements almost hit the desired dimensions, but not quite, however, I could order a trailer 100mm wider, so that’s what I did, but only after a few sleepless nights thinking about it!

The Trailer body was 3.6 metre long (around 12ft) so checking my different micro cars they all fitted inside and some, like the Isetta, had room to spare but, what about the width? Back to my Comparison Chart again and, yes, they all fitted ok, into the 1.650 metre, “plus” the extra, making it 1.750 metre (5ft 9inch) wide at the wheel arch.

Height was my next issue, with me being the tallest at 1.8 metre (6ft), and the roof being 1.650 metre I wondered if it would be ok, but this trailer has an elevating roof on it and the first half metre of the floor is fishtailed for easy access giving up to another 50mm (2”) headroom at the tailgate end, and did I mention the tailgate, yes the whole of the trailer rear wall drops down into a drive on ramp almost as wide as the trailer.

I had now done my homework and it was time to place the order and start the manufacturing process, along with me sending my deposit in June 2018, with final the payment in early September and a collection date later that month.

I did consider having the trailer delivered but at £1000 plus we decided to take a holiday and collect the trailer from Zittaur, in Germany, a long way from my home, with a round trip of 1500 miles but it did give us a ten-day holiday, with three nights near Colditz Castle, and a couple of nights by the Mönhensee all with wall-to-wall stunning sunshine.

If you are wondering how well this trailer tows behind my Renault Laguna, the answer is really well and whilst I got an average of 70mpg, on the outward journey, I got 50mpg on the return which when you consider I was towing a big white box, I thought that was pretty good.

I parked the trailer, on my front lawn, and spent the next two weeks planning and worrying, as I wondered if I had the skills to do this conversion, I wasn't a carpenter and the last time I did any wood work I was 13 years old but, I did have the tools from my late father a carpenter by trade.

My friend Ian came to the rescue as he had some wood-working machinery, and the experience of playing with wood, so we set about the build.



The plan was to have, just as you would a normal caravan, bench seating and the table, that converts into a bed at the tailgate end, and to have a fixed kitchen at the opposite end, next to the side entry door, easy!

The trailer that I had chosen, and one I had gone out of my way to choose,

was made from fibreglass with a Jelly mould shape, therefore, what we found out very quickly is nothing was square, requiring every piece of furniture to be scribed into position and then glued using a product called CT1.

I contacted the manufacturer and ask if the CT1 was suitable for the application and yes it was but "what was I sticking the Wood onto?" The tech line guy reminded me that the glue was only going to be as strong as the painted trailer finish and, he was right, because I did have to remove some things and yes, the paint came off with the wood leaving the fibreglass in place.

I have decided to use plywood as the main build material, for a couple of reasons, one being ease of collection and the other being cost, in other words, I could get things wrong without breaking the bank!

One of the first jobs was to glue in position wooden fixing strips for the wall and ceiling linings and then to glue on the Low E insulation material I had chosen, it's an American product just 5mm thick giving an insulation value of a much thicker material but it's very flexible just what I needed.

The lining board material was to be 3.6mm ply, but I did not realise that plywood was normally only bendable one way and sometimes I needed it to bend at least two ways, luckily Ian had used a product in the print industry called Foamex, also available in 2.4 x 1.2 metre sheets and this would bend easily both ways in fact, with a hair dryer it went a little like marshmallow and would mould every way we wanted it to go.

On top of the Foamex lining, we used a light grey, 4-way stretch lining carpet, found in most camper vans, and this proved useful to hide any issues with accuracy, on the lining board and covered up the small screws holding the lining in position.

The seating / bed arrangement needed to be hinged, up and out of the way, when transporting the car, and dropped down when we removed it. Cutting plywood profiles for the seat ends, and gluing in position for the folding bench seats, wasn't quite as bad as I thought but, to be fair, Ian did the design and helped with the cutting and fixing, leaving me to varnish the wood.

Once the seating positions had been decided the windows needed to be fitted and that required cutting a big hole in the sides of the trailer, at just the right height, so when sitting down you could look out without difficulty, but making that first cut was a little scary!

The kitchen worktop went all the way across the front of the trailer, allowing for a sink above and the other things you need below like the water, icebox, WC, drawer pack and importantly an electric winch, to pull the car into position, all covered up with curtains made by Helen, who wasn't convinced it would turn out as good as it did.



Once the seating and the kitchen positions were sorted, I could then build the wardrobe and the cupboard, one to each side of the trailer.

The bench seating was, of course, varnished plywood but, a foam suitable for sleeping and sitting was required, so I did some research and came up with a medium density foam called Reflex which has similar properties to memory foam but a little cooler in use, as I understand it, so an order was placed and I hoped that had I made the right decision?

Choosing the cover material was surprisingly easy as both myself and Helen decided almost immediately on a Teal-coloured Chenille fabric so we made the purchase from our local shop, ready be made up by Helen.



Electrics for me was quite simple and with the advent of LED lighting the load on the battery was less than 50 watts with all twelve internal and one external light, in use, the drain was 4 amps on the 110Ah 12 volts battery, but I switched them in such a way we really didn't need

more than 3 lights on, at any one time, leaving enough power at the end of our stay to winch in the Isetta back into the van.

I also installed four 240-volt power points that could power the battery charger, cool box, kettle, heater etc., when mains hook up was available which, in 2019 only happened once, but with the temperature being 34°C the cool box paid dividends for the whole of our 9 days away in Amstelveen near Amsterdam.

The car goes into the trailer backwards and for those owners who have mastered reversing the Isetta I salute you because I haven't managed it yet in 40 years of ownership so I had a plan.



One of the problems with carrying a dirty car on light grey carpet means the carpet can get covered in water, dirt, oil etc. dropped onto it so, the floor is covered in six removable plywood panels with 150mm wide metal channels screwed in just the right place so when

you winch in the Isetta it will always go in the same position ready to be strapped down with just 3 heavy duty straps to the fixing rings bolted through the floor. When car is out these six varnished panels can easily be stored below the trailer.

We tested the trailer, for the first time, at the Microcar Maniac's Rally, near Lancaster, in June 2019, and I have to say it was a delight to hear the rain on the roof whilst we remained warm and dry inside but, we still had a few things to do before it was finally complete.

The tailgate had metal guide channels, permanently fixed in position, and these needed to be cloaked by curtains and we also wanted a vanity curtain, between the domestic end and the bedroom, so Helen got to work making these ready for our next outing in Kent at Jean Hammonds 2019 RUM car weekend.

I had designed the trailer to also carry my 1957 Velocette Venom motorbike, with the simple removal of two guide channels and the substitution of a "Bump Stop", that allows the bike to be ridden directly into it before lifting the front wheel slightly and holds it there without falling over while just three smaller straps hold it down for transportation.

The last time we used the trailer, in 2019, was the National Micro Car Rally in Somerset, held in beautiful weather in the village of North Newton and, as ever, we enjoyed catching up with old and new friends over the 4-day event leaving us with happy memories of our first year with the Taurus and it would seem that we have made some good decisions, during design and build stage, giving us 24 nights away, so far, giving us happy memories to look back on during the Corona Lockdown.

Mike and Helen Ayriess 2020