

ISETTA

GAZETTE

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MAGAZINE OF THE ISETTA OWNERS CLUB OF GREAT BRITAIN

The Isetta Owners Club of Great Britain Ltd.

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Editors Bit

Here we are at the start of a new year and looking forward to using my cars. Flavour of the month is the 600 now its restoration is complete. It's time to give 'Bessie' a rest having covered about 10,000 miles in her.

At the start of the month I tailored the 600 down to the Cotswolds behind the motorhome, both were pristine at the start of the journey but upon arrival both were dripping in filthy mud, including the trailer.

The first job after the traditional cup of tea was to get buckets of water and remove the mud whilst it was still wet.

At least the return journey was in the dry but I must do a proper clean now I am home.

Many of you will be out and about during the year at rallies etc. and when you are sitting supping you tea and coffee (or beer) think of me slaving over a keyboard and hoping some of you will brighten my day with stories of your own to put into the gazette.



Ian Parris

Chairman's Chat

Firstly, can I welcome Rob Wainwright and his fiancée Alison Glynn to the committee of the Club. They attended the Annual General Meeting of the Club last October and were persuaded to become committee members.

Is it me or is it a generation thing whereby the younger element of families that own an Isetta don't seem to want to become owners of that Isetta? Is it because their generation of classic cars are Ford Escort Cosworths or XR3i's of perhaps Volkswagen Golf Gti's etc? Having said that my son has expressed an interest in my Isetta's and I have written him details of where my other one is stored together with contact details for the farm in whose barn it has been stored for over 20 years.

This car was the subject of an article in a Gazette a few years ago as Barn Lost and Found – the farmer had moved it from one barn to another so appeared have been lost. Come on, ensure the Club carries on into the future for the sake of our beloved cars.

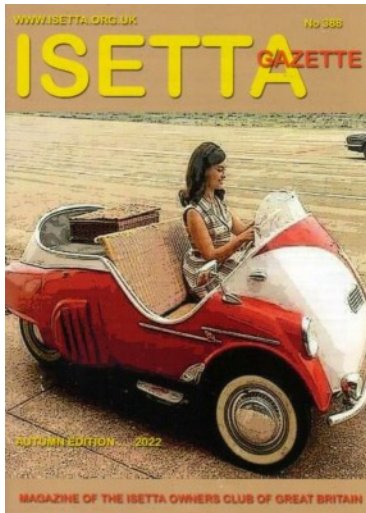
Jeff Todd

Isetta World

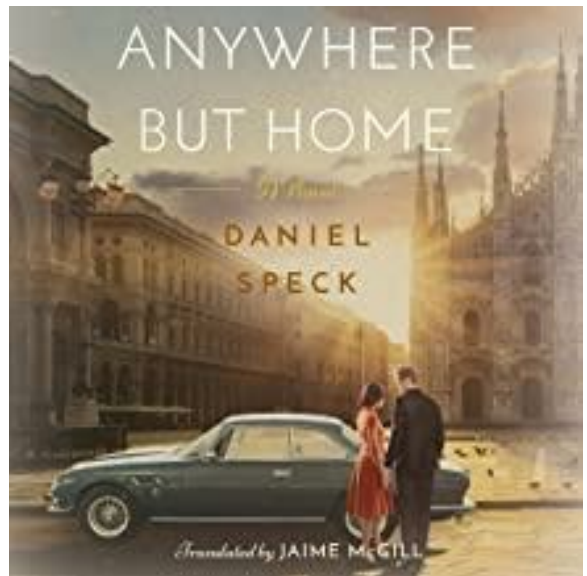
The IoC's Forum on Facebook
[Facebook.com/groups/267159327250111](https://www.facebook.com/groups/267159327250111)



All Isetta Owners Club Members will have boggled at the splendid topless Isetta on the front cover of the Autumn 2022 Isetta Gazette. And for those newer Members (and those geriatrics who have forgotten) here it is again...



The photo depicted the Isetta in a scene from “Bella Germania”, a three-part German TV series based on the very excellent book of the same name by Daniel Speck, published by Fischer Taschenbuch in Germany in 2016. (Translated into English by Jaime McGill and published with the title “Anywhere But Home” in 2020. See notes at end).



The story tells how a young German engineer employed by BMW in Munich is fascinated by the revolutionary ISO Isetta. He approaches his managers with his ideas and they send him to ISO at Milan in Italy to evaluate the possibility of making the Isetta in Germany. He falls in love with the Italian translator assigned to him and – no, I won't spoil it by telling you the rest – but it is a superb and intricate story, brilliantly told.

So let's talk about the Isetta ! It is an actual, working and running car and is owned by Francesco De Cunto, a resident of Rome, Italy (he answers to "Francy" for those who know him).

I first met Francy at the Story Kleinwagentreffen in Germany and we met again in 2013 when I drove my Isetta to Spain to attend the Pyrenees Rally and the Spanish International Microcar Rally, centered at Manresa, near Barcelona. Francy is a big bear of a man, but extremely pleasant and gentle and happy to talk about the special "Spiaggia" Isetta which he had brought to the event – the actual car to be later featured in the "Bella Germania" 3-part TV series and on the cover of our Gazette.



Francy had Imported the BMW Isetta from America. It had been crushed when a tree fell on it but Francy had a vision. He restored the chassis and running gear and removed the roof. He repaired and welded the half-door to the shell. He modified the wings and

sides of the car and mounted new headlamps, ISO-style. He fitted an ISO-style engine cover. He had the wicker seat made. And after styling it all with steps and accessories, some of which came from a Lancia Zagato, the car was finished in 2012. He named it his Isetta "Spiaggia". (Spiaggia means " Beach style")

His Isetta "Spiaggia" then joined Francy's extensive collection of Microcars, which includes several different varieties of Isetta and his ISO-Carro, shown in this photo at an exhibition in Rome inside the Ministry of Economic Development.



Francy also has a Mivalino (Italian Messerschmitt KR175) and a TG500, plus several other Marques.



Sylvia with one of Francy's ISO Isettas

Some time shortly after completing his Spiaggia he was contacted by some TV producers, who asked if he could help source Isettas for a TV series. He replied "How many do you want" and subsequently supplied ALL the Isettas for them.

When filming started he stayed on set and taught the actors and the stuntmen how to drive the Isettas. He remembers meeting the leading actress, Award-winning Muldovia-born Sylvia Busuioc who he describes as "extremely nice and pleasant" and her co-star, some lucky bloke called Christoph

Letkowski, a popular actor in many German movies. And there's more ... Believe it or not, Francy also had another very similar Spiaggia car, this one based on an ISO Isetta, but he was not happy with the restoration work, and he was confident he could do better, so he sold it. I think his confidence was rewarded.



Francy's Other Spiaggia -
Based on ISO Isetta



Francy in TG at Manresa with his wife,
La Contessa Emilia Pagglicci Reatelli,
and my Isetta parked just behind.

“Thank you” to Francy for delighting so many people with your super Spiaggia. Thank you also for filling the gaps in my knowledge and helping me with the details.

Readers may be able to find the DVD of the full TV series on Italian or German eBay – go to www.ebay.es and/or www.ebay.de and search “Bella Germania DVD”.

The following link will take you to the book in English language -

“Anywhere But Home” (English) currently available from Amazon at https://www.amazon.co.uk/s?k=anywhere+but+home&crd=JQ281TJE5XKM&sprefix=anywhere+but+home%2Caps%2C129&ref=nb_sb_ss_ts-doa-p_1_17

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



Sunroof or Snow Roof?

It happened by chance, and not by design, that I found myself fitting the sunroof to our restoration project right in the middle of a snowy winter. Not the best time of year to be doing so I hear you cry. However, by good fortune I met up with Ian Parris at the Classic Car Show that was being held at the NEC back in November, and he not only gave me a lot of good advice regarding the remaining areas of restoration that were on the cards for us to complete, but gave me a clear step by step procedure of how to install the sunroof. This is not an easy task for anyone that has not installed one before



as one mistake would result in either a bad fitting roof, or to coin a phrase of a well known strictly come dancing judge “complete disaster darling”

According to precise Bubble Car Club rules, a can of beans of a particular brand was essential when carrying out this delicate installation. Well, this is what Ian told me, and therefore, who am I to argue? We all

remember the advert on TV of yesteryear ‘A million housewives everyday pick up a tin of beans and say, “My husband will need that to fit his bubble car sunroof”

All in all, I was very pleased with the end result of which I am certain would have been very much different had I not acquired some good old-fashioned advice from those who have gone before.

We are now all set for decorating our Isetta with its all-important adornments, being the bright new chrome front badges and shiny new hubcaps. After a two-year restoration the last stage is going to be an emotional one of which we will keep you posted within the next issue.

Nev Pooley on behalf of Chris Mannion.

Here is an update to the story about my 1957 Isetta 250 published in the Spring 2022 edition of the Gazette (385).

In the autumn of 2021, only a few tens of kilometres after buying my rebuilt Isetta, it suddenly stalled and stopped while driving at very low speed around my home. Usual fuel and spark checks showed no obvious faults and the engine restarted for a few minutes. It repeated this a couple of times and then died for good. The engine had not overheated, oil level was normal and it turned normally on the Dynastart.

To cut a long and sad story short, the engine had very low compression and an unusual accumulation of carbon deposits around the exhaust valve. Strange on an engine with less than 1000 km since it was rebuilt.



When the cylinder head, cylinder and sump were removed, the cause became obvious. The "expert" mechanic who rebuilt it had sandblasted the crankcase and grit residue was found in the sump and around the valve guides. The piston was badly scored and one of the narrow oil ways in the cylinder wall was completely clogged.

It was fully rebuilt again with a "new" cylinder, piston, camshaft, chain, bearings, seals, gaskets, etc from Oldtimerteille after meticulously cleaning the crankcase, sump covers.

Luckily the crankshaft and rod had not sustained any damage. The camshaft "worm" had broken off pieces around the edges.

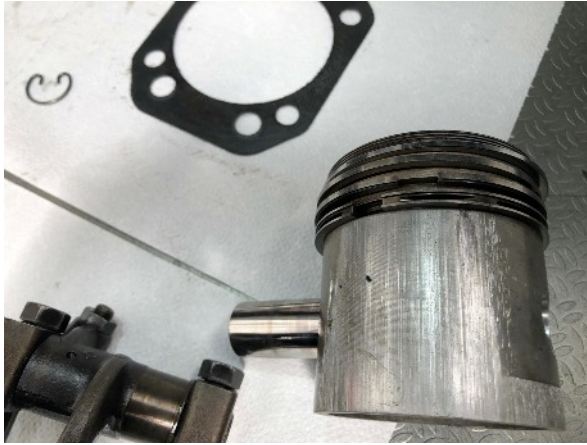
I also bought several parts and tools from the IOC spares system. However, unfortunately due to Brexit, import duties applied in the EU really hurt.

Although digressing, buying parts for my Jaguar MkVII in the UK is becoming unsustainable for the same reason. Luckily I found several alternative sources within the EU.

Everything was back together several months later and now I am gradually building up the mileage to run the engine in carefully. Hoping I can finally enjoy the Isetta and venture out on longer drives.

At one point I almost gave up on rebuilding the engine since I couldn't find a local mechanic with the knowledge and courage to take on the task. Doing it myself was out of the question for lack of experience, adequate tools and space.





I found a professionally rebuilt engine in Slovenia and bought it on the spot. It came with a record of around 50 photos of the rebuild from a very prestigious Isetta expert and enthusiast, well known in the Isetta community. This means that I now have a ready to go, "brand new" engine safely stored to install should I ever need it.

Jorge Edelmann



The Club is pleased to welcome:-

Errol Cause
 Andy Gunn
 Richard Merry
 Jon Poultney
 INicholas Wilkes
 Darin Smith
 David Johnson
 Valerie Dear
 Keith Porter

Southend
 Edinburgh
 Whitstable
 New Zealand
 Oxfordshire
 Norwich
 Kansas USA
 Caithness
 Leeds

Barry Edwards
 Peter Bates
 Andrew Miles
 Graham Johnston
 Warren Hynes
 Keith Sharp
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Isles of Man
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 Norfolk
 London
 Lancs
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 Houghton

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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Isetta 9036 MF – The Back End

We left this story with the chassis stripped and cleaned but little else done. Having checked carefully for cracks in the chassis particularly just forward of the rear crossmember, a swift couple of coats of Underseal (with Waxoyl) improved the look and life of the bare chassis. Some folk like powder coating rather than underseal but I have always found that it is susceptible to chipping followed by rapid delamination from the steel. Personal choice, I guess.

The Chaincase

The two main parts of the chaincase were corroded including the chain tensioner body and sector plate so these were sent off to the vapour blaster and came back looking like new.

As it happened, we had a committee meeting in Leicester that weekend, so I took the rear axle and hub along for the experts to have a look at and the combination of axle and hub was quickly condemned as there was “rock” in the splines. Coming back to Sunderland, a quick foray into the loft where all my spares are, produced another axle and hub with good splines and a tight sliding fit.

The design of the rear hub assembly on the three-wheeler is nothing like as good as the four-wheeler due to the overhung centre line of the rear wheel and this imposes serious stress on the spline, which can cause fretting wear, particularly if the hub nut is not as tight as it should be.

Next, having fitted the inboard circlip, I assembled the main chain wheel onto the outboard spline, again making sure there was no wear in that spline, followed by the outer bearing and circlip.

I had previously obtained new bearings and gaskets from the Club and assembly of the case proceeded with no major problems. Firstly, I fitted the new bearings to the chain tension adjuster then I pressed the double roller bearing into the trumpet. One huge tip is to make sure all the bearing housings are hot before fitting the bearings.

Joining the trumpet to the main case needs a new gasket and then a couple of the through bolts can be fitted just to keep the two together temporarily.

Fitting the adjuster into the chaincase body proved a challenge as it was a tight fit but a bit of grease helped. Then put the axle into main body and fit the chain. Make sure the adjuster is at its slackest position and then fit the main cover, having warmed the area around the axle bearing.

The sector plate can now be fitted and then rotated to tension the chain. Theoretically this should be rotated by hand, but mine wouldn't, so a tap or two with a soft mallet worked well. However, the chain should not be too tight as it will ruin the bearings, so I tapped mine round until it was tight and then backed off one hole on the sector plate. Rotating the axle should be smooth and easy but you should not be able to hear the chain rattling on the inside of the case.

Rear suspension

The rear springs, which had been removed, were disassembled into individual leaves, wire brushed, greased, reassembled, cleaned off, undersealed and then

loosely reattached to the chassis. New tab strips were fitted to lock the clamp bolts once tightened. The clamps were left loosely assembled until the U frame and chaincase were assembled to the chassis to allow a bit of wriggle room.

The next step is to fit the U frame, having pressed in new Silentbloc bushes, and then bolt the offside spring end to the U frame.

DO NOT at this stage, fit the brake backplate, as you will be unable to fit the bolt that secures the nearside spring end to the chaincase.

I found the best assembly method was to insert that bolt loosely into the chaincase, with the chaincase upside down. You will need to shim the bush in the spring end so that it is a good sliding fit in the chaincase gap. If you don't do this, you are highly likely to crack the chaincase lug when you tighten the bolt.

Before tightening the bolt, rotate the chaincase around the bolt and use a tapered pin to line up the holes between the U frame and chaincase. You may need a jack to move the spring end up to enable alignment. With all those bolts inserted and tight, you can gently tighten the spring end bolt but be very careful not to tighten too much otherwise you will strip the thread in the chaincase. If you do that you will have to get a helicoil insert from club spares and fit that to re-establish the thread.

Rear brakes

The rear assembly is not that complicated being a single leading shoe design with an integral handbrake provision. This has been refurbished with a new brake cylinder, new shoes and a new handbrake lever. The adjuster was removed and freed off by removing the angled pistons and unscrewing the adjuster all the way. A bit of copper grease on all the components made for much easier adjustment.

Rear Hub

The assembly of the rear hub starts with the brake plate and seal.

On disassembly, I found one of the large cheese head screws, which hold the brake plate on, very difficult to unscrew so, on reassembly I replaced them with cap head screws with an internal hex head. Anyway, new gaskets and seal made for a sound job with the cap screws tightened evenly.

Then the most critical job, I sourced a new axle nut from the Club and put a fair amount of threadlock onto the internal splines of the hub, before tapping it onto the axle and torqueing the nut up to 200 lb ft. I held the hub still with a substantial crowbar through the studs and managed not to bend a stud. If you do get this wrong and have to remove the hub again, you will need to do it within 15 minutes of fitting or have a very good puller.

Well, that brings me up to date, except that I have now fitted new copper brake pipes throughout. I have experience of old brake light switches leaking, so again I replaced with new from the Club.

Bob Crompton

28th November 2022

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

48th National Micro Car Rally 2023

The NMCR Administrators are delighted to announce that the 2023 NMCR will be organised by Ray Glendinning on behalf of the Micro Maniacs Club and will be based at Woodhouse Farm Holiday Park, Winksley, Ripon, HG43PG, <https://www.woodhousewinksley.com/> Tel 01765 658309. Advanced booking is required.

This venue used in 2022 offers brilliant facilities including, a bar, restaurant, on site shop, exclusive use of club house on Friday and Saturday evening and dedicated camping and show area for our use only.

The event will formally start on Thursday 31 August 2023 through until show day on Sunday 3 September 2023.

Early arrivals and later departures are welcomed.

All rally specific enquires to Ray who is currently working on the road runs and rally planning.

Regular updates will be made on the NMCR website and on the NMCR Facebook page.

Ray can be contacted at: bubblecarray@gmail.com or via messenger at the NMCR FB page

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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.

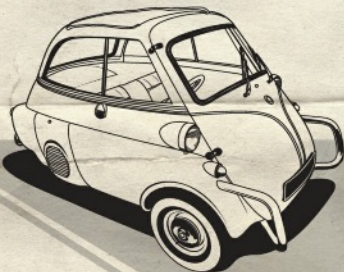
- The Agreed Value certification finally arrives. You begin looking forward to repeating the entire tedious, maddening process, fee included, if you want to increase your value again.



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