

# ISETTA

GAZETTE



SPRING EDITION 2024 .....

MAGAZINE OF THE ISETTA OWNERS CLUB OF GREAT BRITAIN

# The Isetta Owners Club of Great Britain Ltd.

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Website [www.isetta.org.uk](http://www.isetta.org.uk)

Isetta World [www.facebook.com/groups/267159327250111](https://www.facebook.com/groups/267159327250111)

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## **Editors Bit**

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I have received just enough articles to make this edition of just 12 pages. It's a shame with over 400 members only 2 ordinary members put pen to paper or fingers to keyboard to submit anything. Luckily Terry Parkin can always be relied upon to help fill a few pages with Isetta World.

If I have insufficient articles for the next edition I may decide to skip it until I have enough for 12 pages, it's not worth doing any less.

Lee the spares manager has already had over 100 orders this year putting a great strain on him, he holds down a full time job and like the rest of the committee puts his time in voluntarily in his spare time.

Please, if you have placed an order, don't chase him for an early delivery date because you didn't think to order sooner and it's urgent to you, he will get to it as soon as he can.

Anyway, that's enough of me whining on as usual, time to polish the pistons and get the wheels turning again when the weather permits.



## **Ian Parris**

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## **Chairman's Chat**

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Well, it's that time of year again. The rallying season is upon us so it's to show off your pride and joy. I have to admit that I've made no progress with my car. Other priorities I'm afraid. That doesn't mean to say that all other members shouldn't be showing your cars.

Speaking of my car, is there anyone out there who could help getting it running and sorting the brakes out? I will have to put it back together and it will need trailering away. The front brake drums are off and I haven't fitted the brake master cylinder I ordered years ago – I think the master cylinder and/or its linkage are seized. The engine hasn't run since I bought the car 20 or more years ago, it had no compression when I bought it and my ex-wife towed me home in it. That was an experience in itself. I told her to go steady as she'd got power steering, servo brakes and 4 wheels as opposed to my 3. Well, we made in home intact. Please help. I'm not after a full restoration just a car that's drivable. Obviously, I will pay.

## **Jeff Todd**

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# Isetta World

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



A few afternoons ago, I was clearing some space in a drawer which rarely gets opened, when I came across this – a Rally Plaque from 1998 ( Eeee – who remembers when Event Organisers showed their appreciation by presenting each exhibitor with a commemorative token of their attendance ? )



In 1998 the Isetta Owners Club of GB were graciously invited by the BMW Drivers Club to join them at their Oktoberfest event, to be held in September 1998 ( don't ask, I don't know either ) at Silverstone Race Circuit. We readily accepted and as our Club's AGM was due about that time it was decided that our Club should

hold it there, with all Club Members Invited.

As it was a weekend event many of the Isetta Owners present camped out. ( We were younger then.) Our family planned on making a week's holiday out of it, arriving on the Monday before the event, and on arrival we were directed to the campground just outside the Circuit gates where the Marshalls and helpers usually camped. We were asked to camp around the edges of the field due to the helicopters arriving and leaving from the centre. One poor chap apparently "didn't receive the memo" and erected his tent near the centre of the field – the first helicopter which arrived the following morning gave him a severe wake-up call when its downdraft flattened his tent.

Although our access to the circuit was free-of-charge all week, on one of the days the whole circuit had been booked by McLaren and Security was present, so when I sneaked our Isetta in we were spotted and requested to hop-it !. Foiled again, Moriarty !

Come the weekend we were allowed to move our camp to the midfield area of the track and we Isettarians grouped our camp together at the side of The Hangar Straight . We were given access to all the pit garages where the cars of The BMW Drivers Club were housed and even had one allocated to us for our own use.

One highlight came late Saturday night when our then-Editor Neil Bain and A. N. Other who is rumoured to have been Bob Crompton ( our current Club Treasurer ) completed a full lap of the circuit in the dark, on pedal cycles, in the nude. Jan Bain is reported to have photographic evidence but the pics are tightly guarded.

When Sunday came the Silverstone pits, including the one which McLaren had floored with expensive Italian Marble were open for anyone to walk into and inspect the fast machines as they were prepped for the track.

The weekend's programme allowed BMW Drivers Club Members to take their cars onto the circuit and there were some well-tuned cars being driven Very Fast Indeed. Also present at the circuit were some competition vehicles from the BMW factory, including their British Touring Car Championship racecars and race drivers who were giving rides to anyone for a modest sum. I had a few fast laps being driven by a bloke called Alex, who I later learned was Alex Wurz, who went on to drive in Formula 1 for McLaren and Williams.. Then came the moment we were all waiting for – we were allowed to lap the circuit in our Isettars. And to prevent us going too fast we were led round by a pre-war BMW 2-seater, a 328 if my forgettory is working as it usually does. Truth is, they didn't want us racing each other because for some unimaginable reason they thought we might tip over !

But there was more to come ... someone had brought a TV into our pit so we all took our chairs and settled in and we rejoiced as we witnessed Damon Hill winning the Belgian Grand Prix.

It was a fun-filled weekend for we Micronauts and the memories prompted by that old Rally Plaque were a treasure to be relived. ( A fuller description of the weekend appeared in the Isetta Gazette, issue number 243/244, Oct/Nov 1998 )

Terry Parkin

Isetta World – the Isetta Owners Club's home on Facebook  
[www.facebook.com/groups/267159327250111/](http://www.facebook.com/groups/267159327250111/)

## “Melanie’s Micros & Other Tiny Tales”

### **Part 2: NMCR,**

*Ian Danaford, September 2023.*

Melanie’s 600 was complete enough for road trials by August 2021, but in the two years since, I never could get to the bottom of what seemed to be an ignition fault. It would run ok for a short while , but then drop to one cylinder destroying a spark plug in the process. After seemingly trying everything again and again to fix the problem, I decided to replace the whole ignition system with a crudely adapted EI points replacement and a posh new dual outlet coil. This improved things a lot. Another improvement was made using old Champion N5 plugs, rather than the brand new recommended ones! It all came together when the NMCR was less than a week away. Despite the 600 having barely turned a wheel in fifty odd years, perhaps it was now running well enough to take on the journey.



I decided to catch an early ferry from the Isle of Wight on the Tuesday morning and maybe camp or visit friends along the way to Yorkshire. With so much space in the 600, packing was much easier than on previous

trips. I just threw in anything I thought might be needed!

The Tom Tom was set for Woodhouse Farm using the most direct, non motorway route. Normally, I find this option the most interesting. It does, however, tend to take you through every city centre and use farm tracks to cut corners. I know there are now more effective ways to choose a route, but I’ve not quite caught up with the technology yet.

So, after negotiating Southampton and Winchester at rush hour, all appeared to be going quite well until just before Newbury, when I pulled in to check things over. To my horror, when I opened the engine lid, there was oil everywhere. The leak was traced to the (again new) pushrod tube seals. I topped up and headed into Newbury, where straight away I spotted a huge Halfords sign. Although there was nothing of any use on display, the assistant opened a kind of under the counter drawer full of various sealants. After careful consideration, I chose ‘Instant Gasket’. This was injected around the problem area and to my amazement, it cured the leak!

Still a little worried, and in case more serious work was needed, I decided to change course and head east to call on friends near Cambridge. However, after about twenty miles, my confidence had returned and I resumed my journey north. Another spark plug gave up in Oxford, so I knew the old problem was not completely cured. Luckily I had spares just in case. As I pressed on, it



started raining, so stopping to camp became less appealing. Wet tents are a bit difficult to deal with and there was still time to get to Ripon before dark, just!

It was about 21.00 when I arrived at Woodhouse Farm. My LED headlights gave ample glow to erect the tent and with a sigh of relief and a cheese and cracker supper, it was bedtime at last.



Wednesday morning it was off to Ripon for supplies and to fill up with petrol. All was still quiet on site in the afternoon, so a nice stroll seemed like a good idea after all that driving. It was a pleasant but very long walk across the fields and through the deer

park for my second visit to Ripon in one day. I was completely worn out by the time I got back. But on returning I noticed a very strong smell of petrol in the air. It couldn't be ignored. Something had to be done or sleeping would be impossible.



It was the petrol tap which was leaking, so the only option was to drain the tank. I had an empty can and borrowed a few others to decant what was left. In the morning, Mike Ayris helped me fix the problem, again with the 'Instant Gasket' bought before and with careful reassembly of the petrol tap. I felt a bit bad because he was dressed smartly for Helen's birthday!



Friday saw the first proper outing of the rally weekend. The wuthering route took us through thick fog and rain, up and down Dale to Grassington. All great fun. After a good look around and coffee with Neill, the other 600 owner, I headed back to base in a 600 convoy.



The old problem recurred on the way, so on returning I enlisted the help of old time Berkeley mate and engine whisperer Martin Archer. He concluded the engine was running way too rich and tweaked my slow running screws. The fine adjustment again helped, although tickover was still a little erratic.





The Saturday run went without major incident, which meant that Display Day Sunday could be spent relaxing and socialising with no driving necessary. The sun was shining and the turnout was good, making this a day to reflect and enjoy and remember.

Although the weather had been great, due to the time of year everything had got pretty damp. On Monday morning I dried the tent as best I could and chucked everything back in the car, ready for the journey home. This time I chose 'most eco friendly' and my destination was Somerset. The only offer of a stopover was from the Mckays, which although not strictly on route, was still within striking distance of Lymington for the next day.

The eco-route was far less stressful than my northward venture. I passed Brimham Rocks and along the Holme Valley then up over the Derbyshire Peaks. The only major city to deal with was Wolverhampton. There seemed to be no more car problems and I arrived at Malcolm and Helena's at about 20.00, Just in time for supper.



Next afternoon, just as I was about to leave, I gave the silencer a prod and realised it was hanging off. Malcolm, of course, insisted that we fix it and obviously I was in the best place to do so.

Refitting the tinware was a little tricky, but before long all was tightened up and ready for the road again.



The car went very well indeed and just after Shaftesbury, I stopped at a viewpoint to take some photos. As I pulled in, two very impressed ladies came running towards me. They were so excited seeing the 600 in their mirror.

After a surprise photo shoot, I continued to Lymington to catch the 18.05 ferry.

One last twist. Those thousands of miles of enthusiastic gear changes had taken their toll. Two miles from home, the gear lever broke off.

Tired and thinking quickly, I decided to try and complete the last bit in 4th gear. So two steep hills, one roundabout and three T junctions, but I made it. What a great car Melanie had chosen.....

In fact, the trip was so successful, I decided to squeeze in one more adventure in 2023, which means there is even a part 3 of the story to follow!



## Two solutions in one for Isetta owners

The joy and pleasure of owning a classic or vintage vehicle provides an ideal hobby for many of us, but it is a pastime that requires having good dry storage to protect and secure your investment. If your vehicle is an Isetta there is an additional requirement. Current traffic levels on busy roads do not provide an enjoyable driving experience for small sized, low powered vehicles. Hence a trailer is required for transportation over long distances. Having experienced both these issues over the years I recently found one solution that addresses both storage and transport.

The solution is an enclosed single-axel braked trailer of suitable size and strength to act as a garage for storage and an easy loading/unloading trailer for transporting the car. The internal dimensions of the particular one I have are ideal for an Isetta and it has a number of floor hooks for lashing down the car for transportation. Old settee cushions between wheel hubs and the sides of the trailer along with tight timber spacers between the tyres and side walls at each side ensure little or no side to side movement. It also has sufficient space in the



angular nose at the front of the trailer to fit a floor mounted electric winch for hauling the car on board. The 12v winch in this case has power leads of sufficient length for connecting to the Isetta battery and a wired remote control which allows ease of operation when using the winch.

This trailer is the perfect size for an Isetta and the total weight of both the braked trailer and bubble car ensures that it can be towed safely by a two-wheel drive vehicle of suitable



ble horse power. The rear door of the trailer can open either side-wards, for access inside or downwards to form a ramp for loading and unloading the car.

The trailer also has a small door at the front which allows access to the rear of the car and the winch when pulling the car on



board or releasing the tie-down lashings or the winch cable. The spare wheel for the trailer is also stored securely in this space along with a box for breakdown kit and essential spares.

The addition of a solar panel trickle charger to the roof of the trailer ensures that the voltage of the car battery is maintained during storage.

So far, this trailer which was purchased second-hand has provided an ideal solution for both storage and transportation of my Isetta. It acts as both a garage for storing the car and also a trailer for transporting. In addition, the installation of the 12v winch and the solar trickle charger have made life a lot easier in keeping the car in good fettle and condition.

I know there are many members who may frown at the idea of trailering their Isetta rather than always driving it but for me I prefer to compromise for the sake of safety and comfort.

*Noel Shanaghy*

*January 2024*



## Safety Critical Warning

Whenever I look at cars for sale or displayed on the rally field I always look at the steering Column Universal Joint marked as No 97 on the BMW exploded views which we all have in our files or in our John Jensen Isetta Restoration Manual on page 195

If I mention to the owners the securing bolt No 101 is missing, I often get told “that’s how it came or that how a bought it.” I have found 3 cars now with this fault in recent times!

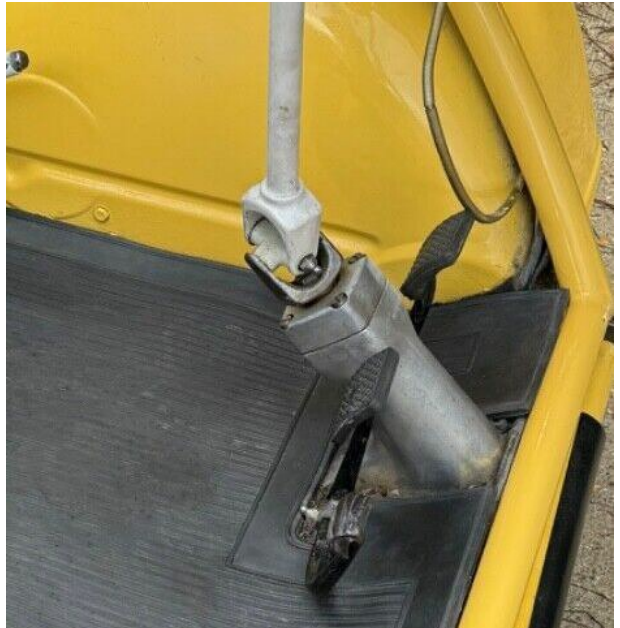
Looking at cars for sale I often see this bolt missing and whilst often images are of such low quality when zoomed in, I am sure the examples shown here have no bolt fitted? Did you think these are cars needing restoration? No these are fully restored expensive cars!! How important is you ask?

Well, if this securing bolt No 101 is not in place along with the castle nut and split pin No.s 102 and 103 the whole steering column could become disconnected from the steering box worm No 86 which you can see quite clearly in the exploded drawing and I am no doubt you could lose control of the car if all the dominos decide to fall at the wrong time?

### **What should you do?**

Open your car door look at the universal joint now check the bolt is in place and if it’s not get a M6 x 55mm bolt Part No 101/3, castle nut Part No 102/3 and split pin Part No 122/3 fitted before driving your car again.

**Mike Ayriss**  
**February 2024**





# **FORTHCOMING EVENTS**

## **NATIONAL MICROCAR RALLY 2024**

**August 29<sup>th</sup> - September 1<sup>st</sup>**

At Hampton Loade

Nr Bridnorth

Shropshire

Reservations: [jennydilks@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:jennydilks@hotmail.co.uk)

### **The Club is pleased to welcome:-**

|                    |              |                  |                   |
|--------------------|--------------|------------------|-------------------|
| Paul Edge          | N.Ireland    | Thomas Harper    | North Lincs       |
| John Nelson        | Somerset     | Jenny Driver     | West Sussex       |
| Dennis Martinussen | Denmark      | Stephen Williams | Birkenhead        |
| Herb Fava          | New Zealand  | Ian Hunt         | Shipston on Stour |
| Fernanado Alatorre | Mexico       | John Ball        | Preston           |
| Wayne Stockton     | Birmingham   | Michael Houston  | Kent              |
| Keith Hackett      | Cheshire     | David Robinson   | Preston           |
| Garry Fatt         | Dorset       | Graham Dell      | Malvern           |
| Graham Rowe        | Lincoln      | Robin Impey      | Colchester        |
| Csatari Istvan     | Hungary      | Timothy Owen     | Prestwood         |
| Anthony Smith      | Pershore     | Darren Sear      | Eastbourne        |
| Malcolm Gould      | Norfolk      | Juan Volschenk   | South Africa      |
| Brian Finch        | Suffolk      | Ruben Fernandez  | Spain             |
| Tony Searle        | Castle Camps |                  |                   |

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