

# ISETTA Gazette

SUMMER EDITION .... 2014



# The Isetta Owners Club of Great Britain Ltd.

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## **Editors Bit**

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I am sorry for being late with this 'Summer Edition' of the gazette but I have run out of articles to print. I can't even summon up enough for the usual 16 pages. It has been suggested that I reprint articles from previous magazines but the quality of picture that were used are not good enough.

So here I am again, begging for you stories. There are almost 300 of you out there with tales to tell so don't keep them to yourselves.

Next year will be the 60th anniversary of the Isetta, we are looking for ways to celebrate, perhaps with rally where we could try to get 60 Isettas to attend. If you have any different ideas let me know now before we commit ourselves any further.

The online spares are going well and I am just looking into getting new silencers made, if you need spares that we haven't got or can't be obtained from elsewhere let us know and we will look for other sources.



Ian Parris

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## **Chairmans Chat**

You may have noticed that this Gazette is a little thinner than previous editions. Ian has had to delve into the depths of his resources to find material to fill this many pages. So come on members let's have some material from you. It's now the middle of summer and most of you will have been or will be out and about in your cars. Send Ian a photo of you and your car wherever you have been with a quick note about the situation and hey presto, Ian has filled another half a page or maybe more in the Gazette. Your adventure with your car may seem trivial and routine to you but it may just stimulate another member to do something similar. That then creates more exposure for our cars and our club.

Why not organise some form of social event in your area, Ian will gladly publicise such gatherings and a report would be tremendous creating more articles for the Gazette.

Jo and I will be at the National Microcar Rally this year but I don't know at this stage if our car will be ready or indeed if we will have transport if she isn't ready to be driven. We will also be at the NEC this year and hope to be there for more than just one day. We were 'working' on our stand last year but there are some many other cars to see which create so many nostalgic thoughts of days gone by. Also the range of vehicles that people have chosen to restore and the quality of their work. You cannot fail to be impressed.

Jeff Todd

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# My Restoration by Ian Parris

I really did have the intention of doing everything myself on this restoration but after a year of dabbling her indoors told me to stop messing about and farm out the specialist work..

It's not that I didn't have the equipment, I kitted myself out with a MIG welder, shot blaster, spraying equipment, larger compressor etc. but realised that time is more important than anything else. If I wanted to see a finished car before I was confined to a pine box I needed to break out the cheque book.



It's hard to believe but it took more effort to get someone interested in doing work on the car than you might imagine, 10 months in fact. In this economic climate you might think businesses would be begging for work, but in this field you are wrong. Finally I found a company who would take on the bodywork.



I had shot blasted most of the underside but Phil the Paint sent the body off for a proper job. As soon as it got back to Phil he etch primed it to stop it rusting then off it went to Rodger the Weld who placed it on a spit.



When I saw it I wondered if I could sell it as a colander there were so many holes in it.

Rodger thought it would be more cost effective to weld in a completely new floor rather than spend lots of time and money patching parts in. I had already obtained repair panels for the front door, front wings and cill so he had something to be going on with while he waited for the new floor.

I was going to work on the chassis whilst the body was being done but realised Rodger could do with it to get the alignment right so off that went to the professionals for shot blasting

and powder coating. The money pit was getting bigger every day but at least the value of Isett's is increasing daily, I hope I don't overtake it.

The chassis was returned to Rodger in time for welding in the new floor. Unfortunately, the floor only fitted where it touched and needed a considerable amount of cutting and welding to make it work.





Eventually the welding was complete and of it went to Phil the Paint.

The most difficult part was to decide upon the final paint scheme. I didn't want to stick with originality when it came to the colour and her indoors has a lot

more idea about colours than I do so I left it up to her to narrow down a selection. We finally agreed on a colour scheme and went to see Phil, needless to say he didn't like our choice at all. He did a test sample and wanted to include Old English White, one of his favourites. I picked up the sample and took it home for a second opinion as I didn't like the Old English White, luckily her indoors didn't either. Back to Phil to try a different white, retry with our choice, much better now, we will go with that. I am not going to reveal the colour until the car is complete but suffice to say it caused quite a stir at the paint shop, most people loved it and even Phil seemed pleased although he won't admit it.



I can now get on with the mechanical parts of the restoration. I knew there was a small amount of play in the king pins so they must be dismantled. I didn't like the idea of beating the hell out of them until they gave up, I wanted to extract them carefully. I welded a threaded rod to the mushroom end and with a liberal amount of heat and a large

spanner I slowly extracted each king pin. The deep socket was used to allow the king pin to be withdrawn by tightening the nut on the threaded rod. The king pins were corroded so new one were ordered along with new bushes from the club's online spares.



Replacing the king pin bushes is not the easiest task, great care needs to be taken removing the old bushes and slowly pulling the new ones into place.

Greater care is needed when reaming out the new bushes, take a thou too much and you have wasted your time and money, you can't put the metal back, just buy more bushes and start over again.

I must be mad but I actually enjoy cleaning parts, here are the before and after pictures of one of the front suspension items ready for the king pin bushes to be replaced.



I've now got the body & chassis back home and am starting on the rebuild, I am not rushing things as it is quite cold in my rebuild garage and I easily get distracted from the task in hand. Some people like to start and finish one job, I like to jump from one thing to another, I can be looking for something for the job in hand, pick up another part in my search and go off doing something totally different. Never mind, I guess in the end all the work will get completed and anyway I am doing this for my pleasure.

Once the king pins were done I was able to reassemble the front suspension and in the process install a steering damper. In 'Bessie' I had a couple of scary moments when the steering shuddered uncontrollably, the only slamming on the brakes and coming to a complete standstill stopped the shudder, once with cars close behind but needs must as they say. I immediately ordered and fitted a steering damper to 'Bessie' and have had no problems since.

The steering dampers that fit the Isetta are from the VW T2 vans and only cost about £20 or so. The Isetta chassis is already fitted with a flange to attach the damper but not all track rods have a clamp fitted. The track rod I had for the restoration project didn't have a clamp so I fabricates a flange and after carefully measuring for a placement welded it direct to the track rod, thankfully it works a treat.

With the front suspension fitted I was then able to rebuild the front hubs and brakes. I had already refurbished the slave cylinders, back plates and drums so I didn't take long to get them all into place with newly relined brake shoes.

I have made up all the brake lines, bled the brakes and put some old wheels on to see if the brakes work and that the wheels do not touch the flexible hoses and all seem OK.

With holidays and other commitments I haven't done anything for a couple of months apart from getting the clutch plate relined locally. Thereby hangs another tale, I didn't pester the company doing the relining until after my holiday, only to find they had lost my details and were waiting for someone to call looking for the item so now I am ready to put in the clutch and offer up the engine to the gearbox.

I had wondered whether the car would be ready for this season's rallies but that is out of the question now but it will definitely be ready for the 60th anniversary celebrations.

More to follow in future editions:-

## **EXTRACTS FROM THE FBHVC NEWSLETTER**

### **Discontinuance of the Tax Disc in October 2014**

DVLA have currently not reacted to our comments on their proposal that on any sale of a vehicle with an unexpired tax disc, the VED registration expires and a new one has to be sought.

The proposal says the existing VED licence (even if it is for a Historic Vehicle and no actual VED is payable) will expire when the Secretary of State is notified of the change of keeper (i.e. when DVLA receives the V5C in Swansea). Neither buyer nor seller will know exactly when that is.

But the seller, because of Continuous Insurance, will need to keep his insurance in place until he is sure the licence has lapsed. The buyer will presumably not be able to get a new licence until the old one has lapsed but will need to have put insurance in place to use the vehicle after sale.

Perhaps worse, on a vehicle in respect of which VED is payable, although the seller will be able to claim a rebate on any existing VED, he will not get refund of that part of the month's VED in which the sale occurs. Meanwhile the buyer will immediately have to apply for a licence. This seems to have the effect that some VED will be paid twice over. This looks wrong in principle.

The Federation is also concerned that DVLA do not appear to be planning for an owner to possess any actual evidence of his own. DVLA seem to consider that being on their database is enough. We are concerned that others, especially abroad, may wish to see some evidence that the vehicle is licensed, even if only a print of a computer record, and will not be willing to simply be told to visit the DVLA website.

DVLA have not to date explained how, if at all, these problems are to be dealt with. The Federation will keep asking.

### **Continuous Insurance**

Finally a word of warning: we have come across examples of people falling foul of the Continuous Insurance provision because they do not realise its full extent. Owners, who have maintained their VED licence in force and not made a SORN declaration, have for a variety of reasons discontinued their insurance because they knew it would not be needed as the vehicle would either be off the road or covered by another party's insurance. In each case that has seemed to be the correct course to take.

But everyone should be aware that continuous insurance means what it says. If you have a VED licence in place, you *must* have insurance in place for the vehicle as well. While this might occasionally seem perverse, looked at from the point of all motorists and other road users, its simplicity is a justifiable method of seeking to ensure innocent people are not put at risk from uninsured motorists. Failure could get you an enforcement notice and liability to a fine.

## A 'Bertie'-ful makeover

I'm not sure how long it is since I last contributed to the Gazette, but, believe me, it's been a while.

I, along with Terry, used to be the "go to" person when the Gazette editor needed something quick. I guess I suffered burn-out, but my output dried up. Until now.

Bertie is my 1960 4 wheel right hand drive Isetta which I have owned since 1996. I'm only her 4<sup>th</sup> owner, I think, to date, although my 11 year old niece asked me the other day, "What are you going to do with Bertie when you die?" When I replied, "Oh, I don't know. I might leave it to you." She said, "Oh good. Can I sell her!"

Well, I might not have contributed to the Gazette recently, but I've still got Bertie. Mechanically, she is as sound as she always was, but body wise, the brown rust moth had been at her, the strap behind the engine panel had broken, the seams at the back, well, they were no longer seams but holes. Bottom of the wings, bottom of the door, bottom door hinge, all bubbles under the paint, so in 2010 I took the decision to take her off the road and SORN her whilst I saved up the pennies.

Last year I booked her into Lessian Motors in Ilkley for her makeover. She was stripped down and the body removed for sand blasting whilst the chassis was stripped, repainted, and mechanically checked over.

One of the discoveries that I hadn't banked on finding was the gear change cable, down to its last two threads in a very large fray. I didn't remember that!

The drive donuts have been changed for new, and, although there were no splits in the old ones, it's so much easier with the body off to do them than laid on your back, spitting oily muck and scraping your knuckles. Also, when the spanner slips it invariably hits you in the face. I remember breaking my spectacles that way once. I also pre-empted the exhaust silencer. Bertie's seemed solid enough but was red with rust. Rather than risk it dropping to bits in the first 100 miles, (which it was bound to do) I bought a rather smart brand new German style one (with the spot welded joints down either side). That should fix that!

The engine mountings were about ready to give up, and that was a surprise finding the right hand engine mounting on the left hand side and the left one on the right? Who did that? When did I do that? Anyway, it's corrected now.



When the body came back from the sand-blasters there was this huge hole in the side, level with the firewall, which had been filled. Where did that come from? I'd never seen it before. So, off to Lessian's where much grinding, cutting, welding, filling, priming and spraying has taken place over the last six months.

I had much trouble persuading them not to chop the floor out of her. It took taking the chassis down to demonstrate that all the floor does is keep your feet dry in the rain and hold the battery.



There were some funny moments in all that time. Like when the garage rang me up to ask if the brackets that join to the chassis at the back could be removed. It took a visit down there to work out he meant the bumper brackets. Also, although there were a lot of holes in Bertie's body, some of them needed keeping! So I went round the body with their body man pointing out which ones were needed and which ones weren't.



I have to say that they have done a beautiful job on her, and I collected her last Friday. Whilst I have been out of the micro car loop, I had forgotten what a lively, friendly community it is. My thanks to Ray Glendinning who lent me his trailer at the drop of a hat to bring Bertie home, also to Paul Champney for all his help too.

So, the rebuild of the body (wires, lights, sun roof and stuff) commences. Hopefully, she'll be back on the road for the summer, depending on time. Total cost so far? About £6000, I guess. The body is a straight £4K and the sandblasting was £650 (apparently it is more difficult to strip an Isetta body than

a mini shell, so says Mr Blaster). Then there were the new parts that I purchased.

I suppose the advantage of restoring a car you already own is that you only pay for the restoring. If you've also had to buy a tatty car for, say £6K first, then restore it, it begins to get expensive.

My only question that remains once she is built, however, is a difficult one.

Where shall I go first?

Richard Jones  
0447NO



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

Matthew Williamson	Australia	Rex Lawry	Redruth
Donald Le Bihan	France	Raymond Neall	North Lincs
Andrew Dover	Denbighshire	Alain Gardinier	France
John Darley	Selby	Stephen Meadowcroft	Bedford
Wills Viljoen	Cranleigh		

### **New Members since the last Gazette**

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

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A microcar reminiscence from a WWII pilot writing on an aviation forum about when he was based near York. Sent in by Mike Hallam.

### **Danny adds to the Gaiety of the Nations (York, anyway).**

It really all happened so simply and so easily. It was a nice sunny Spring day, and I was running back to York at lunchtime off morning watch. Nothing unusual until I passed Bootham Bar, then suddenly there seemed to much less traffic than normal, and there were several police cars dotted about.

Following my usual route I turned right towards the Museum Garden gates, then left into Lendal. On the corner there was a handful of chatting police doing nothing in particular. Nobody took any notice of me, or put a hand up to stop me, and I'm certain there were no "No Entry" signs. Into Lendal I tootled. This was very familiar ground; "Lloyds-the- Money" on the right and the GPO down the end.

Fifty yards ahead came out from the left, and turned left ahead of me, a large old gleaming black Roller (later I learned it was the Lord Mayor's car). I tucked in behind it and looked through the wide back window. Dead centre was a huge full-bottomed wig above scarlet and ermine. Behind me a white police Jaguar closed in, leading another two or three police cars and sundry followers. It was, it seemed the Opening of the Assizes, and I had inadvertently inserted my Isetta into second position in the official procession.

Of course I realised that I was, shall we say, a little *"de trop"*, and get-out-quick might be a good idea. But My Lord's driver had his clog down now (maybe My Lord had lingered too long over coffee and cigars), and had wound the Roller up to about 35 as we swerved left at the Mansion House, past Terry's lovely mahogany restaurant - (and "Betty's" opposite) - and round to the right. He could afford to do this (although the old lady heeled over rather alarmingly), as the route had been cleared for him: every possible escape route for me was sealed-off by a traffic policeman.

And not any old policeman. All the main crossings were manned by at least two-pips, all stiffly to attention and frozen at the salute in their best No.1 SDs. They wore that expression of shock and horror that Bateman depicted so well in his cartoons. I considered returning the salutes, but on second thought discarded the idea as inadvisable.

And now we were running into Piccadilly, where it seemed that most of the good folk of York had assembled to see the show. Suddenly realising that they'd "put in the clowns", they reacted with delight: cat-calls, cheers, thumbs-up and waves (to which I replied with gracious regal nods and limp lifts of the wrist). I could sense teeth grinding in the front seats of the Jag on my tail. Clifford's Tower loomed up ahead; things were getting serious now.

What could they get me on ? There must be *something* in the medieval statutes to meet the case. It was clearly Contempt of Court, and probably *lèse-majesté*. I racked my brains for case law, but could only come up with a tale I'd read or heard long ago. The chronicler of the time had recorded it in the mixture of English and Norman-French then current. It told a sad story as follows:

It seems that this litigant, dissatisfied with a judgment: *"ject un brickbat à le Justice, que*

*narrowly mis'd'*. Promptly arraigned before the said Justice, he was (not surprisingly) found guilty and "*immédiatement hangé*". I did not think they would go so far with me, but a session in the dungeon and a grovelling apology to My Lord seemed on the cards. And now we'd passed the Tower. This was it . In a few moments now I absolutely knew what would happen. My Lord would turn left into the Assize Court: the white Jag would have me.

But I was spared. Unbelievably, the Jag and the rest of the entourage followed the Roller into the Courts. Greatly relieved, I scooted out of York as fast as my little wheels could carry me. Of course, I wasn't out of the woods even now. The Jag passenger had been hammering the radio, the followers had had ample time to engross my number on vellum if they wished. I might yet have to fear a summons in the post. But it didn't happen.

Goodnight, all.

Danny42C.

*....After the Lord Mayor's Carriage comes...*

## LETTERS

Hello Ian,

This is a letter to members about a dream. Many years ago when cold and wet on a motorbike travelling to work, others arrived in bubble cars. Warmish and dry. The dream began, but as an apprentice money was no available.

Some years ago I acquired an Isetta 300 with the intension of creating a running vehicle. Time has taken its toll and age has caught up so I now have to think about either selling the Isetta or finding someone who would take the body off and maybe renovate the chassis. I may see the dream ahead.

So I ask the membership for comments. Do I sell or do you know of a restorer who understands the bubble and charges reasonable rates?

email [p.smith7@btinternet.com](mailto:p.smith7@btinternet.com) Peter Smith

Dear Ian

Please see attached pictures of BMW Isetta, Due to the passing away of its owner the car is now up for sale.

Registered 1961, Mileage 47,000, was restored 2009.

Due to ill health, the owner had not driven it for over 2 years, it has no tax or MOT, some work was being done on the alternator so this would need to be finished.

We are looking for realistic offers.

Should you require any further information, i will do my best to answer.

Paul Chadwick Mobile 07713 787790.



# FORTHCOMING EVENTS

## August 21st - 25th (Fri-Mon) Cheshire Microcar Rally

At Sycamore Farm Caravan Site, Soss Moss, Cheshire (near Alderley Edge)  
For more details and to book a pitch contact Andrea on 01625 860893

6 - 7 September 2014 10:00 am - 05:00 pm

## Microcar, Bubble Car and Three Wheeler Show

Heritage Motor Centre Gaydon Warwickshire

Contact Email: [perkins4236@btinternet.com](mailto:perkins4236@btinternet.com)

Phone: 07817 169046

## 11 - 14 Sep (Thu- Sun) The 40th National MicroCar Rally

Wetherby Racecourse, York Road, Wetherby, West Yorkshire. LS22 5EJ  
Tel: 01937 582035 Fax: 01937 588021 Web: [www.wetherbyracing.co.uk](http://www.wetherbyracing.co.uk)  
Wetherby Racecourse is located adjacent to Junction 46 (Wetherby Services) of the A1(M).

### **Costs:**

Rally Pack £6 incl 40th anniversary clock Day Visitors on the Sunday £1 Camping costs £12 per unit per night. Please note that electric hook ups and showers are **not** available. 24 hour heated toilet facilities are available in the Bramham Hall Conference Centre. Guests may extend their stay from the Monday of the preceding week to the Monday after the event in the Owners and Trainers car park if required. Please contact Ben, [ben@wetherbyracing.co.uk](mailto:ben@wetherbyracing.co.uk) at Wetherby Racecourse should you wish to extend your stay. For guests that are not camping we have arranged a specially discounted rate of £49.00 per room per night (single or double, including breakfast) at the Days Inn Hotel located at the adjacent Wetherby Services. Please telephone 01937 547557 and quote code **WRCR** when booking. This special rate is **not** available when booking through the internet.

### **Event Programme:**

Thursday: Welcome from 12:00 Road Run to Ripon  
Evening - Social get together Bramham Hall  
Friday: Road Run to York – National Railway Museum (£5.00 parking)  
Evening - 'Race Night' in Paddock Bar  
Saturday: Road Run to the Yorkshire Dales  
Autojumble in Bramham Hall  
Evening – Live Band in Bramham Hall  
Sunday: Vehicle display and presentations  
Contact: Ray Glendinning Event coordinator  
Micro Maniacs Club  
49 Claremont Grove  
Shipley West Yorkshire  
BD18 1PS  
e mail: [bubblecarray@gmail.com](mailto:bubblecarray@gmail.com) Tel: 07977 445694