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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

Time marches on and I seem to have done nothing as far as going out in the car and showing it off. I have a lot in the pipeline though along with holidays in our motorhome where the car always comes with us. The Isetta takes us places the motorhome would not be welcome. By the time you read this I hope to be down the south west with the Isetta holding up traffic in the usual way.

It is strange that motorists seem to accept being held up by a bubble car but not by a modern car, it must be that they feel sorry for us having to drive a toy car. Only one motorist was irate enough to blast his horn as he overtook me in over 9000 miles, he should have thanked me for keeping his speed within reason.

For the history buffs amongst you I have included a letter from Piero B. Rivolta to John Jensen author of 'Isetta Restoration' previously published in the gazette of March 1992.

You will see from the last gazette we have welcomed another 23 new members following 26 new members in the last gazette, this makes a total of 361 paid up members of the club.

This shows we have a thriving membership in the club but very little input as far as the articles for the gazette. The new spares however are a different matter, Lee our spares manager is having a job keep up with orders from all over the world and Mike is busy re-ordering stock to avoid us running short of items.

Enough from me wittering on, lets hear from some of you about your exploits, especially what you are doing with all the spares you are buying.



Ian Parris

Chairman's Chat

Welcome to the summer chat with the hope for a warm and welcome meet and show season. There isn't much to report on my behalf other than I took my 1960 Isetta 300 to the Restoration Show at the NEC in March. It drew quite a bit of attention on the BMW Owners stand with the usual "this doesn't have a reverse does it?". I could hear Dave Watson screaming in the background I'm sure! Hopefully the appearance there brought us a few new memberships. Hopefully many of you will take the opportunity of our impending "fine weather summer" to get out and about in your cars for shows or just a just a drive. I had several local shows listed for mine but firstly I went to meet up with some old colleagues at a local hostelry. A nice 17 miles through Cambridgeshire countryside, lunch and return. However, the return was not so joyful.... 7 miles in and the smell of electrical wiring overheating closely followed by smoke emanating from the corner under the seat. Luckily somewhere to pull over, switch the isolator and get out. Not only the electrical problem but the sunny weather changed to torrential rain and wind whilst waiting for my wife to tow me home. Well that's it for my show plans while I locate fault and repair the wiring. New loom on order with Lee Turnham who by the way is doing a sterling job with the spares, the sales of which have already almost reached the level of all last years. Thanks for all your work Lee. Hopefully those of you who are going out in your cars this summer have a less eventful time than I did.

Chris Skepper

A POEM WRITTEN BY MRS. PAVEY
BUBBLE BLUES!

We went to Burford in the Hillman
Because the bubble was sick
She'd passed her MOT the previous day
Without so much as a hick.

But on the way home from the garage
She began to splutter and cough
I drove her so very gently
But oh dear she sounded quite rough.

She almost stopped altogether
When we went up a very small hill
She made a brave effort to keep going
Though my bubble was terribly ill.

Almost in tears I pulled up at the house
Six times in a mile she broke down
"It might be the electrics" my husband said
Encouragingly as he saw my frown.

We tried until midnight to put her right
but she seemed to get worse by the minute
Her electrics were fine, her carb was ok
Her tank had petrol in it.

There wasn't a thing we could think of
That hadn't already been checked
Plugs, carburettor, wiring, valves
The timing was quite correct.

I was heartbroken my bubble was dying
There was simply no more to be done
So we went to Burford in the Hillman
But it wasn't half as much fun.

We each bought ourselves a new tee shirt,
And of course we scoffed at the rain
We admired everyone else's bubbles
But somehow it wasn't the same.

"Tomorrow night" my husband said
"We'll have another try
There must be something we've not thought
of
We just can't let her die

So off I went to brownies
And got back around seven that night
I was met by my husband at the garage
So smelly and dirty, what a sight.

I think I've found your trouble love
He was a very happy chap.
He held aloft a fiddly bit
That looked like a petrol tap.

He'd drained the tank & removed the tap
He'd poked and prodded & blew
It was full of nasty white gungy stuff
The petrol just couldn't get through.

"Is that all that was wrong with it"?
I asked in amazed disbelief
"Is that what was stopping it going"?
Oh, what a blessed relief.

So now my bubble is fine gain
And feeling none the worse
The moral of this story is simple
Always think of the obvious first.

Isetta World – Romi Isetta This issue of Isetta World contains translations from the original Brazilian text as remembered by Alberto Belan of Santa Barbera, who, at the age of 81 years old is proud to have been responsible for the assembly line of the first Brazilian automobile, the Romi Isetta, which was produced in Santa Bárbara between the years of 1956 and 1961. Alberto says "Only I can feel happy and proud to have been part of this project so beautiful and that has meant so much to our history. "



The Isetta was actually the first vehicle to be built commercially in Brazil, and its arrival in Brazil, more precisely in Santa Bárbara d'Oeste, happened under the influence of Romi Industries, makers of engineering tools of the city. The company believed that this was the perfect time to put a car on the street and popularize automobiles in their country. The idea was proposed to Américo Emílio Romi, founder of the company by the stepchild of the founder , Carlos Chiti.

In the year of the bicentennial of Santa Bárbara d'Oeste, the Romi Isetta is one of the most important brands of the municipality. Alberto Belan has collected many items of memorabilia and also picturesque and funny facts of the time. One such memory was the participation in a car race. He explains that because the Romi Isetta did not have an appropriate motor for competitions, they chose to put ether in the tank. "We won the race with our Romi, but, on the other hand, that ended the engine of the vehicle, " he recalls, laughing.



As the cars left the factory assembly line, Belan recalled that the vehicles would leave for the verification tests. "We would put some fuel in the car and go out for a drive around Vila Romi. If we did not notice any irregularities, the cars went to the last step which was that of the final finish. It was a joy to drive one of those cars.



Another moment that Belan remembers with affection was his relation of friendship and respect with the ex- mayor of Santa Bárbara, Américo Emílio Romi who also owned Romi Industries. "My work in the company made this direct contact with him and, although very demanding, he was always a kind person."

According to Isetta World member Eugênio Chiti, Vice President of the Deliberative Council and heir to Romi's legacy, the volume of production of the vehicle released by Romi Industries was about 3 thousand units.

Unsurprisingly, candidates for restoration are still being discovered, like this 1961 Romi Isetta. This one has the BMW motor, correct for its age, although earlier cars had the ISO split-single "Twingle" motor with two cylinders but only one combustion chamber. The other BMW body parts



shown here include the long-pod headlights, which first appeared on the early bubble-window "standard" Isettas produced in Germany, as opposed to the headlamps-on-wheelarch of earlier Romi cars which were the same as the Italian ISO originals.

Eugênio writes that when the car began to be produced in Brazil, the buyers varied from families of industrialists, to the classic buyer: the middle class. Due to its characteristics and format, Romi-Isetta was also very successful among opinion-formers, such as artists, musicians, actors and also pilots. He also points out that part of the publicity of the car was addressed to the female audience, which made it popular in an eminently patriarchal society.

Designed to be a low-cost investment and maintenance vehicle, the selling price of Romi-Isetta was always the lowest among all cars sold in Brazil. To get an idea of values, in 1960, the magazine "Quatro Rodas "reported that the Romi-Isetta cost Cr \$ 370 thousand (or 38 minimum wages of that time), while a VW Fusca cost Cr \$ 540 thousand, or 56 minimum wages.

Romi even experimented with their own version of a two-door Isetta, although it never progressed beyond prototype stage.



Romi 2-door Isetta prototype

Today, The Fundacio Romi (the Romi Foundation) preserves the history of the company.



Romi-Isetta was the first vehicle produced in Brazil

According to the coordinator of the Cedoc (Historical Documentation Center) of the Romi Foundation, Sandra de Souza Barbosa, the Romi-Isetta collection is composed of approximately 2,200 items, including photographs, catalogues, textual documents, graphic materials, newspaper clippings, technical drawings, and two examples of the vehicle. She adds "The Romi-Isetta is the first car of national manufacture and for the city its production is a milestone because it places Santa Bárbara d'Oeste in the history of the Brazilian automobile industry".



Thank you to Eugênio, Sandra and Alberto for this fascinating information.

Terry Parkin, Moderator, Isetta World

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A Right Mayoral Ride

Nowadays everyone is talking about climate change and the gas guzzlers or particulate polluting diesel cars of today. Also, the use by politicians and business moguls of big limos is often berated as unnecessary and lavish lifestyle. Well go back only as far as 2005 to find one political stalwart who bucked the trend with a small fuel-efficient vehicle.



Mrs Lesley Cotterill was the Mayor of Northwich, other town and city leaders may lead a champagne lifestyle with Rolls-Royce or Bentleys but she was quite happy with her “Bubbly” life and Isetta 300. Lesley and her councillor husband Roy reckoned the 7-foot-long 300cc BMW Isetta always left their fellow dignitaries’ cars in the slow lane shade and were happy to break with tradition. They considered the “Beemer”, which was then 46 years old, to be the pride of their own fleet let alone that of the dignitaries’. When at functions where the Mayor of Chester would be with his Rolls-Royce it always seemed to be the Bubble that had the most attention.

The Bubble was very reliable and after picking it up from Birmingham they drove it home to Northwich and also to many other places for rallies or official functions. Lesley and Roy generally used the Bubble for local engagements but left it with their 1965 Austin A40 Farina and the 1937 Morris 8 that Roy was restoring when going further afield.

The Mayor and Bubble had national fame one day when Lesley was busy one Monday morning putting washing in the washing machine when the phone rang. She answered it but because of the washing machine noise all she heard was .. “!!*!*!! Sarah !*!*!*!! Live .. She replied “sorry I will have to turn the washer off, it is making a hell of a din”. Then she could hear the person on the other end Sarah Kennedy from BBC Live say “Are you the Mayor of Northwich with the bubble car?” “Yes” she replied. They talked for about ten minutes.

In the afternoon Lesley went in to town shopping where a number of people came up to her saying things like “I didn’t know the Mayor of Northwich does her washing on a Monday”, “You can’t put all that shopping in a bubble car” and “You were very clear on the BBC this morning” Well Lesley was more careful answering the phone in future!!



A more recent story about the Mayoral Bubble was when one of our Club members met a previous Isetta owner at a 90th birthday party and it turned out that Lesley and Roy’s Bubble reappeared in East Sussex for the birthday boy to reminisce in.

Both birthday boy and the Bubble doing well.

Chris Skepper.



THIS PHOTOCOPY OF PIERO B. RIVOLTA'S LETTER TO JOHN JENSEN SHOULD BE OF HISTORICAL INTEREST TO MANY MEMBERS. FRANK.

Il Presidente

Mr. John Jensen
449 Bryant Street
San Francisco, CA 94107

25 July 1991

Dear Mr. Jensen:

Thank you for your letter of May 10th, which I found waiting for me on my return from Italy. I am delighted to learn that you plan to publish a restoration guide for the BMW ISETTA.

I have enclosed a copy of our new history of ISORIVOLTA, which will provide you some of the historical background you seek. Of course, this document does not focus solely on the Isetta as it traces the development of my family's company in all its aspects.

I have read your text and I would like to clarify these points:

-- the basic idea for the Isetta came from Ing. Preti, who described his concept to my father, who was convinced that the idea was valid and began development. (Mr. Gobini was the factory manager.)

-- neither Giugiaro nor Ghia was involved in the design of the Isetta, although Giugiaro later worked on the design of the IsoRivolta GT under Bertone.

-- our family's house is still partially controlled by us, having been converted into condominiums, but the surrounding park does belong to the city of Bresso, as you say in your text.

I hope these few lines have been helpful. If you plan to attend the Iso & Bizzarrini Owners Club meeting in Monterey (details enclosed) during the weekend of August 16 - 18, I would be happy to meet you and to answer any questions you may have.

Good luck with your project!

Sincerely yours,

Piero B. Rivolta

PBR/s
Encl.

ISO RIVOLTA s.r.l.

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My First Car - 1918 RF

Following the ongoing request from the club for gazette material, I feel that I should write and share my Isetta experience.

Yes - the first car I ever bought was a 1960 LHD Isetta. This was in 1973, for the cost of a week's wage of £15 (aged 16), as an apprentice electrician. If only we could buy these for that price now eh?

The car was a "Basket case", despite being only 13 years old, it had already suffered a hard life. 1918 RF was a local car to me, was in bits and laid up in an old shed. What we would call today a "barn find"!

My parents were not impressed as I got it back home with the help of a friend and a horse box! The car had rust on the door, wings and floor; the usual places! Lots of bits were missing and it was to be a labour of love to restore. We all know that scenario!

I found the newly formed Isetta Owners Club in its inaugural year during 1978 and immediately joined, being the first Derbyshire member of the club and original member - number 66. I think I got a mention in gazette issue number 7, to be honest, like lots of members the car lay in a dry shed for many years due to the arrival of my son and daughter and other family commitments.

Renovation started in earnest in 1989, when I started on the chassis and engine. I had a monthly allocated budget limit for spares and my wife was disappointed that £100 worth of spares dropped through the letterbox in an envelope on a regular basis. I never realised that such a small car would require so much work.



At the time I was fortunate enough to make my own steel jig to make new front wings and parcel shelf/floor. The body took months of grinding and welding in preparation for paint. This was in the days that cellulose paint was readily available. To get a good finish I put on layer after layer, it must have added another 10% to its total weight.

Finally, in 1995 the work was completed. The engine fired nearly straight away and has never missed a beat in nearly 24 years. Every nut and bolt has been lovingly removed and cleaned and replaced if required,

I did all of the work myself apart from re upholstery of the bench seat.

What a great little car, passed its MOT first time and every year since. Every outing is an adventure, raising a smile or the turn of a head everywhere you go.

One day I was on a run out towards Buxton when I experienced being able to only select first gear, not ideal on a busy junction. I limped to a safe area and found that a split pin had come loose on the gear selector linkage and was lost on the road. After a 30-minute walk along the roadside I came across a rusty ladies' hair grip and used this to get me home with a full set of gears. How many cars can you do that with today?

I can honestly say that the love and affection for this little car has been incredible. One of the highlights for me was the track day at Silverstone in 1996. Invited by BMW, a few cars

attended and were able to run around the track. I think that I must hold the record for the slowest time around the track. Yes, I came last as I was still running in the engine. The club has served me well over the years and provided spares for my car all of the way through my epic restoration and for that I thank the devotion and commitment of the committee members both past and present. This was my first car, the bond and devotion has lasted 45 years. The first love of my life, just before my wife of 42 years! So thank you IOC of GB for some glorious years of support and friendship. Keep up the good work.

Bob Hensley.

The Club is pleased to welcome:-

Ray Glendinning	Bradford	Gervase Deakin	London
Jim Orcutt	USA	Greg Davis	Canada
Stuart Statham	Chester	Clive King	Wiltshire
Mark Springett	Northampton	Gustavo De La Parra	USA
Robert Agnew	Ireland	Gerard Auckram	New Zealand
David Ramsey	Tyne and Wear	Jim Little	USA
Karl Schubert	Glamorgan	Bryan O'Halloran	Ireland
Peter Brown	Cheshire	Simon Noakes	Leicestershire
Matthew Fielding	Shropshire	Steven Gerzon	Kent
Peter Dutton	Sheffield	Poul Sørensen	Denmark
Gordon Wilson	Durham	Darren Sear	Sussex
Yukihiro Sudo	Japan		

New Members since the last Gazette

SPACE RESERVED
FOR MEMBERS
ARTICLES AND LETTERS

BUY AND SELL & WANTED

FOR SALE.

BMW Isetta 300cc. First registered 8th October 1992. Originally manufactured 1962 and has original registration number. Last change of keeper to me September 1994. The vehicle is right hand drive and single rear wheeled. Current genuine mileage 38884. The last MOT expired on July 20th 2015.

In 2013 the vehicle was fully restored except for the engine. The vehicle has new rubbers and seals, leaf spring and shock absorber, wheel bearings, new wiring harness and bushes, swing arm, drop arm, hoses, drive couplings and fixed window rubber, silencer box twin pipe. The chassis has been powder coated, all brake pipes have been replaced and the vehicle has been fitted with a complete new rear section. as well as being completely rewired.

The vehicle won the Isetta Owners Club restoration car of the year award in 2015.

The vehicle has had the seat completely recovered in genuine leather.

The vehicle comes complete with a Paxton trailer which is fitted with an electric winch and lockable A frame.

Because of ill health of myself and my wife the vehicle has not been used since 2015 and I will need assistance from prospective buyers in getting the vehicle out of the garage where it is always kept on the trailer.

Price of the vehicle with trailer £16,000.00

Mike Paxton Telephone 01423 879033 or 07899 798 849.

The vehicle is located in Harrogate, North Yorkshire.



WANTED: Isetta project, 300cc and right-hand drive. Car needs to be complete and in restorable condition. If you've got one in your garage and aren't going to be able to finish it, I'd love to hear from you! Please ring/text Mike on 07443-611823 to discuss.

BOSCH DYNASTARTER by NIGEL GOYMER

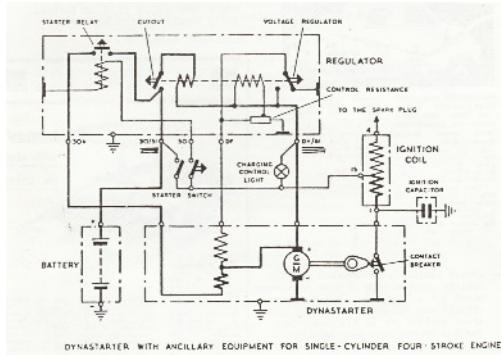
I have been asked to supply some info about the about the Dynastarter. I dug out the Bosch pamphlet on the unit and extracted some info that I feel may be of use. By its very nature It's is quite technical but you should find that it helps.

The Dynastarter comprises of three integral parts: - THE STARTER is of direct-cranking type and is a series-wound motor (giving maximum torque at the beginning of rotation). Armature windings and field windings are energised by the same current, which flows from the battery through a relay in the regulator case. THE DYNAMO is a shunt-wound d.c. generator whose armature is driven directly from

the engine crankshaft. The two-contact regulator keeps the output voltage constant and controls the output current according to demand. THE IGNITION system is a normal battery-ignition circuit, with a transformer coil. The cam has one lobe.

In a single cylinder four stroke engine you have one ignition coil and one contact breaker. The contact breaker interrupts the primary current in the coil once per engine revolution. This gives one spark per revolution. However, while one spark ignites the fuel/air mixture the next will fire uselessly, at the end of the exhaust stroke. The coil should have a short a high-tension lead as possible, but keep a clearance from the engine to stop overheating.

The pamphlet then goes on to talk about removal and re-fitting but only in general terms which are not specific to the Isetta. If anyone has any problems with reference to this, let me know and I'll send you a photocopy of the relevant chapter in the Isetta Maintenance Manual.



Dynastarters have very few problem's, but you should check that your contact breaker (points) gap is set correctly and that the contact faces are kept clean and free from dirt. You should know that the ignition may never be correctly set by altering the contact breaker gap. The dwell angle of the contact breaker would thus be altered, which would in turn lead to a less efficient ignition system. The carbon brushes should be checked after running in and then every 500 miles. Treat them gently, there are four and clean them with a petrol damp rag, never use wire wool, a file or

emery paper. If you buy a set from the spares service, easy to follow instructions are supplied. (I changed mine and had no problems) The commutator (the round bit with the windings that the brushes rub against) should be smooth and an even grey black colour. A maximum eccentricity of 0.012" is permissible as with brushes use a petrol damp rag to clean it, do not use a file. Ensure that there is an undercut between each segment, but do not damage the insulation. Also, it helps to ensure that your battery is in good condition and that the coil is securely held in place (for earthing purposes) and the leads to and from it are in good condition.

For the technically minded, the following information may be of use. The starter cranks the engine at 11 volts and 40 amps. Cut in voltage is 12.9v to 13.2v speed 1250 rpm. The dynamo turns at 2500 rpm. Open circuit voltage of 14.4v to 15.4v, output voltage of 13v to 14.2v at a current of 13 amps. The ignition contact breaker spring pressure should be 23 to 28 ozs.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

21st - 23rd June Bond Owners Club AGM Rally, Ashton Under Hill, Worcestershire. Full details soon. Dennis Jump 01530 223 965 or denthecaver@yohoo.co.uk

27th - 30th June Micromaniacs Darlington Rally, Hurworth Grange, Darlington, f 10 per night camping but NO EHUs. Eric Bruce 0191586 0834 micromaniacsclub.co.uk

4th - 7th July Bristol Microcar Club Rally. Keynsham Rugby Club BS31 2BE

23rd -26th August 11th Cheshire Microcar Rally, Sycamore Farm Caravan Site, Nether Alderley. Andrea Steggel 01625 860 893 Facebook: Cheshire Microcar Rally.

5th - 8th September 45th National Microcar Rally, Steps Farm, North Newton, Somerset. Fuller detail soon national-microcar-rally.co.uk

26th - 29th September- Micromaniacs Christmas in September, at Drax Sports & Social Club, Selby. Christmas Dinner booking is essential. Bob Bareham 01724 710747 micromaniacsclub.co.uk

31st October - 3rd November - Micromaniacs Oktoberfahrt - cheap and cheerful end to the rally season. Brighton Ferry pub neary Selby. Camping, toilets showers and electric hook-up available. Jim Jamieson - 07980 958 830 (office hours), 07517 673 374 (all other times) micromaniacsclub.co.uk

8th - 10th November NEC Classic Car Show Birmingham.

Colin Green a club member would like help with a restoration of his Isetta. He would like to hear from anyone within a 50 mile radius of Bridport. His address is Swan Cottage, Brook Street, Shipton Gorge, Bridport, Dorset. DT6 4NA Tel. 01308 898334
Email colingreen33@gmail.com

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

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CLASSIC CAR INSURANCE?



THE HARD WAY

- Ring an insurance broker that's not Hagerty. Spend half an hour explaining why your classic isn't just "an old banger".

- Politely decline home, pet and travel insurance. Patiently explain that you only need agreed value classic car insurance. To get off the phone, promise to get a quote for your home "in the near future".

- Go out to the garage, pull off your car's cover, snap several photographs. Email photos but hear back that "the photos are too dark" or "we need six and you only sent five".

- Cough up a £15-50 "certification" fee, on top of your policy premium.

- Wait on hold half an hour while their staff reviews the information. Lose the connection. Ring back, get transferred to three wrong departments. Get put on hold again.

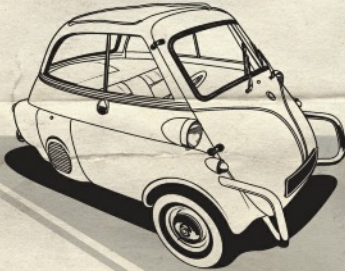
- The Agreed Value certification finally arrives. You begin looking forward to repeating the entire tedious, maddening process, fee included, if you want to increase your value again.



THE EASY WAY

- Call Hagerty. 0333 323 1383.

- Go for a relaxing drive.



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Good news for club members.

The club has agreed a discount on insurance premiums for club members insuring with Hagerty International Ltd. By quoting our club code CCIOC members will receive a 15% discount on their premium. Don't forget, laid up cars can also be insured.

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