

ISETTA **GAZETTE**

WINTER EDITION. 2012



NEC REPORT

The Isetta Owners Club of Great Britain Ltd.

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Forum autos.groups.yahoo.com/group/IsettaWorld

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United Kingdom (and members receiving an electronic gazette)	£18.00
Europe	£21.00
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Please ensure you give the Membership Secretary the full card number, the expiry date and the 3 digit security number from the back of the card above the signature strip. **By PayPal to isetta.subs@virginmedia.com**

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Editors Bit

Well, another year is coming to a close and for those of you who haven't finished your restorations why not turn your Isetta up the other way and use it as a coracle, we have certainly had enough rain this year for it to be an option. Let's hope next year bring better weather.

As you read further you will be reminded that next years subs are due and during the Christmas festivities would be a good time to extricate your cheque books from down the sofa and get writing to Jeff Todd your membership secretary who is anxious to hear from you. Remember, you can also pay by PayPal.

This is a good opportunity to thank the contributors to the Gazette especially John Jensen over in San Francisco a prolific writer for the club as without his input the Gazette would have a lot of empty pages.

I know I keep harping on about articles for the Gazette but as I have said before, you all have stories to tell so lets get them into print.

The odd graphic in the corner is a QR Code which is being used more and more as a quick access to almost anything if you have the right app. On your phone to scan it. This one will take you straight to the Isetta Owners Club website.

I have included a QR Code on the subs reminder on page 5 as a shortcut if you want to use it.



Ian Parris

Chairmans Chat

Well the AGM came and went with no upset and everyone was re-elected to their usual roles. Special thanks must go to Neale Turnham and Ian Lowther who attended and Ian even turned up in his Isetta. 10 out of 10 for that.

The provision of a New Spares service continues to be problematic but at last we have a volunteer to take on and develop this role. Apologies to members who have wished to use this service in the past few months but the committee felt that we needed to get it right and provide the professional and efficient service that members expect. Hopefully, by the time we publish the spring Gazette, all can be revealed.....watch this space.

Still no progress on my car but I have been to look at some lock up garages nearby so I can have a clearout of my garage at home thereby creating the environment to get on with my car, and probably some other repairs for friends and family, who knows.

On behalf of the Isetta Club Committee I would like to wish all our members a Merry Christmas and a Happy new year.

Jeff Todd

Front Cover. The Isetta Club Stand at the NEC Classic Motor Show displaying a selection of microcars

My Isetta is part of my dreamworld, a major part actually. I keep fussing with nonessential but intriguing aspects of the car. Actually this all began as a boy in winter, downstairs in the old dark basement sometimes used by my grandfather, but seldom. So my younger brother and I busied ourselves making knives, tomahawks, bows, arrows, wooden symbolic six-guns and lever-action repeaters. We played Tarzan in summer, cowboys-and-indians in autumn. With wooded hills up behind our old house, a creek just a couple miles to the east, a car bridge and railroad bridge over it, we enjoyed a veritable paradise for boys. My brother was especially good at making a bow and arrows. We used straight hollow weeds for arrows. Bows then were like Robin Hood's, a solid piece of wood. A friend of ours tried skiing down a hill at school one winter. He borrowed his uncle's strap-on skis, solid oak. He would not allow anyone else to try, they were his uncle's old skis.

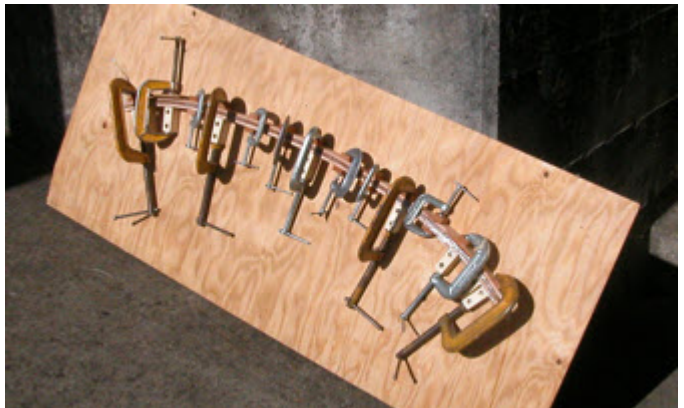
I became a father in 1990 and began reading *Wooden Boat* more often. I sent away for the plans to build a 7ft pram dinghy sailboat out of plywood. I figured I'd make a scale model first, to see what was involved in boat-building. By the time we put it in the water, setting the rudder and trying to sail the model, Julian saw immediately that it needed radio controls and a motor. Ah well.

As Julian reached middle school I decided one summer to build the full-size boat. He mostly supervised, and I did a lot of sawing, sanding, gluing, clamping and epoxying the elements together. My wife sewed a very nice sail for the boat, and our son did sail it several times with shaky confidence on San Francisco Bay, in the wind but in partly sheltered waters. I was so proud of him.

He also raced 2-man 14-ft boats and did extremely well at the rudder, his favourite place. But soon he was learning to drive a car, and by sixteen was driving across the bay to Marin Academy for high school in his beloved VW GTI, an '05 model that he still drives now, but in Los Angeles where he edits commercials.

So... one day I hopped in the Isetta to go for a trip to Ikea, and chose to drive a few miles on the freeway. As I got up to speed, the sunroof caught the wind and flew open. I didn't know it was not latched. When that occurs, as we all know, the steel middle roof bow goes to the rear and slams down hard with a loud "whack" against the steel body, fortunately not the rear window. This event has never made a dent, but always upsets me. I began thinking about a lighter roof bow, maybe just a sheet of tempered aluminium sheet. I slept on it, turning it over in my sleep.

A few days later as I awoke I had a vision of a thin laminated roof bow made from exotic hardwood, even though pine would have been adequate. My Isetta deserved more than pine. At MacBeath Hardwood in Berkeley I found some very nice thin sheets of hardwood laminates, selecting a pack of East Indian Rosewood with a straight grain for tensile strength. But, mahogany would have been just as good for this.



To determine the curvature, I laid a straight piece of pine across the closed taught sunroof, near the steel centre bow and measured the space between the level board and the sunroof every 4 inches from the centre out to the edge. I laid out those points on a piece of ½” plywood and added a nail at each point. Then I took a piece of ¼” thick pine and bent it to form the curve, drawing it on the plywood.

I spaced a few wood blocks along the line, screwing them to the plywood base. With this curve, I could glue a centre strip of 1/8” door-skin plywood with a thin strip of wood laminate on each side, and then a cover of plastic-wrap, and an inner and outer strip of ¼” wood. That sandwich was then clamped to the blocks to form the desired curve.

The next day I put it against the curve of the roof and found it did not conform tightly enough to the roofline. I gestimated the amount of correction and moved the blocks to slightly more than the error, and made another bow. It was perfectly curved. Knowing that, I could use my best materials and add some sheetrock netting between the layers of wood for more tensile stiffness without altering the curve.

Wood glue would have been fine for this with an outside coat of varnish, but I used boat epoxy. This makes for an excellent roof bow and is light enough not to frighten me or damage my Isetta if I should forget to latch the roof before driving at speed.

A few years later I built a lightweight plywood bike trailer to haul groceries in. It uses thin plywood laminates reinforced with sheetrock netting to copy the Isetta rear spring suspension. Yes, I stole it from ISO and BMW. Hopefully they won't mind.

Recently I thought about how I might have created similar springs by sawing the front ends off a pair of snow-skis. Or, maybe I could cut 1” strips from skis and make a crossbow: only for target practice, survival from the effects of global warming, extreme capitalism or the reprise of the dinosaurs. Man's primitive side is not very distant from where we now stand. Hopefully we won't have to return.

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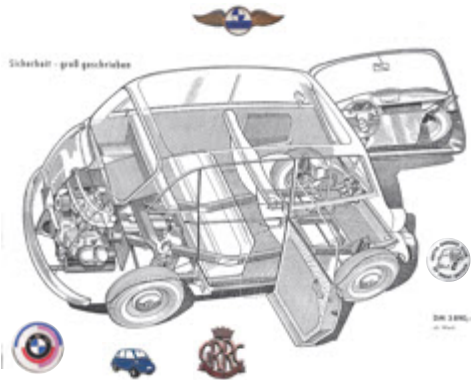
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Poster sent in by Alan Town showing his Blue & White 600

MY TWO ISETTAS FORTY SIX YEARS APART BY ROGER HALL.

First of all I would like to thank my wife for putting up with my restoration project and encouraging me, when many times I was ready to throw in the towel.

At the age of 16 I bought myself an NSU Quickly, I passed my test on the NSU and went on to have a succession of small motor bikes and a Vespa scooter.

As an 18year old Apprentice Electrician on about £5 a week I was fed up of getting to work wet and cold and then having to spend all day on a cold building site.

Someone told me there was an Isetta for sale belonging to a man with a false leg and he could not manage the clutch, I went round to see him and did a deal on KNH 548, it was about a year old. I felt like a King getting to work the next day all dry and warm.

I went all over in that little car and it never let me down. I took my Mum from Northampton to Shrewsbury and Birmingham to visit her sisters.



The black & white photograph is of me and two of my mates on holiday in Skegness. We went for two weeks and sent the luggage on ahead by British Rail. That is me on the left age 19 years. I still see my mate Dave, he is the one on the right. He lives in Spain now and my wife and I go every year for a couple of months to visit him and his wife.

I still had KNH 548 when I met my wife in 1963 in Louth, Lincolnshire and used to travel from Northampton to Louth every other week-end, again it never let me down, a round trip of 240 miles.

I was driving around Northampton one day and there was a big bang and the car stopped. It had to be towed into the local Isetta dealer which was Moto Baldet in Northampton. The bad news was the dreaded valve had sheared, it was a common fault on early cars as BMW used to join the valve stem, I think it cost me £60 to have it repaired but that is all the car cost me in three years, apart from fuel, oil, plugs, etc.

I sold the car in 1964 when I passed my test for a full licence. a workmate bought it for £25, that paid for the insurance of the Hillman Minx I had just bought.

FORTYSIX YEARS LATER.

Having run my own Electrical Contracting Business for thirty years I retired. My two Sons who carried on the business said I must have something to do and that is when I had the mad idea that I would like to own an Isetta again, only this time I would like to restore one so I bought a 1962 Basket Case Reg. No. 986 NYD I bid on eBay and won the car for £1020.

My Son and myself went to collect the car from Sheffield, it was dark when we got there so did not have much chance to have a good look at what I had just bought. The next morning my wife and I went out to the garage to see it, what a shock , it was a lot worse than I thought when I handed over my £1020, I bet he





had a smile on his face when we drove off.

I had spent a lot of time racking out the garage and installing part bins so everything down to the smallest screw and bolt had their own home until it would be rehoused on the car.

The next few weeks were spent in my garage stripping down what was once an Isetta 300 Plus. Everything was rust and rot. The floor was more holes than steel, the rear parcel shelf had rusted away, wings, sills and inner wings were just as bad. I removed everything from the body, the door was the only part that did not fall apart. The seat still had its horsehair instead of foam.

With help from a couple of mates we lifted the body off the chassis and believe it or not it did not look too bad. I took the chassis for a grit blast, if it came back as bad as the body I was going to scrap the project. It came back as sound as a pound so two coats of Hammerite Matt and I put it to the back of the garage so I could see what was needed for the body.

I ordered from Mike Hurn at the IOC. Floor, parcel shelf, sills, inner wings, rear wings and battery box. While I was waiting for parts to arrive I repaired the petrol tank and started to strip down the engine and final drive to see what parts were needed. I had the engine rebuilt by a motorcycle company. Everything else I did myself.

At last the body parts arrived and a mate of mine did all the welding and body repairs, the parts we could not buy he made for me, window sills rear window frame and patches for headlight fixings. After about two months it started to look like a car again.

Next came the re-spray. We made a tent inside the garage and started by under sealing which Isettas never had, then the etch primer and then two days rubbing down. It was now ready for painting. I chose a deep blue as the original buff log book stated only that the colour was blue. After five coats the car looked good and I could not wait to start re-fitting all the new parts I had bought, new door hinges new glass rubbers and new sunroof.



I made a trolley using half inch ply and casters from Machine Mart cutting a hole in the ply for the battery box, I could then turn the body around to work on each side like a turntable. When I had reinstated all the parts I could it was time to work on the chassis.

I stripped the front suspension units down, fitted new bushes also kingpins and bushes. I replaced the complete braking system, master and brake cylinders, new piping and flexible hoses, brake light switch and new drive shaft couplings. I also had to replace the rear axle, the chain was okay. Next was to install onto chassis final drive, rear suspension, engine and gear box. Easy with the body off, I would not want to do it with the body on. I connected the brake system, clutch and throttle and wired up temporary so the engine would start and run before the body was installed. I fitted new stainless exhaust system with heater and new stainless air filter canister. It all looked so great I did not want to put the body on.

Next Putting On The Body.

Three mates and myself lifted the body onto the chassis with care, did not want to chip the lovely paint work job. All the holes in the floor lined up with the chassis fixings so was more than pleased we had built the body correctly. We rebuilt the body using chassis as a template as advised by Mike Hurn. Next step was easy fitting dashboard, steering wheel, wiring up all the lights and dynastart etc. The hardest part of all was getting the reverse gear, it took me three days of in and out of the car to adjust the rods and cable.



Last of all was fitting glass and rubbers. The sliding windows were a pain but got there in the end. The recovered seat looked great.

Now to see if it will run up and down my drive. The engine started first time and off I go to the front gate, about thirty yards. Next was to get my V5, Dave Watson did that for me, I had already checked with Swansea to make sure it had not been a write off, they told me it was still registered and I could keep the original number, the last registration in the log book was 1966.



It then went for the first MOT and passed no problem. I have had three MOTs after restoration and have had no problems at all. I go out for a run only when the sun shines as I do not want to get it wet.

If anyone is restoring an Isetta at the moment and want to chat with me about any problems they are having, and I had plenty, my wife would say it was a mardy car if she saw my face when things would not go right, please ring me on 01472 826009 or email janethall17@hotmail.co.uk

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John Jenson Restoration of Isetta. You must buy this book, I could not have got my car on the road without it.

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Last but not least I would like to thank my good friends Mark Campbell for his body work skills and John Major for his tig welding skills



Think Small by John Jensen

No, that's not a typo. IBM founder, Thomas J. Watson originated the word "think" in a company publication in the 1920's. Later it became an IBM motto of sorts, printed on stone and raised-wood wall pieces in IBM offices.

The term "think small" was created by Julian Koenig and George Lois at BBDO for VW. Ah, the 50's in Manhattan, and Carry Grant posing with an Isetta on Park Avenue. I hope they gave him one in the color of his preference.



The Fadex Company was importing the Isetta from BMW Munich, perhaps at the tail end of bubble-window production, which corresponds to the beautiful and successful advertising blitz for the VW. "Think smaller" might have worked for selling Isettas, but BBD&O may have objected.

It was the era of James Dean, Marilyn Monroe, Elvis, Terry Thomas, Peter Sellers, rock and roll, electric windows, power brakes, cafe racing and surfing. But... about the photo.

This vessel served to get some advertising attention, especially in NY. Daily commuting was not unusual there. Trains arriving at Grand Central Station had been doing this for eons, long before the crash of '29. Manhattan was the place to be for business, but successful people moved out to the suburbs for a quieter life with the wife and kids, another world, really.

Some of those upper one-percenters lived up the Hudson River. As they came to enjoy a more resplendent life, a few preferred their own boat to come to the city. The sight of this Isetta juxtaposed on the fore-deck is truly thought-provoking. Maybe the owner takes his wife shopping or visiting at times, tying up at other ports for an Isetta driving adventure somewhere away from home, the Erie Canal maybe, a sort of reckless adventure and a chance to live a very different life, an Isetta life, away from NY doing your own driving for a change.

Considering this, an average person might think, "Wait a minute. I could afford a car like that for myself or my wife to use at home, and not have to rely on the bus or streetcar to go shopping.

And so, for a certain modest percentage of persons with dreams and unique vision, those Isettas found homes, and in many cases remained with the same owner for a lifetime, if only because there were too many wonderful memories connected to that Isetta to let it go.

Forty or fifty years later, with some dreams having faded, the Isetta is eventually sold to someone, perhaps another person with those dreams, someone ready to tackle a restoration project, make that cute little Isetta new again.

The Isetta on the boat might still be around somewhere, maybe up the Hudson in a glamorous old estate, kept in a brick or stone garage with a few other vehicles in a place for honored memories.

Every now and then, another one pops up.

The Joy of NEC – by Neal Bircher

“Why has it got a BMW badge on the front?”

“Fibreglass, aren’t they?”

“Two-stroke, is it?”

“My first car was one of those.”

“Worth a lot of money nowadays, aren’t they?”

“If only I’d kept it ...”

“My friend drove his up to a wall, and because they have no reverse gear ... *Blah! Blah! Blah!*”

If you own an Isetta, you’ll be very familiar with each of the above comments, and no doubt plenty more besides. For me they are a source of entertainment, playing buzzword bingo to myself on the club stand at the *National Classic Motor Show*, and it doesn’t take long to fill up a card! The show is held at the NEC, and it’s that event, rather than the latest instalment of my 31 year restoration, that is the subject of my story today.

The joy that I derive from being a member of the Isetta Owners’ Club is somewhat tempered with a slight feeling of guilt that I am one of the 95% of members who benefit from the efforts of the small number of volunteers who run the club, without making a contribution of my own. In recent years I have appeased that guilt a little by volunteering to help man the stand at the NEC for a day or two each year, and I thought I’d share a flavour of this year’s experience with you.



Alan Town’s
BMW 600

I did the Friday and the Saturday this time. Friday is press day, although members of the public can also buy tickets – albeit at a higher price than those for Saturday or Sunday. These factors, along with it being a week day, mean that most of the “customers” are either journalists or old people. It also means that it’s less busy than the other days, and that means more time to sneak off from my duties on the stand to explore the show. And what a show! Something like 1400 vehicles of all shapes, sizes, types and ages, from Beetles to Bentleys, Metros to Morgans, and from piles of scrap to pristine show-stoppers on the concourse stand - among their number this year being our very own Dave Watson’s beautiful blue Isetta, which is surely the best in the country.



Dave Watson buffing his Bubble

A ticket to the car show also gets you into the neighbouring classic bike show, which is also crammed with plenty of gleaming metal to drool over. I spoke to a bloke on the FS1-E stand:

“My first bike was one of those.”

“Worth a lot of money nowadays, aren’t they?”

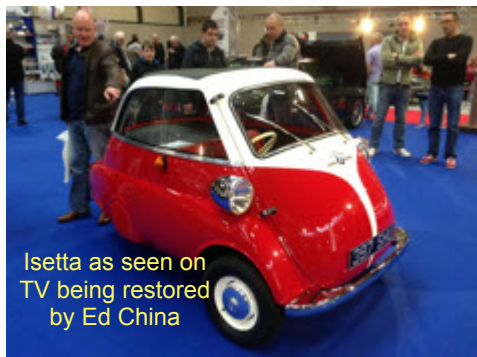
“If only I’d kept it ...”

And I struggled to drag myself away from a brilliant yellow Yamaha RD400 with a “For Sale” sign on it.

So there are cars and bikes a-plenty, but there's also the autojumble. No trip is complete without investing in suitcase-full of presents for my little blue friend ... preferably including something shiny. This year it was a sparkling new chrome number plate light.

Well, that was the Friday over with, save for the brief drive to my B&B, followed by a table for one in a curry house, a few beers in a rough pub hosting a packed nineteen eighties disco, and then back to the B&B to watch episodes of *Father Ted* until my lager stash ran out in the early hours of the morning. Evenings don't get much better than that!

Next morning I crawled out of bed and got to the NEC just the five minutes after Lee Turnham – tireless organiser of the club's stand at the show for many-a-year, who had travelled 75 miles more than I had! First task was to do something that I had neglected to do on the Friday – run around and sponge freebies from insurance company trade stands: two cloth bags, two fancy pens, two packets of mints, two wind-up torches, two golden memory sticks ... My kids are still young and naive enough to think that I spent loads of money on them.



Isetta as seen on TV being restored by Ed China

Much of the rest of the day was whiled-away playing “See how many people I can entice into a bubblecar.” That's a pretty easy game though, as every woman and child (as well as just about every man too, if they are honest about it) wants to sit in an Isetta, and Lee's dad, Neale, had his car on the stand, and his door is always open.

We had, as ever, an eclectic mix of visitors, including Richard Gunn and Mike Le Caplain from *Classic Car Weekly*, who featured the club's stand in the following week's issue, as

well as somebody from a production company who offered my Isetta a(nother) film role, this time starring alongside Kirsten Dunst. Whether or not that comes off remains to be seen, but they have been back in touch since, so it's looking quite likely.

So, if you haven't been, then I hope that I have whetted your appetite for the show that's simply known as “The NEC”, and that you might come along next year. I'll be there, as ever, doing my bit for the club, but, as you may have gathered, it's actually not really so much of a chore!”

Right, I'm off to drag my Isetta from the garage and take it for a spin. Wouldn't it be just so much easier if only it had its own reverse gear?

Neal Bircher.



Isetta on the Carol Nash Insurance stand

Rallies and Batteries in 2012 by Mike Ayriss

We have been to the Dutch rally quite a few times, over the last 20 years, always receiving a warm welcome, but, this year was a little special as our Isetta HEG 175 clocked up 20,000 miles en-route to the rally, at Sevenum, near Venlo which is close to the German border.

Rebuilt in 1985/86 I have not touched the engine, except changing the valves, as BMW recommended at 14,000 miles, and also a little later when the engine rattle became louder, the cam chain tensioner, it was almost completely worn out!

This engine has an alloy con rod so I was expecting it to fail by now but I think changing the oil every season regardless of the mileage it has helped extend its' life span to a total of 28,000 miles so far (I reset the milometer to zero during the restoration by the way).

We drive the car at a maximum of 44mph for long engine life unless provoked to go faster which can sometimes happen when changing lanes on the motorway, for example, yes we do use it on motorways but only when we have to!

Now I noticed on the outbound journey to Sevenum an "acid" smell and suspected the battery was gassing, maybe due to a cell failing, so I ignored it, as I tend to use batteries that have seen their best days on one of my motorcycles, this one being from a 1979 BMW R100RT that was made by Varta and is a 30Ah capacity, an ideal size for the car.

The same smell was in the car on the 130 mile return drive to Hook Van Holland so I decided to look into the problem after the National Micro Car Rally, the following weekend, which this year was held near to Great Yarmouth.

We trailed the Isetta to Yarmouth and I was a little red-faced when all the starter would produce is a "click", the battery was flat! Help was on hand as it always is and a friend produced a battery charger, and over night the problem went away, but we still smelled that gassing battery whilst enjoying the runs around Norfolk and as the season was all but over I did not need to worry.

The Micro Maniacs Club had an Oktoberfahrt Rally, close to Pickering, so this year we went along. The run out on Friday saw the Isetta dragging up some really steep hills, quite the opposite of Holland and Norfolk, but it made the top on every occasion, however, we were getting a strange smell in the car something a kin to fertilizer?

The Varta wet lead / acid battery from my old R100RT had been replaced during the month or so between rallies with an Exide Gel type, from my modern BMW R1150RT, as that had served me for over 9 years and I knew one day it would just stop working so I replaced it and put it on standby for the Isetta not knowing that I was going to use it quite that soon. The Dynastart was putting at least 15 volts into the battery, when I checked, so full use of the lights all the time solved some of the overcharge problem until a cure was found.



Bosch have stopped making the mechanical Starter/Regulator Part No 0190219003 and have also stopped supplying the Regulator Part No 019 035 0068, that was fitted to the VW Beetle, however, they still offer an electronic version Part No 190040099 so we can still put this one together with a Lucas Starter Part No SRB 333 to solve our charging/starting problems. I decided not to go down this route as Dynamo Regulators Ltd in Hampshire offer a specific Dynastart regulator Part No DVR2-S that not only holds the voltage down to 14 volts but it also has an overload facility set at 8 amps protecting the Dynastart from

passing a high current that may shorten the life of this expensive electrical device we rely on so much.

Does it work you ask? I don't know yet but I will forward a full report when I have fitted it, in the very near future, in readiness for the 2013 season, of course.



Our Isetta's Double Cardan Driveshaft

Once you remove it and clean it up, then add a fresh coat of paint, you can see just how beautiful this driveshaft is. One end is rotated 60° from the other. Each end has three legs that fit nicely on a 6-bolt giubo, which fits nicely on a 3-bolt flange of the chain-drive and transmission. When combined with two rubber giubos, a constant velocity joint is created. It may seem simple enough, but achieving this did not come easy.



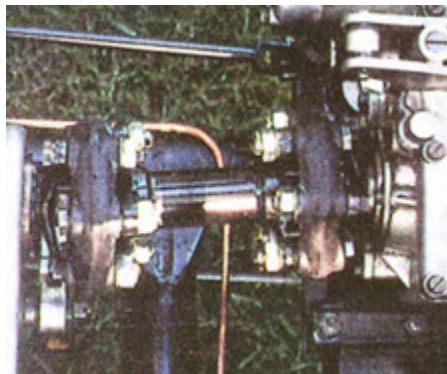
Its use on the ISO Isetta was fairly revolutionary. I googled to find a modest amount of history, but would need to study Italian and German to learn more than on Wikipedia/English. There are many types of flexible joints, generally made of steel for automobile use. Search under “universal joints”, then “constant velocity”, “Cardan” and finally “double Cardan joints”.

One can then appreciate the clever simplicity using the giubo system in our Isetta's “double Cardan driveshaft”. Terry Parkin turned me onto this, having used some complicated mathematics himself to keep his former single-wheel trailer upright. I wish I knew more than I have found so far, but it is extremely complicated. I can no longer figure the square root of a number with only pencil and paper. Fortunately, I have square root on my old Casio, but not my iPhone. Anyway, we don't have to do the math. Cardano did that ages ago.

1545: Gerolamo Cardano wrote a book on The Rules of Algebra, and showed how to solve the Quartic equation. (see: Ars Magna, The Rules of Algebra, ISBN 0-486-67811-3, Dover, published again in 1993) But if you go here (http://www.storyofmathematics.com/16th_tartaglia.html), a kind author named Luke Mastin has provided some very exciting history on mathematic experts Cardano, Tartaglio and Ferrari from that period.

Here's the “quartic” equation, go figure.
$$Q(x) = a_4x^4 + a_3x^3 + a_2x^2 + a_1x + a_0$$

1856: Lokomotivführer Friedrich William Goetze, invented the copper-asbestos gasket (probably for steam engines). The Goetze Company began in Burscheid, Germany. (review item 5-104 on your Isetta exhaust header pipe)



The company became Goetze AG, today a part of Federal Mogul, also Johnson Controls, with an office in Burscheid still.

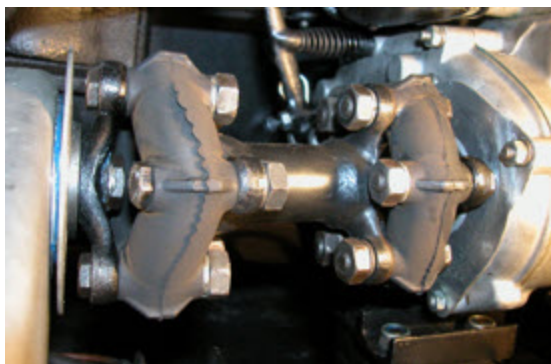
1896-1988 Antonio Boschi probably created the “giubo”. The word is a conjunction of giunto and Boschi, something like that. Most likely it was Boschi who combined this flexible rubber ring with a driveshaft to create the Double Cardan Giubo driveshaft used in the Isetta. ISO would know. Note the angle of ISO driveshaft.

“Antonio Boschi, with a degree in engineering from the Politecnico of Milan, worked for the Pirelli company in the production and elaboration of rubber (R&D), and was responsible for important patents, which earned him a Gold Medal for Work and Economic Progress from the Italian Chamber of Commerce in 1963.” Might the Isetta have had something to do with that Gold Medal, or was it Pirelli Cinturatos? That Cinturato rubber would make strong but flexible couplings don't you think?

A lightweight 3-wheel ISO Isetta might have simply used a rear wheel powered directly from the 2-stroke engine, set up like a Vespa scooter or a Schmitt. But the ISO Isetta became a 4-wheel vehicle with engine to the far right and the unique “double Cardan giubo drive-shaft” connecting the transmission to the chain-drive / rear-axle. Giubos had been in use, but not necessarily in this manner.

ISO could have lined up the transmission and chain drive, but they didn't. BMW might have, at the start of Isetta 250 production, but they didn't either. Even when BMW moved the rear springs up on top of the rear cross member as part of the sliding-window Isetta improvements, the driveshaft remained offset. After reading about the Double Cardan system, I suspect the offset remains for a good reason. But, due to coupling failures over the years, many Isetta owners have adjusted their motor-mounts to swing the engine more toward the chain drive, lessening the angle of the drive-shaft, and gently violating the double Cardan concept.

Here is my driveshaft with standard Goetze Giubos. Recently, professional Isetta restorer, Greg Hahs in Southern California came up with a different approach. He moved the rear springs a bit forward on the frame mounts to help line up the driveshaft with the input and output shafts, substituting a different length connecting link to the chain-case as well.



He uses heavy-duty couplings that are generally too stiff for the Isetta. He says this concept works smoothly. He has set this up for several Isetta owners already, and offers a kit for those who want to give it a whirl.

He has thus moved the input-output shafts closer together, but still parallel, while diminishing the angle of the driveshaft. Time will tell if this version of the double Cardan concept proves to be a marriage or a confrontation of steel and rubber. My praises to Greg for his creativity regardless of the long-term outcome. I'm prepared for anything. It's not my car.

I envision Antonio and Gerolamo seated at a table nearby, sipping an excellent vintage Italian wine while looking down from the wings. They're curious, too.

Maybe I should get on eBay and unload my two pair of Goetzes and one pair of 6-segment Jurids, while they still have reasonable value. What would a hedge-fund manager do?

John Jensen

The View from the Counting House

The AGM was held on the 28th October and as Ian (rightly) asked the Committee (and Members) to write something for the Gazette, herewith my contribution in the shape of a short summary of where the Club is financially.

At the top level, the Clubs accounts for 2011 have been audited and submitted to Companies House by the required submission date. We are solvent and made a small profit in 2011 of some £ 458.

As most of you will know the Club New Spares had a difficult 2011 and unfortunately only £ 2500 of spares turnover was made in the year compared with the more normal £ 10,000 or so. This in turn led to a much lower profit despite a number of cost saving actions being implemented. All profits are generally re-invested into making new lines of spares available. In this year 2012, the New Spares service has been suspended for a considerable time and although we are intending to re-start the service this may not be until the 2nd quarter of 2013. Meantime we have a reasonable amount of cash available c. £13,000 and we will be looking at ways of using some of it to bring in new lines of New Spares. Obviously our ability to continue such funding will depend on an ongoing good level of Subscription income and I would encourage all members to renew their membership as soon as they can.

In summary then, we have a Club that is financially viable, at least in the short and medium term and which is reasonably placed for the future, assuming only that the Membership holds up at a reasonable level.

Bob Crompton



Scoutacar of Chris Wayman next to a 1915 Overland at " Dieppe Retro " early in September

BUY AND SELL



I have a limited quantity of 100mm square melamine coasters featuring an Isetta car available for sale. Price £1.50 each including postage. I can be contacted on 01988 500593 or by email: davidcarle@btinternet.com.



PARTS FOR SALE

Tom Reilly has various parts for sale , he can be contacted by email at jaqueline49@hotmail.co.uk