

# ISETTA **Gazette**



**WINTER EDITION .....**

*J.F. Wareing*

# The Isetta Owners Club of Great Britain Ltd.

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Forum [autos.groups.yahoo.com/group/IsettaWorld](http://autos.groups.yahoo.com/group/IsettaWorld)

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| United Kingdom (and members receiving an electronic gazette) | £18.00 |
| Europe   | £21.00 |
| Rest Of World  | £25.00 |

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## **Editors Bit**

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Another year comes to an end, and with it the need to renew memberships. I have added a stuffer into the Gazette as a reminder to you all so get out the chequebooks and present Jeff (the Membership Secretary) with a new year's gift.

You may not have noticed, but you can now pay your membership via the online spares system, but do bear in mind you need to create an account first and wait for approval to pay your subs. This may be a better way for our overseas members to pay due to the different currencies used. If you do decide to pay this way it would be a good idea to drop me an email at [isetta@ianparris.com](mailto:isetta@ianparris.com) to ensure I register your payment, otherwise you may miss out on future gazettes..

The online spares have been a resounding success keeping both Lee and me busy. If you have any trouble using the system let me know, and if you have questions regarding the actual spares please contact Lee, but do remember, apart from some secondhand spares from Mike Ayriss we only have those spares listed. You are of course welcome to ask us if we can obtain other items or where they can be obtained.



The Committee wish you all a Very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.  
Ian Parris

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## **Chairmans Chat**

The AGM was held at Beedles Lake Golf Club near Leicester and all the officers and committee were re-elected unopposed. I hope that is a sign of confidence in the running of the club. I must thank members who attended Clive & Wendy Batchelor and Andrew Weightman & Dawn.

Jo and I attended the Classic Car Show at the National Exhibition Centre on the Sunday. We both had great day, the size of the event was magnificent and we had to ask directions to our stand. Thanks must go to Dave Watson who masterminded our presence for the first time and those members who provided cars. I must also thank Lee Turnham for his efforts over the years organising our stand at the NEC; as most of you will know Lee is now concentrating his efforts on becoming New Spares Manager and that side of the club is flourishing, thank you Lee.

Thank you to all those members who sent me information on how to deal with my seized brakes, hopefully I'll get round to them over the winter and have something positive to report next time.

Jeff Todd



## Bubble's Big Adventure (Continued)

### David Marsh

The first part of the journey to Paraparaumu takes you up the Ngauranga Gorge. This is a vicious hill, and even some modern camper vans struggle to get up this hill. I took a run at it and soon I was down to second gear and 20mph. The other drivers were very understanding and the first of many Ipad pictures were taken from the overtaking cars. We ground our way up that hill; it seemed never ending, but we made it still in second gear; well done Isetta.

Once over the Gorge and along the gorgeous coastline road it was just a few miles to go to the overnight stay at the Golf View Motel. We arrived to find it was **NOTHING** like the pictures etc on the web site on the internet that I had booked it from, it was rather tired and run down.



Once we were in I phoned Chris Butler, a member of the Microcar Club who had offered to show us around in one of his Borgward cars. He drove us round the area in his Borgward Isabella car; this is a really nice part of New Zealand. The Kapiti coast is well known as a great place to retire and we could all see why as we drove along the coast with the sea glinting in the setting sun.



The sea views and the relatively spacious housing areas made it look very hospitable. We also went back to Chris's house to see his latest project a Borgward Coupe.

Chris then took us to dinner at a local Vietnamese restaurant The Khmer Kron which was super.



We returned to the motel and planned our route for the next day. Chris had made a recommendation but Ronnie and Dave Stenning (who know the area well) felt his route might be a little too hilly and twisty for the Isetta. We decided to leave the final decision to the next morning.

### **Day Two Monday 4<sup>th</sup> of February 2013**

We woke up to find that Dave Stenning was up and had found a nearby bakery open and returned with fresh and still warm bread rolls.

After making our farewells and cancelling the booking we had at the motel for the return trip we set off. The route selected that day by Dave Stenning and Ronnie was to travel North on Highway 1 through the towns of Levin, Foxton and Sanson, and Bulls where stopped for coffee and to get some rolls for lunch as we had now decided to try to make our overnight stop at Taihape.

All along this route Dave Stenning was able to make contact with his radio mates all over New Zealand telling them our progress. It is amazing how well organised this "secret" network is and also how useful it would be in a disaster situation.

After lunch went through Hunterville and Dave and I stopped for lunch under the railway viaduct some 30kms outside Taihape. Lunch was interrupted by a heavy rain shower; the precursor for what was to follow.

We arrived in Taihape at 1.42 pm. We went for tea and cakes at the Brown Sugar Café and decided that it was best to stop here for the night as it was a long way to the next big town and the weather looked grim. We went through the AA accommodation book and found three likely Motels. We selected the Taihape Motel. This is a typical New Zealand concrete block motel (as immortalised by the local group Hot Club Sandwich). We chose this motel because:

- It was off the main road.
- Backed onto the Police Station.
- Gave us a discount.
- Had an in room meal service from one of the local restaurants.

By the way, Taihape is famous for its annual gum boot throwing contest day and not a lot else.



The motel is used by a lot of travelling workers, and gave us the opportunity for this photo!

The in-house meal was fine and went well with the Stoke Dark beer and excellent red wine we got at the local liquor store.

The rain started early that evening and got steadily worse during the night. It woke me up several times. This did not bode well for the next day as we were going to drive across the Infamous Desert Road to Taupo.



### Day Three Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> of February 2013

Before I start on this day's events; a few words about the Desert Road.

This high (1074 metre) 35km long plateau runs through the centre of the North Island from Rangipo to Waiouru. It is a wild and desolate place; the army has its HQ and training camp in the middle of this area at Waiouru. The army also has its museum there. On this road when the weather is good you normally get to see fantastic views of the mountains of Ruapehu, Ngauruhoe, Tongariro. However it

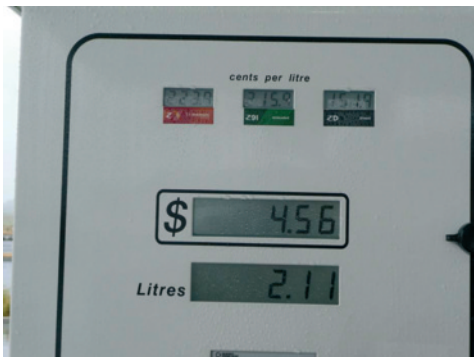
is not unknown for snow to fall on this plateau in the height of summer.

The road across the plateau is not flat, it has quite a few vicious dips and short sharp hills, its road surface is always under repair and is in a rough state due to the weather and the heavy traffic that uses the road.

We left Taihape via the fuel station. We also took with us extra fuel as well (just in case) and a flask of hot water and warm clothes. The first part of the trip that day in the rain was OK but as we approached the plateau the weather got colder; the inside of the Isetta is unheated, condensation ran down the windows and they fogged up again as soon as Dave Stenning had wiped them. It was so cold and wet that the letters on the running in sticker fitted to the windscreen fell off and the whole sticker gradually disintegrated. Several times we had to stop for road works. One in particular was at the foot of a very steep hill. We tried all we could but it required first gear to get up that one. All along this road heavy lorries overtook us, in the rain and wind. that day it was very hairy. (We always pulled over when we could but there are very few such places on that road.)

After an hour and quarter of this we arrived at the Army Museum in Wairau *"Never in the field of human travel was a coffee and cake needed so much"*.

We spent an hour here warming up and looking around the museum shop where some keepsakes were selected. After taking some photos and topping up the Isetta's fuel tank with 2.11 litres we were off on the final leg to Taupo where we were to meet up for lunch.



As we approached the great lake of Taupo the sun broke through the clouds. Dave and I stopped in the first of the many viewpoints of the lake. We were both very cold and glad that



the trip across the desert road was behind us. A friendly German tourist took our picture for us

*(The Taupo Lake was formed in the crater of a large volcanic eruption; it is 28.58 miles long 20.51 miles across and approx 237.8 square miles in area.)*



The lake runs for 20 plus kms along the road, we arrived in Taupo town centre.

We had coffee whilst we thumbed through the AA accommodation guide to find a motel for the night. We selected a few in Rifle Range Road to look at and selected the Acapulco Motel.

This was a great find, really nice owners; the rooms were all very modern, clean and in good order – it even had a heat pump and finally very comfy beds.

The owners' children all wanted to have their pictures taken in the car. No surprise there!

In the evening we went into the town and had a reasonable meal at the Speight's Ale house





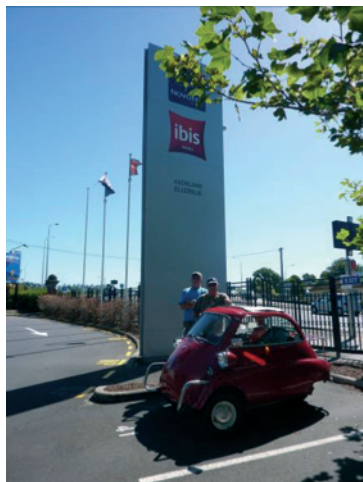
and on our return collected a great bottle of Yalumba red wine which we consumed whilst trying to watch a DVD. We all slept very well that night.

### **Day Four 6<sup>th</sup> of February 2013**

We woke up to find the sun was out; Blue Sky but chilly. The TV weather forecast was good. Dave and Ronnie selected the route for today on the basis of missing Hamilton and taking a scenic route across country to rejoin State Highway 1 on the far side of the town. Depending on progress we were either to stop at Ngaruawahia or thereabouts or carry onto Auckland.

Off we went; once we turned off from State Highway 1 to Highway 30 the scenery was fantastic. The Waikato River was running alongside us nearly all the way to Whakamaru. This is New Zealand at its best; the road was undulating with several long hills but it must have been the sunshine as the Isetta seemed to going even better today in the warmth using third gear on most of the hills. However a really annoying rattle developed. Dave Stenning found that the handle of the sun roof was coming loose and the washer under the handle was rattling. We stopped and fixed it with a ten cent piece being used as a screw driver, the only tools used on the Isetta in the whole trip.

The first of our agreed meeting points was the village of Mangakino. This area was where Ronnie first taught when she qualified as a teacher. We parked to have coffee and succumbed to apple and cream doughnuts. The Isetta was quickly surrounded by Maori children and adults who all wanted to have pictures taken and to tell us how much they liked the car. When we asked if they had a petrol station we were told it had burned down some time ago. We topped up the Isetta with one of the three spare cans of fuel we had as we needed to run these down as we approached Auckland.



The second stop and possible finishing point for the day was Ngaruawahia. Here we treated ourselves to Tip Top ice cream cones from the local dairy, a must do in New Zealand.

We decided that as it was only 12.35 we could make Auckland as it was mostly motorway to Ellerslie where we had planned to stay, however we were two days early. We phoned to ensure the hotel could take us; there was no problem. So after emptying another of the fuel cans into the Isetta off we went. Ronnie was to go ahead to the hotel and we would get there later. We deployed the Tom Tom sat Nav device to ensure we found the hotel on the motorway OK.

The motorway into Auckland is normally very busy but this day was a public holiday to celebrate the signing of the Waitangi treaty which set in place the rights of the Maori people.

The road was still busy, however the motorists were all very cautious and many many waves, toots and pictures were taken of us on that road. The Bombay Hills beckoned; this is a long uphill section and we managed this section of road in third gear albeit at approximately 20-30 mph. About 30 kms before the turning to the hotel we stopped to refill the Isetta's



fuel tank for the last time. As we stopped we received a text from Ronnie telling us she was now in the hotel. Half an hour later so were we.

After checking into the hotel we took Dave Stenning over to see his family in Massey where a family Bar B Que was being held. We said our goodbyes and returned to the hotel where we had good night drink in the bar before a very good night's sleep was had.

It's now Thursday the 7th of February and time to gather my thoughts about the trip.

First of all I am astonished at how well the Isetta did; its performance was faultless; it never missed a beat. The statistics on its fuel consumption were astonishing as was the fact that the whole trip was done in approximately 16 hours of driving.



Second 99.9% of the drivers here were respectful of us and our small but brave vehicle, only two idiots gave us the finger for holding them up; one in a high performance Black Holden Commodore the other in a Toyota Land Cruiser. Regretfully we did see some very bad driving which could have so easily have lead to serious crashes.

Third the scenery of New Zealand must be seen first hand to understand how lucky we are to live here.

Finally I am pleased that on this big adventure we met so many New Zealanders old and young who wanted to know about us and our very special vehicle.

Will I do this again? Perhaps next time without a support vehicle? Hmm that's a very interesting question.

David Marsh

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## **BUY AND SELL & WANTED**

I am a fairly recent member of the isetta owners club and would like to ask if any members have history of owning my right hand drive Isetta reg 21 LCV. Also I am looking for a suitable towing frame if a member have one they don't use and wish to sell I would be interested. Or if anyone knows of where a new one could be purchased

Many thanks

Dennis Greatbatch Home email [dengreat@aol.com](mailto:dengreat@aol.com)

## Ultimate power corrupts! Insufficient power shows you up on hills.

Nice gleaming newly restored Isetta was ready for its first run to a show. In the usual last minute panic, it was only finished the night before, so had not gone far.

As it is my daughters car she was designated driver and I was the backup "tow truck".

We all set off for Popham Airfield, some 50 miles away, the Isetta was 2 up, with strict instructions not to exceed 30 mph on that rebuilt engine. Apart from the complaints about the brakes pulling to one side, it made the show.

It was the first hot day we experienced for some time and it was very welcome.

It created lots of interest, it seems everyone had a relative who had one.

After hearing about not parking too close to the garage wall for the 10<sup>th</sup> time, we went home.

The climb up Winchester hill went very slowly, collecting a lot of traffic.

I thought that she was keeping to the running in speeds, as instructed, but unbeknown to me, was flat out.

On the run down the other side I noticed puffs of smoke from the tail pipe each time it was on the overrun.

Well if that was all that was wrong, not too bad. (inviting trouble from those chickens I was counting)

By the time we reached Butser hill we were down to 25mph ! We eventually reached the summit and picked up speed on the downhill stretch. The smoke was worse and seemed to be coming from further under as well as the exhaust.

I closed the gap between us to get a better look. Good job we are nearly home I thought, its starting to rain. I put the wipers on and the screen went opaque, it was covered in oil.

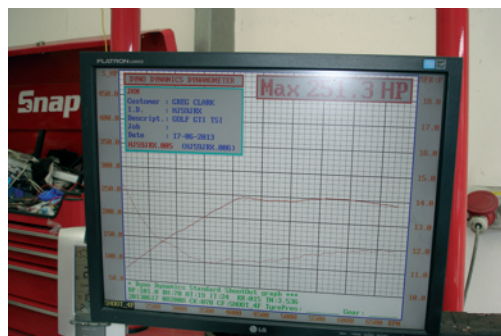
We got it into the garage at home and tried to find the oil leak that had covered the underside and engine bay.

The sump was empty. Several bolts were loose holding the sump pan in place, perhaps the cork joint had squeezed up further than I expected. I was still not sure that I had found the answer.

The slow running, and a compression test of 75psi, perhaps I had seized a ring or broken one.

This would give more crankcase pressure than the joints could handle?

I really did not want to take the engine out after a lovely paint job if this was how they perform.



Perhaps with my bulk of 22stone is too much for the 300cc engine to cope with

A pal who has his own garage, with a dyno, was persuaded to test little Isetta.

The ramps on to the rollers had to be re-sized with a plank in between to accommodate the third wheel.

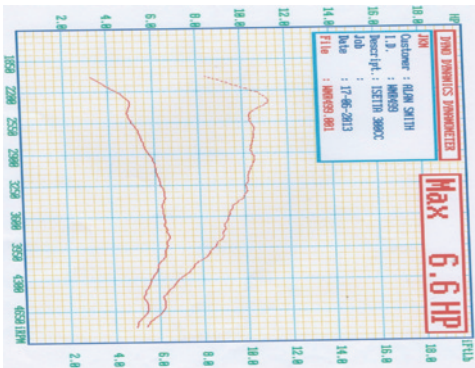
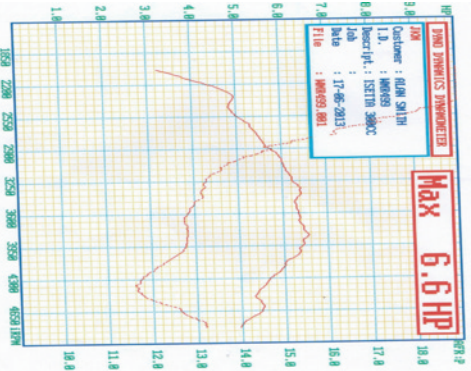
The back wheel had to be balanced on top of the roller as the distance to the idler was too great.



While all this was being organised, I saw the last test run he had carried out was still on the screen. 251.3 HP ! from a Golf GTI, bet Little ISO could beat him 0 to 60!!! (perhaps a bit ambitious as it only has a quoted top speed of 53) Nearly ready, cant wait to see the results. Hope it stays in one piece. After agreeing “no blame” if the engine exploded, Jim ran the engine through the gears. Its surprising what you see at full power. The fuel filter was spinning in its housing with the vibration. Needs looking at!

The mixture was lean up to half throttle and acceptable from then onwards. The biggest disappointment was the power output.....6.6 HP

This shows the torque in ft/lbs at various rpm. After a long time looking at the results, I can only accept that the engine has to come out. If, as Jim suggested, there is usually only be a couple of HP lost in the transmission of a motorcycle, we should have seen 11 HP at the



back wheel. If anyone interprets a different solution I would like to hear about it. Many thanks to Jim at JKM motors for his tolerance and I apologise for the puddle of oil left on his Dyno

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

- |                   |             |               |             |
|-------------------|-------------|---------------|-------------|
| Chris Skepper     | St. Neots   | Mike Wood     | Southport   |
| Paul Robinson     | Nuneaton    | Tom McWhirter | Elgin       |
| Craig Smith       | Southampton | Steve Wallis  | Nuneaton    |
| Anthony Robertson | East Looe   | P Seymour     | Hove        |
| John Foulk        | Belper      | Dave Walker   | Holton      |
| Tracy Dougan      | Co Down     | John Davis    | Ellington   |
| Richard Stockman  | Gloucester  | Winston Phair | Irvinestown |
| Robert Parke      | Aldershot   | Mel Mullane   | Shirley     |
| Marcos Varlotta   | Cheam       | Joseph Joyner | Salisbury   |

**New Members since the last Gazette**



In the early nineties I visited the BMW Museum in Munich. This was well before the renovations got underway for my own Isetta and saw this lovely Isetta in the Museum and took a photo of it. It was positioned about half way up the spiral ramp to the first floor and was very much "Pride of Place" in the museum.



I have also attached a picture of my long suffering wife stripping the covers and horsehair from the seat. The photo on the



front of the current magazine is a salutary lesson as to what can happen if one of the seat springs breaks free and embeds itself into the + battery terminal. I fixed my seat springs and fitted a "Battery Isolator". I also find this acts to maintain the battery charge particularly during cold spells. As you can see from the last picture the seat has gone through a considerable transformation but I am always concerned a seat spring could still break and cause irreparable damage. So beware all you would be renovators! I wonder if the left hand drive is any more or less vulnerable to this than the right hand drive?

Doug Bell





## NEC Report 2013 By Dave Watson

I decided to re-take on the organisation of the IOC show stand at the NEC this year after Lee Turnham had completed many years at the helm. Lee has now taken on the role of new spares and did not have the time to do the NEC as well. I had previously organised the stand with my old mate Neil Unsworth - initially getting the green light from the organisers to have a stand at the then considerably smaller show in the early 90's. I did not want to lose our place as they are hard to come by with so much competition from other car clubs now. So, at the end of the 2012 show I filled in the application forms for 2013 and waited.

It's not normally until May/June time the following year a club is contacted to advise if they have been successful or not in getting a stand. I was quietly confident as I knew the drill etc. and the organisers did not let me down. 2013 was going to be the 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary and the biggest show to date spread over eleven halls and three days - 15<sup>th</sup> to 17<sup>th</sup> November 2013. A stark contrast to the first show that was in just two halls over two days.

I think the NEC show is trying to rival the Essen show in Germany held each year in March. If you have never been, go! It will blow your mind. I've been many times and it never fails to impress. Anyway, we were given a smallish floor space in hall 12 along with the Heinkel/Trojan club and the NMCR. We were all side by side down one side of the hall in a line so Micro cars would be once more well in attendance. Our neighbours' were generally huge American cars so the contrast between them and us would be interesting.

Time passed, the sun came and went and before I knew it was time for the National again.



Where has the year gone!! I decided to have a look around at the National for some "interesting" and perhaps more rarer Isetta cars to have on the stand. Space was a little limited (the same for all clubs this year as the organisers were trying to pack so many in). I looked, but nothing inspired me. Hm-mmmm I thought. Perhaps a more direct approach was needed.

I knew from past rallies and communications who owned what type of car pretty well so I sent some emails to various owners asking if they would like to exhibit their car on the stand. One week passed and nothing. I thought I'm going to have to get 'PO' out and have her on the stand. I did not want

to do this as she has been so many times before I wanted to give other members the chance. I needn't have worried, one weekend the emails came back one after the other "yes please!!!". In the end I had to reluctantly turn down a couple of kind offers as I simply did not have the room. Thank you so much to those members who replied, I will try to include you next year.

September and October passed in what seemed like a flash. I was busy planning the finer details of the stand. I drew out a plan to scale and managed to fit on five cars. I could have got an extra one on but again past experience has taught me not to over crowd the stand with cars as people like to come on the stand and have a closer look. For this you need space around them.

Many emails between the owners and myself passed. The complimentary passes arrived in good time from the organisers and were sent out. I always apply for more than we need and this year I decided to offer via the Yahoo web board a pair of passes FREE to the first club

member that contacted me for Saturday and Sunday. A bonus. These were snapped up by two very happy members. I was very busy completing information boards for each of the show cars and just making sure everything was in place for the set up day.

During this time I had also taken on the role of Registrar and was spending silly hours at the computer compiling from scratch a data base linking ALL the information the club owned from previous Registrar's Graham Potter and Lee Turnham. There was masses of it but not all in one place or form. This was also helping me in my other role of DVLA officer for the club. The Data base is nowhere near complete yet but getting there. I have literally thousands of Isetta's listed with information gathered over the years but in paper form. This is now all in one place in one large electronic document. There is a search function as well so member's cars can be searched for easily and any information known shared with them. I also track the cars sold on Ebay. It's a massive document and growing all the time. It was my intention to have the data base running on a Lap top computer at the show as this year's theme was "reunited" I hoped some owners could be reunited with their old cars. More on the data base another day.

A few final emails passed and set up day was upon us.

Thursday 14<sup>th</sup> Nov. I took the day off work and loaded up my very un-practical Mercedes with about 4 tons of carpet tiles and other "stuff" for the stand. I drove up to the NEC and got into the hall early. It was my plan to lay all of the carpet before the others arrived with their cars then the placement of them would be easier. When I found our allotted space and checked the area with a tape I found that we had an extra half meter in depth. Just as well I had extra carpet!!!!

This allowed just that extra bit of space around the cars to make it even better. Added to that the rear of our stand and the other micro-car stands down the way all had a lovely 10 foot high wooden painted wall at the back to display pictures etc. so all in all not a bad spot. We were also next to an exit door (handy for loading) and opposite one of the main public entrance doors so could see some of the public entering the show.

The carpet was laid and in the space of about an hour my phone rang several times as the cars arrived almost like clockwork. First to arrive was Alan Town with his two-tone green 600. Driven (well done Alan) all the way from Telford. Next was John Horth from Hull with his

Superb Velam and Velam Pedal car restoration project. Whist helping John un-load his car Lee and Neale Turnham arrived with Neale's 300 sliding window and the rest of the stand (pictures, bunting and small wooden posts etc). Cars were unloaded and positioned on the stand. Last to arrive was Greg Moore with his two-tone Bubble window complete with PAV trailer.

The guys helped me set up the rest of the stand putting up the images and bunting etc. By about 3.30pm it was all complete and looking superb. Exactly as I wanted it



and looking better than I could have hoped. The setup had run exactly to plan. Elsewhere the rest of the show was being set up and was clear that this year it was big. I had a quick look around as I normally do on set up day to get a feel for the show before saying my goodbyes and all heading off for the night. I live 80 miles from Birmingham so choose to drive up and down each day as I like my own bed and the M1!!

Friday arrived and I was up to the NEC early. Greg was already there polishing his car. Another tradition for me is to have an NEC overpriced breakfast each morning before the show opens. As soon as Greg and I had finished breakfast and returned to the stand Neal Bircher was there. Neal comes up each year to do his bit for the club and help out manning the stand. Alan turned up in good form as always as did Mike and Helen Ayriss. The show opened and in came the crowds. Friday is normally the quietest of the three days (and most expensive) and the best day to have a look round. I had a good look round for a couple



of hours whilst the others covered on the stand. Isettas were elsewhere in the halls as well. There was a nice one in the Silverstone Auction that failed to get a bid a £15k; there was a tri-tec Orange one advertising media something or other and a Red one on the Tamworth Club stand in the Motorbike section.

Saturday and Sunday were repeat performances of Friday. Saturday was by far the busiest of the three days. At times the three metre gangway in front of the stand was solid with people. The organisers reported that over the three days they had a staggering 65,000 visitors to the show!! We had the normal jokers: "These din't have a reverse mate?", "Aint they made out of fiberglass?" "My mate had one of them and rolled it!!" And so on. We HAVE heard them all before and a few more besides but it's all part of the "Fun" educating the public. Letting the Kids sit in the cars for photos and generally trying to stop the interest dying of our great little cars. Over the weekend all the owners put in a good turn helping out on the stand as well as Jeff and Jo Todd, Mike and Helen Ayriss as well as my Partner who came



up on the Saturday (more to see David Soul than the cars me thinks).

Over the three days we saw Rod Stewart and Chris Evens having a wander. Spoke to countless people one of which turned out to be one of the original workers at the Brighton works. It was his first job when he left school and told us a few tales of how the Isettas were assembled and tested. We have his details and will be following this up for a separate article later. We showed him the photos we had of the factory and he remembered it all very clearly – Amazing!!!!

All too soon Sunday afternoon came and it was time for another favourite of mine the

tradition of blowing of the car horns when the show closes. Then the worst bit – the breakdown of the stand. One hour of chaos - every one for themselves just wanting to get home. I've done it many times and still hate it. The guys helped break the stand down and it was then all loaded up ready for the trip home. I had the 4 ton of carpet tiles and Lee had the



rest of the stand in his car. There was no room for anything else. We all said our goodbyes and in my case thank-you's to the guys and it was all over for another year.

Was it a good show for the IOC? Well, we managed to increase our overall membership by 3% so I would say yes. The interest is still there, the smiles are still on the faces of the public when they see the cars. The kids love them, the ladies all want one! Would I do it again? Well it looks like it as ive just applied for a stand in 2014.

One lesson for next year: Bring some seats!!! We only had one seat between us and my feet were killing me after three days. You think we would know by now???

Finally I have to say a **huge** thank you to: Alan Town, Greg Moore, John Horth, Lee and Neale Turnham, Mike and Helen Ayriss, Neal Bircher, Jeff and Jo Todd and Ian Jenkins for supplying their cars, time and enthusiasm for free, to help make the stand the success it was, and finally my other half Francis for putting up with me whilst organising it. **Thanks Guys.**

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