

MAGAZINE OF THE ISETTA OWNERS CLUB OF GREAT BRITAIN

The Isetta Owners Club of Great Britain Ltd.

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Jeff Todd.

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Editors Bit

A new year begins and a new round of rallies to go to with many new members. Each year inevitably members come and members go but we are certainly holding our own with around 300 members. I think our membership is doing so well because of the vast range of spares we can offer to members, presently over 800 different items and increasing all the time thanks to Mike Ayriss who is having unavailable items re-manufactured. This of course keeps Lee Turnham our new spares manager busy picking, packing and posting to locations all over the world. Considering the size of our club, you may be surprised to learn we have members in 24 countries where many of our spares go.

With so many spares being sold you would think we would see many more cars on the road but we don't seem to. You would also think there would be many more tales to tell of rebuilds, but very few seem to come my way. I guess that's why I'm rambling on.......

I am just starting the restoration of my other Isetta which has been off the road for many years, and if there is space between rallies and holidays and I do enough I will include an article in the next gazette charting my progress.





Chairman's Chat

My Christmas wish list referred to in the last Gazette didn't materialise. Socks and shirts galore were the order of the day on Christmas morning. Nevertheless I have started work getting my van repaired for the MOT. If I can get the brakes sorted then I can get the welding done. I've ordered some loading ramps from a local fabrication shop, then I can get my car home and work started repairing that. I have made a conscious decision not to do any car repairs for family, friends and neighbours, instead getting mates in the motor trade to do them on my behalf. So come on all you Isetta owners club members with cars resting in garages, rearrange things so that you have the time and inclination to get them out and about again.

Our next committee meeting is on Sunday March 19, we welcome new members to the management committee of the club, give me a call on 01472 200331 between 6pm and 9pm, or 07799 183260 any reasonable time, if you'd like an informal chat about joining us. We need new blood with new ideas to keep the club moving forward.

Jeff Todd

A Short History of my Isetta by John Blase

Sometime in the late 70's after leaving work I called to get petrol at GoBowen Garage. The owner was in the backyard and I went to ask for petrol and to my amazement found this bubble car in a very rough state. After a brief discussion the bubble became mine, £60 to be paid on delivery two day later.



We lived up a short private lane so I would start the bubble up and take the children up and down the lane for a laugh. Time went on and what with work pressures and the fact I was also rebuilding a 1924 Bullnose Morris at the time, what was I to do with the bubble car.

In a corner of my yard I had a coal shed now unused. I pulled the front wall out of the shed (it was all constructed of wood) put a sheet of plywood on the floor and levered the bubble car onto the ply and into the shed.

Around 30 years later the bubble saw light of day once more when we move to our present house.

18 months ago while I was restoring another Morris I thought I must get the Isetta restored. I knew of Anthony Bowers in Welshpool so went to see if they would do restoration work on one of my vintage vehicles.

He called in two days later took one look at the Morris and said 'easy job, I will soon do that for you'. I then pulled a sheet off the bubble car and he almost exploded. For the next two hours he was trying to buy it from me, it did not improve the situation when I told him that I

had an engine and all the running gear for another Isetta, all I was short of was a body to fit it to.

Anyway I digress, he took the Isetta away to his workshop, completely stripped it shot-blasted everything and rebuilt it. The finished job is fabulous, totally re-sprayed, bumper bars rechrome plated, new seals in the side windows supplied by Bromley Bubble, new petrol tank supplied by the Isetta Club, wheels shot-blasted and plastic coated by a local firm, four new tyres by



Jack's Tyres Welshpool, new leatherette by Fabric Express Oswestry.

Marcus my son bought a trailer for me to transport the Isetta to rallies away from our local area.

I've covered a few miles getting parts, a trailer from Coventry, rubber channels from Bubblecar Company, chrome bumpers from the Midlands and met a lot of nice helpful people and now have a fabulous car.

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The story so far of 'Izzy-Ferret' (1961 RHD Isetta 300) who now resides in the seaside town of Herne Bay in Kent:

I am a long way from our family's original Isetta tale (when my mother's brother in the South Wales valley's bought one in the late '60s as an 'upgrade' to his Lambretta to get him from the family home in Aberdare to Merthyr hospital where he worked the night shift). I was always aware of the bubble car in the past from tales of trips out and photos and family album (I really must dig these snaps out again when I get a moment).

Decades later after messing about with everything from original Fiat 500's to Caterham Sevens, Vespa's and Ducati's in between; I finally found what I thought sounded a "good prospect" - a 1961 RHD Isetta 300 3-wheel and to finally get one of my own summer 2015. The car I spotted in a private ad was partially-restored example from its proud owner in Chorley near Blackburn. The write up sounded good: bodywork restored in 2-tone BMW blue/silver by an ex TVR factory painter.

When I went to view the car it was "restored ready to MOT" and was pretty tidy-looking and

a runner (just about, as it transpires). Sure enough the TVR paint man had worked his magic on the exterior, kept a nice photo diary or the work, and a new stainless fuel tank and new set of wheels & tyres had been fitted. Not wanting to put 'Izzy' to the test on a long journey back to Kent, I trailered him home (I am fortunate to own a nice covered shuttle trailer for my Caterham that fits the Isetta a treat.

The following week I drove Izzy locally and discovered a few things definitely



needed urgent attention (brakes, gear change, and intermittent starting issue to name but a few). What with work, rebuilding my garage at home and other commitments, along with a gradually deteriorating 'Dynastart' situation.

After a brief cameo appearance with Izzy in brother's wedding photos, it was clear it wasn't going to be reliable, or safe enough, to be the official wedding car unfortunately. I thought it was getting silly and I needed to get Izzy sorted out for road use and get the required UK MOT (being a 1961 car – it still needs one a certificate at the time or writing to go on the road





too). I did some research and found I was virtually on the doorstep of Bromley Bubbles. It seemed the obvious place to entrust Izzy to the experts: a call to David and Denise booked Izzy in for a check-over, a few jobs and the MOT. After various things were inspected, tested and replaced (brakes had been previously been re-built backwards, Dynastart needed replacing, fuel leak needed addressing, etc, etc). An extensive list of parts were ordered to cut to the chase and go right through the car mechanically while it was in. The car would definitely not have passed an MOT without David's expert attention, and he nurtured it back to life mechanically, fitted a windowwasher, brakes and handbrake that would stop and hold the car, and sorted the gear selector, starting, fuelling and timing. MOT achieved, David reassured me the engine has excellent compression and was still being run-in, and what I probably had was a very low mileage car that had been sitting for decades, and will probably get better to drive with use. All done, my Isetta was trailered home again from Bromley Bubbles (not wanting to get exposure to salt and road grime in mid-January) I'm finally ready for trips out this spring.

It's still a rolling-project though, as I've got some cosmetic finishing and re-trimming of the interior to do myself in future, but essentially I'm chuffed with my Isetta now. I will let you know how it goes this year, and my first 'event' is likely to be the very local Herne Bay, classic car shows this year where I spotted a light blue Isetta 300 amongst nearly 1000 cars on the promenade last year (I really recommend this show to anyone in the areas).

Whilst installed at Bromley Bubbles my car caught the attention of a local band who practice in nearby industrial unit "Marvellous Mo and The Backline Ferrets"

The "Ferrets" asked David and Denise if they could take some publicity shots with my car

Herne Bay Car Show 2016



(sample attached) and as a result I have decided to name my Isetta "Izzy Ferret" when he hits the road again in Spring 2017, I will get some stickers made-up to this effect. So if you are ever out an about on the North Kent Coast and spot a 2-tone Isetta it might just be me behind the wheel.

Matthew Stears

ISETTA SPARES DEPARTMENT

It's been a fantastic 2016 for the spares dept. The orders more than doubled from 2015. In 2016 the spares generated 282 orders meaning more than 282 trips to the shipping company (as sometimes I need to go there more than once per order). Out of that only one parcel was confirmed lost and still remains so somewhere in that great 'lost parcel mountain' in the sky. Several parcels went missing but they were either found or arrived late.

The majority of orders are from the UK, but more and more are coming from overseas. These are processed in the same way but there is a slight difference in the shipping process, due to additional postage and insurance issues. Each customer is emailed about additional postage if required prior to shipping.

The shipping company we use is open from 7am to 10pm which fits in well with my work patterns. However if I deposit the orders late in the day the parcels do NOT get processed until the following day. If it is a Friday then orders may not be processed until Monday morning so early tracking is not possible. I email each customer as soon as I get a tracking number, but the number may not register on the shippers system until the next working day, so please be patient.

There has been an increase in the base shipping cost. This is due to the shipping company increasing their rates and a slight increase in packing costs.

Our storage facility has had a makeover with the 34,000+ parts in stock now being kept in clear selection bins. Additional racking and lighting has also been installed.

We welcome constructive advice, and feedback is welcome to help us improve where we can.

Lee Turnham New Spares Manager

ISETTA RENOVATION by NICK HADDON

My desire to own an Isetta started whilst I was at school. I used to play in an abandoned one in a pub car park near my school. It was much later before my interest resumed. For some reason I enjoy working with metal, again going back to school days we had to choose between wood work or metal work, I was one of the very few in the metalwork group by choice, most others were chosen at random from the oversubscribed wood work group.

My resumed interest in microcars began in the late 90's, I had owned a number of old cars by then usually one at a time. I saw a Trojan for sale in about 1998 and I tried to do a deal with a Big 7 I had at the time, but was outbid by someone with cash rather than swaps! However this had rekindled the interest and I started looking for a project cheap, the result was my first Trojan but I digress.

I still had a desire to own an Isetta and briefly around 2005 I had one, but there was a lot missing including one of the inner arches, I didn't know that many people at the time so it got swapped for a Goggomobil.



I thought that was the end of an Isetta, I had by this time got a few Micros, usually basket cases that everyone else had looked at but rejected because of the work involved welding. The prices of Isetta's had started to rise rapidly.

Whilst browsing eBay as you do back in 2014 one

Whilst browsing eBay as you do back in 2014 one appeared looking very sorry for itself with most of it missing! And lots of rust.

Fortunately there was not much interest and after talking to my friend Garry about it he said don't worry about the missing parts, I have spares of most bits! So I took a chance and won the bidding. As you can see from the next few pictures I had my work cut out.

I had cut the small rear wing off before leaving for home, it was only held on by a tiny piece and I didn't think it would survive the journey.

Although some welding had been done previously a lot of it was very poor and with very thin steel.

I started by combing the internet to see what panels were available, which is quite a lot, I ordered a number of panels from Germany which all came quickly and were an excellent fit, I also ordered several others from Radford panels at Rugby, something like a 12 week lead time but they did do panels not available in Germany.



The panels from Germany arrived within a few days, all excellent. I had ordered the repair panel for the short wing but after looking at the remains I had cut off and the repair panel it would have been difficult to repair it.

Radford panels listed the wing as a complete part, so I arranged to go and look at their sample, it looked good and had a lip at the top to attach it so I added this to my order. A 12 week wait now. I turned my attention to the door this was in a poor state with large holes and lots of rust.

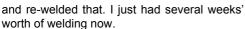
At the time I couldn't find another door so though I had nothing to lose by trying to repair it. The bottom was very ragged but the inner part was still partly intact so I started with that, looking at pictures I made up some repair panels with the aid of a swager I have. There were also holes in the front and around the door handle area again with the aid of the swagger repair pieces were made and welded in, I made the raised wiper motor



indent using 2 sockets one smaller than the other and a big hammer!.

After my 12 week wait had stretched to about 16 weeks I finally had a message that my panels were ready, I duly collected them from Rugby, they looked good initially!

The main part holding me up was a rear floor, I could have bought a complete floor from Germany but the front part of my car had already being replaced, although the angle on the pedal side was completely wrong, I had cut



Starting with the rear floor and short sill, I had already made and welded repair panels for the bottom of the firewall and put in the swage lines to match up with the existing.

Another panel from Radford was the complete upper side, the original was a complete mess and I decided this was an easier option, the only real complaint with this was that the inner rib below the window was not included and not available which meant I had to make it and shape it to fit, I only have a 600mm bender so it's in 3 pieces.





After fitting the new side, the next thing was the new parcel shelf, I had bought this in 2 pieces from Germany, The area under the back window was another complete mess with bits of repair badly welded so I had cut it all out, this is not available as a repair piece either here or in Germany so I had to make it. The original was in 2 parts so I did my best to replicate it, with the swager I could roll a partial bend in a curve which gave me the upstand and then do a 2nd the opposite way to face down, it was a bit hit and miss and I am paying the price now for not



actually fitting the rear glass before filling and painting, I had held the glass in the opening and it seemed to be close but it could be better!!

I also had to make several sections of window channel, again nothing is available so back to the bender and swager.

The roof was also in a state with someone had tried to lead load the front corners to cover the rust the shape was all wrong. I decided to order the repair panels from Radford. The side pieces are not bad but only do the opening and down the side, not the rain channel, it sort of stops! I am not sure exactly what was intended.

The worst part was the front, it just would not sit correctly on the hoop. I had had to replace part of this as it was badly dented. I had been lent a complete hoop to use as a template so was happy mine was at least close. The repair piece would not sit correctly on the spare hoop. I took it back with the hoop to show them at Radford, his attitude was it was my car that was wrong! But he did agree it didn't fit the hoop and said he would make another, about 4 weeks later it was ready, to me it was the same, it still didn't sit right on the hoop. I took it home and proceeded to cut the front part off and join it to the front part of the original, that seemed ok. Later I decided that the inside edge was also wrong, having a curve in it rather than straight, so I had to remake that as well!

I don't seem to have any pictures of the short rear wing but that is not the best panel either, the bottom edge at the front of the arch was at least 2 inches longer than the German repair panel was and the shape of the arch is not quite right either it just doesn't seem to have quite enough metal in it, I almost chopped it out to fit the German repair panel to my new wing, that said it is at least new metal and made the repair much easier!

Finally all of my new panels were welded in place and the hours of filling could start.

Before putting it back on the chassis I had chemically treated the rust and painted all the underneath with a 2 pack resin rust treatment, stone chip and then paint.

The rest has just been hard work and it could still be better but I do get tired of filling and rubbing down!!

I have done the spraying myself outside on the drive, I'm not going to pretend it's the best but hopefully it will be another one saved that was little more than a pile of rusting metal.

It still has quite a few things to do but hopefully it will be on the road later this year.



they arrived on the Wednesday. Also good old eBay where I not only found the car but lots of other parts as well!

Nick Haddon



FORTHCOMING EVENTS

2017 National MicroCar Rally

We're very pleased to announce that the 2017 NMCR will be organised by Marilyn Bryce and Alan Prince of the Scottish Microcar Club from 6th - 11th September 2017. The rally will be based at Grasmere Sports show ground, in the tranquil Lake District, an area that has much to offer.

Road runs to local places of interest are being planned for the Thursday, Friday and Saturday. Marilyn and Alan are making full use of their local knowledge to ensure that we get the best sights and attractions in the Lakes. This year the site is available on the Wednesday afternoon through until the Monday lunchtime.

Contact: Marilyn at mbryce132@gmail.com or Tel 07979622580

Venue: Grasmere Sports Show Ground

Venue Address: The Showfield, Stock Lane, Grasmere, Cumbria, LA22 9SL.

http://grasmeresports.com/

Please check www.national-microcar-rally.co.uk for further details

In my annual Christmas exchange with Otto and Marianne Kunneke, the owners of the Story Kleinwagenmuseum in Germany where the bi-annual Story Microcar Weltgrosstes Keleinwagentreffen (World's largest Microcar Rally) used to be held, they tell me...

"In the last days several micro cars have been moved from Story to the PS, SPEICHER in Einbeck.

A large microcar exhibition will be opened in 2018 after an intensive renovation of the building that has already started.

The opening of the exhibition will be accompanied by a Story Revival Microcar meeting in 2018, where we hope to meet you all again.

The exact date will be announced in the next year."

Anyone who has ever been to a previous Rally there, and anyone who regrets never having been to a rally there, will be excited and overjoyed by this news.

Terry,

Moderator

Isetta World



A Funny Little Story by Colin Ferguson

What a funny title for a story - I am going to tell you about my beloved Bubble which has been part of our family for the last 37 years. I bought it in 1979 for £170, when I was in the RAF and needed some wheels to get to work - I often drove it 20 miles a day. My wife and sons (4 & 2) used to squeeze in easily. Now the deja-vue bit; the 2 year old now has young boys and he is the same age I was when I bought the Bubble, so I am looking at a snapshot of my family 37 years ago!



When I left the RAF and moved North, the Bubble came in the back of the removal van, and I built a short extension to our garage to accommodate it. The grandsons love it and we often go for a short ride to our local airport to watch the planes and have an icecream. It is very popular at our village Fair, and I once spent well over an hour giving rides round the boundary of our cricket club.

I must drive it more, as it is going really well since I relined the brakes - they must have been binding slightly. My garage-owning friend David repainted it for me some years ago and it now looks great. I share a vintage aircraft with him and I often drive to the airstrip - a 75 year old, in a 54 year old bubble, going to fly a 53 year old wooden aeroplane!





Bubble really is a great little car and handles well on Mini wheels. The headlights are really good but the wipers are a bit tentative - I don't do wet if I can avoid it, and I'm a bit nervous in modern traffic.

I shall never sell my Isetta and one of the boys will inherit it. They drive it well although they are not great with the gear change. I wish I knew how to adjust it to be a bit crisper - maybe next year. I came to the AGM and was very impressed by the level of (unpaid) dedication to the cause. It was great to be able to put faces to the names I've known for so long.

Keep up the good work guys!

TEACHING AN OLD 'FROG' NEW TRICKScontinued

A restoration story by Rhona Bell

Now, where did we get to? Oh yes, we had just got the engine vapour blasted and very nice it looked too. Ken decided it was time to re-build the engine. We had ordered all the parts we needed for the build but were short of the piston ring from Germany. This duly arrived, thanks Mike. Ken and fellow member, Derek Cole, started the rebuild. They decided to do it in Derek's workshop as he had a few tools that Ken hasn't got. All proceeded fairly well until they found that some of the bearings were not the right size and did not fit the 250 cc engine. Replacements were easily obtained from a local bearing shop. They used Derek's hydraulic press to press on the new bearings. The press was located in a lean-to garage and, upon entering, found that wasps had moved in to the garage and they were not happy about humans being on their territory! However, the humans 'pressed' on with wasps buzzing around (really brave) and it will certainly make the re-build somewhat memorable! It cost Derek £50 to have the nest removed but, if they hadn't gone in the garage to do the bearings, the nest could have been even bigger!

All continued well with the bottom half of the engine until they got to the point of fitting the camshaft sprocket which was found, on examination, to be warped. Onto Mike Ayriss again and a replacement sprocket was obtained. Once they got the sprocket the rest of the re-built was finished in a day. Ken brought the engine home, fitted the gearbox and placed it in- situ on the chassis (see picture).

Whilst waiting for various bits to arrive, Ken had started to refurbish the heat-





er which differs from the 300cc engine model. This can also be seen in the photograph. He followed on with digging out the window catches. They are very different to the 300cc which has sliding windows. The 250cc model has two guarter lights that hinge outward and we now know that these windows are called 'delta' windows. The hinges were not in an awful condition but we thought we would find out how much new ones would cost. They came to around £350 so decided to go down the refurbishing road! We also considered having the old ones chromed but companies won't do them unless they are all taken apart which would have been a complete pain! In the end, Ken rubbed them down and sprayed them with chrome paint. They now look guite reasonable. However, we found that we didn't have the screws to hold them in place through the glass. We again got on to a website in Germany only to find they were out of stock! So off Ken went to the lathe and made some! The only difference with them is that the button is flat instead of domed but what the heck!

Whilst getting small bits and pieces together, Ken came across the handbrake cover (another difference from the 300cc) which had some remnants of the original blue paint on it. Now, I thought Helle Bleu (light blue), which was the original colour of the car, would be a sort of sky blue. It is, in fact, a fairly darkish turquoise which I quite like but Ken still hasn't made a decision! Who said women can't make up their minds!!



Ken decided, in his wisdom, that he would have a look at the wiring loom and promptly brought the whole thing into the living room, an exercise that will not be repeated when we have a new carpet! Ken has done various looms before including the Isetta three-wheeler but the bubble-window is different to the three-wheeler. The biggest difference is that it has



a fuse box under the dash like the Heinkel. He did have to make up a new section for the number plate and tail lights and various bits were tidied up. Having done his continuity checks whilst following a wiring diagram for colours, he is now happy that it will all function correctly and has been packed away ready for use.

He decided the door could be sent to the blaster but decided to try and blast the dashboard himself. However, the paint was sooo hard it would not budge so that too went to the blaster. They have now been returned and the door is in pretty good condition as is the dash. Ken has filled a few little bits on the door but it awaits more attention.

Ever since Ken and Phil bought Kermit they were both obsessed with the fact that it must have Z- bar trim either side. They seemed to think a bubble-window is not right unless it has this trim! Ken has carried on with this obsession and we have, over the months, contacted a couple of German suppliers in the hope of locating the trim but the answer

was always 'out of stock'. We did find out that the Germans mostly call this trim 'Thunderbolt' trim. We reached the point where we had almost given up with the search and Ken and our friend Derek Cole decided that they would attempt to make them. We went to France about this time with the Bonds Abroad group and when we were at our third campsite near Paris, French microcar enthusiasts, Michel and Sylvie Humbert, joined us for a few days. They, together with members of their Club, had planned a full day out touring around the area. On the day, another member, whose name we never got, turned up with an excellent example of a bubble window Isetta, newly restored by the look of it, but with no Z-bars. His English was not good and our French even worse but with the help of Michel we managed to ask him if he knew where we could get the trim. He said yes but, unfortunately, we had to go immediately out on the run. It was an extremely hot day (30 ish) and his Isetta kept breaking down. When we returned we noticed that his engine cover had no air vents in it so we were



not surprised it kept stopping! Apparently, this is not unusual to have no vents but Ken, politely, indicated that he should throw the engine cover away by throwing his hat across the campsite! The owner only stayed for the one day and before we knew it he had gone but, fortunately, at the last minute, Michel had managed to get a business card from him with the name of a possible supplier of the Z-Bars. Once we were home we followed up on the information and, lo and behold, the company could supply them at, wait for it, 490 Euros! I am afraid it was a 'must-have' for Ken and they are now, carefully, packed away for future use.

Lastly, the colour? The dashboard had many layers of paint on it, including the turquoise blue that we had thought original. However, below that there was Helle Bleu that was the light blue of original. I think Ken has now decided on the colour for the bottom half of the car. It will not be green as the 'Frog' and not Helle Bleu as original, but a cross of the two,

Turquoise! But he may change his mind? We hope to see some of you soon in the coming months.

" More German Isetta News ...

As some of you may know, a while after I stopped making and selling my I/5th scale model Isettas, the German Isetta Club bought my moulds and they now sell them through their website.

Today I received an email from Norbert Schardt. Chairman if the German Isetta Club which says - "Hello Terry, in the house of the first German Bundeskanzler Konrad Adenauer in Rhöndorf near Bonn is always an exhibition. They decided to renew the exhibition up to April 19th, the day Adenauer died 50 years ago.

To the theme Wirtschaftswunder, that means the years in the fiftes, where the Germans started the industrie and slowly all become a litte bit rich, they wanted a Isetta model from us.

We took a 1:5 model bodyshell from your moulds and Philip Kaden from Berlin did a good work. We gave the

The

model to the museum. photos and papers I will show you.

exibition

opened April 19th, the plan is Angela Merkel will do it. She said, she will come, if nothing important happens. We will see. Excuse my bad English."

Philip Kaden is a good friend and he has made an excellent job. I'll upload the pics which Norbert sent me.

I hope Frau Merkel recognises the friendly co-operation between the English and the German people which this venture demonstrates.

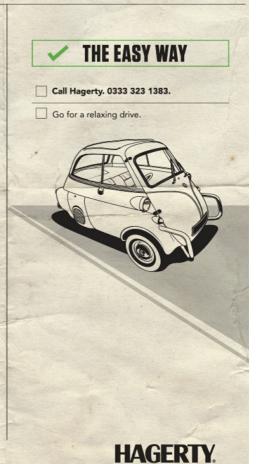
Terry, Moderator Isetta World "



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.



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Hagerty International Ltd.

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