



# Les Slimes

Dec 2020

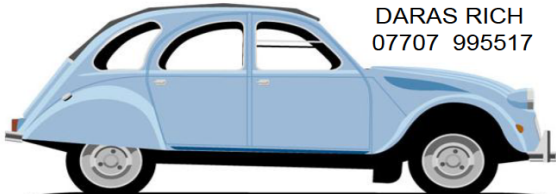


## Happy Christmas to all Escargots and Friends



### Inside


- Club Meeting
- Bubble Cars in Brighton
- Get Me Home
- My Car


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**Christmas Jumper Club Meet  
Thursday 17 December  
By Zoom  
See e mail for details**

**My Car  
Simon & Ben completed a classy  
refurb on my Grey  
Charlston**



**Thanks Driving Spirit  
Send me your pics on any good works  
completed on your pride and joy !**



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## Get me Home

I have an idea for next years editions about some good stories you have for any 'get me home fixes' you might have done

I will kick off.....

In 1979 in St Tropez in our blue Dyane TTM322R... the exhaust snapped just by the front wheel.....tent pegs as splints, gum gum, bandage and wire made for a great fix for the next six months. It set hard in the Riviera sunshine !



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Isetta of Great Britain, Ltd.  
Brighton Works.



You may wonder why !!!!! Daras raised the subject of 'Bubble Cars in Brighton' at our Nov meeting and Bijou John pulled this out of the archives. Thanks Both

The Isetta started life, in Italy, in 1953. The car did not have much success so ISO, the maker of the car, in Milan, sold the design and the manufacturing rights, to BMW (Germany). The Isetta was an instant success and some say that this fact saved BMW from closing down.

BMW in turn sold manufacturing rights to various companies around the world, one of which was "Isetta of Great Britain, Ltd" once the Dunsfold Tools Ltd.

Part of the British Railways locomotive works in Brighton, adjoining the main station, was about to be decommissioned. The final locomotive left the works in March of 1957.

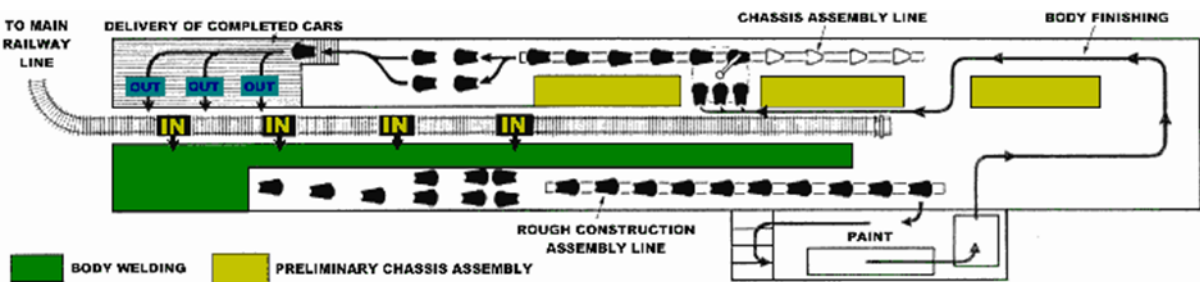
This would become the factory for Isettas, in this country.

The contractors moved in that same week, of March 1957, assembly lines, welding jigs and electrical plant, quickly followed. In three short weeks (23rd April), 70 ton railway engines had given way to 7-cwt cars. Assembled, in the same place, by many of the same hands, which proved the adaptability, of man, as well as buildings.

The conundrum is that building had commenced, on a miniature car, in a factory, whose only access to the road was down a flight of over one hundred steps.

So the plan, involved more than just taking over floor space. The old locomotive works was at the top of a precipitous hill. It could not be reached by road. Cars had to finish their journey by rail, why should they not start that way, especially as the components, arriving from Germany, had to do so and as for the delivery of those complete cars, there was a great deal to be said for the railway.

The design, for this new and highly original factory, was produced by B.M.W. for the British company and its essence is shown in the diagram below:



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Of the three railway tracks only the middle one was left, for supply and delivery, while inspection pits beneath the side tracks were put to good use for the installation of endless conveyors.

The raw pressings were imported from Bavaria, having been welded on jigs and proof-tested at the German factory. The bodies were built on one line, passed into, and out of, a modern paint shop in a loop, and then arrived at a point half-way down the opposite line on which the chassis frames had taken shape.

25 cars arrived at the top of a loading ramp which, apart from spaces beside the assembly lines themselves, this was the only "store" in the building.

The production programme looked, naturally enough, like a railway timetable.

The Brighton goods depot accumulates during the week a trainload of parts sufficient for 250 complete Isettas; engines, transmissions and body panels from Germany; electrical gear, brakes, tyres, suspension and other parts from the Midlands; small metal components from Shoreham and other local sources.

On Saturday morning a week's supplies were unloaded from the central track to the delivery points in the factory. At 7.30 am each day from Monday to Friday, and again during the lunch-time break, the shunting engine withdraws eight flat wagons carrying three Isettas apiece, and leaves eight empty wagons in their place. Sixteen wagons travelled nightly with the express freight train from Brighton to London, and thence to anywhere in the country.

The last link of the transport chain was the dealer, or, if he prefers, the customer himself, who was able to collect from his local railway station a car with a total distance on its recorder of approximately 25 yards.

For the first few weeks the whole production effort was concentrated on an order of 1,000 cars for Canada. Left or right-hand drive presented no problem in assembly of the Isetta, and production was flexible within a range of six models. The Canadian cars were built with left-hand steering, heavier bumpers and electrical systems to suit local conditions.

The mainstay of production for the British market was a cabriolet and a saloon for a remarkable figure of £359 17s. 6d, including purchase tax. For a four wheeled Vehicle bearing the full weight of 60% purchase tax this was real economy motoring. A lower rate, applied to commercial vehicles, brought the price down to £299 17s. 6d. or £307 2s. These prices were for a miniature "pick-up" and a "lorry."

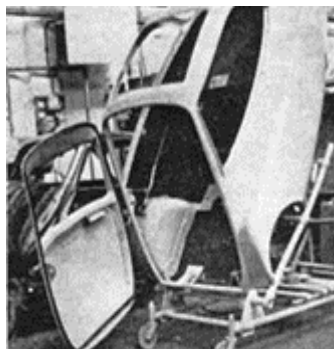
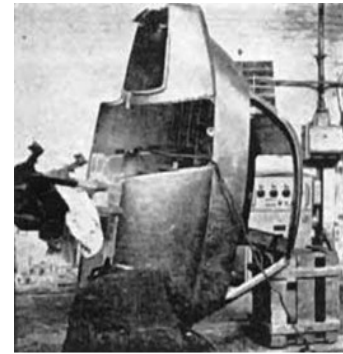
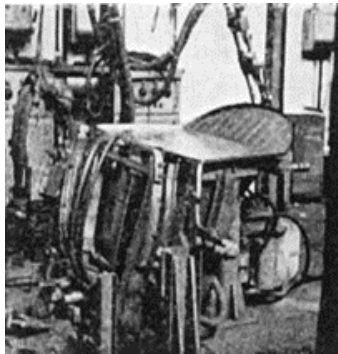
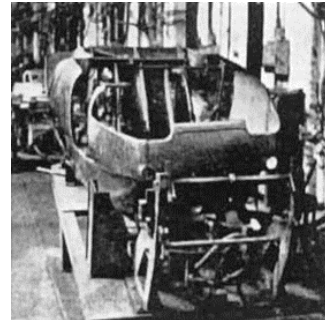
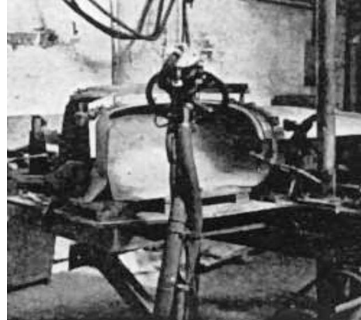
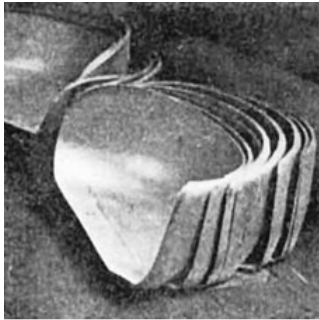


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## Around the Factory:



At its height of production, the Brighton factory output was one and a half cars, per man, per week. That translated to around 300 units. BMW, subsequently, took over the manufacturing of the Isetta moving the factory to the Victoria Road site, in Portslade, until production finished in 1964.