

Miniature classics



Messerschmitts – full-size and miniature – Bond Minicars, Berkeleys, Heinkels, even an Isetta towing a caravan – they all rolled up at the Cotswold Wild Life Park for Sunday's 21st anniversary rally. Below, Andrew Rodgel, 13, and Matthew Devonport, nine, sample the delights of open-air mini-motoring on a rainy day. Pictures: JON LEWIS

They're forever showing bubbles

THEY came in various shapes and colours proudly declaring: small is beautiful.

Even the pouring rain and the muddy field at the Cotswold Wild Life Park, near Burford, couldn't dampen the enthusiasm of their owners. After all, it was the 21st National Microcar Rally — and devotees had travelled far and wide to make the anniversary.

More than 100 microcars — or bubble cars as they are affectionately known — took part in the rally, which was part of a two-day event.

The cars are distinguished by their 1950s and 1960s simple shapes. Usually three-wheelers, you got into them by lifting the lid, stepping over the side or opening the front.

On Saturday, the owners enjoyed a road run in the countryside of

neighbouring Gloucestershire, and welcomed the sunny weather. On Sunday, they sheltered under umbrellas and giant tents, swapping spare parts and compliments on the success of one another's restoration efforts.

At least two owners had driven to Oxfordshire from Germany. Other Germans brought their cars on a trailer, but Henner Rensch, from Brunswick, went one better and towed a mini-caravan behind his BMW 600 Isetta.

He said: "It's wonderful. In Europe there are many meetings, but British meetings are the best. There are lots of cars, the people smile, and it makes me very happy."

The rally was a doubly nostalgic occasion for the enthusiasts, who held their very first national rally at the wild life park in 1974.

