



MEWSLETTER 101

July - August 2011

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Pictured is Oliver Smith's rare black Rebel saloon. This car appears to have always been black as there's no trace of any other colour, even in all the "hidden" places. Rescued last September by Oliver it has been the subject of an extensive and high quality body off rebuild, which, for those who are interested, has been videoed and up on YouTube for a while now. By the time you see this it should be all black again.

The Register caters for all the under 1 litre Reliant 4-wheeled vehicles plus all of their derivatives: Foxes, Rebels, Tempests, Salamanders, Ciphers, Jimps, Asquiths, Vantiques and all other specials including the Liege.....



The Reliant Kitten Register

Rebel parts stock held by: - Adrian Hanwell

New Kitten / Fox / Rebel parts stock held by Brian Marshall
E-Mail info@kitreg.org.uk

Rebel alternative parts list contact: John Blagburn
E-mail: wirelessjohn@googlemail.com

Kitten alternative parts list: ****Situation vacant****. Contact the Editor to volunteer.

Fox alternative parts list contact: Duncan Bradford, 52 St. Phillips Road, Norwich, NR2 3BN.
E-Mail hidunc@ntlworld.com

Our Mutual Aid Spares scheme is run for us by Phil Hallam 4, Greenhead Holding, Stevenston, Ayrshire KA20 4JX

Tempest Registrar: Martin Seymour 19 Cedar Court, Churchfields, South Woodford, London E18 2QU
E-mail mseymour@freenetname.co.uk

Mewsletter pictures – should be sent to John Pearce at Toddbury Farm, Slapton Road, Lt Billington, Beds. LU7 9BP
E-mail john@atodini.co.uk

The Register is a member of the FBHVC, which monitors UK & EU legislation and lobbies on our behalf to protect our freedom to use vehicles of all ages on the roads. Readers are invited to show their own support of this worthy cause by becoming members in their own right. Contact the editor for details.

It should be noted that opinions and ideas, information and advice printed in this publication are as recommended by our readers and others, and, while believed to be accurate and correct, such information is given in good faith, and it does not necessarily have the approval of the Reliant Kitten Register, and cannot be guaranteed by either the Editor, or the Reliant Kitten Register. Owners must satisfy themselves as to the suitability of any suggestions made within these pages, as no responsibility can be accepted.

Web page: <http://www.kitreg.org.uk> or have a look at <http://www.reliantkitten.co.uk>

Dinky Cars

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This time our front cover features the car covered in the story on pages 9 to 15 of the magazine. My only regret is that the pictures in the magazine are not in colour too, the bright green of the chassis, in sharp contrast to the orange of the fuel tank, radiator top, rocker cover and wheels is truly striking – but compromise is, as always, necessary!

Welcome as ever, back to normal this time. This edition is mainly devoted to Rebels – the joys of planning well ahead. Erddig is just a couple of weeks away as I type, and I expect much magazine material to be generated there, and indeed from the intrepid Liege adventurers who are going to do a Liege Le-JoG (a journey from Land's End to John O'Groats by Liege) in July, and should be passing through Ayrshire about the same time I should be in that neck of the woods on holiday – photo opportunities should abound - you may see more of that in the next edition!

I must just say a big thank you to Malcolm Rush for his time, enthusiasm and generosity in organising and financing Erddig for us, and to Roger and Yoland Brown for the transportation and loan of their gazebo, which, thankfully, we used as a sun shade on the day.

Malcolm is also responsible for providing the enclosed window sticker, the words **Thank You**, seem so small, Malcolm, we owe you a great deal, on behalf of not only those who enjoyed your hospitality at Erddig, but everyone else too, many, many thanks.

Thanks also to Bob Neal; who was quick to send me a copy of the Classic Van & Pick-Up magazine's article on page 12 of their July 2011 edition which made more than a passing reference to the Register, Dave Smith's Fox, (as featured on the cover of edition 99,) and the fact that, in their opinion, this journal, the Mewsletter, is the clear winner of the title "sweetest named club magazine" around! Always good to be recognised. I must send a copy of this to Dr. Bill Lonie whose idea that name was.

Also, contact made through our being mentioned in other publications, in June I received a communication from Geoff Halstead, an Austin 7 Ruby enthusiast, his is a 1935 model, and he had read on page 17 of the club news section of the Federation's (F.B.H.V.C.) magazine about our article on HVLP spraying

did put a marinised Chevy 454 tuned from 350 up to 450bhp, into my 21' 1955 Chris Craft Capri (the old 5.5 litre Hercules MLB side-valve six, was barely good for 160bhp) and my XK 120 has a Jaguar V12 stuffed in (about 650bs, barely heavier than the original six). Only my daily hacks; the Golf GTI and the Celica, are pretty stock, to ensure reliability. My latest toy bought about a month ago, is a 1975 Chevy C60 truck, that reputedly carries up to 10 tons, the back platform is 6 metres long and I have already carried two classic Minis on it. It has a couple of heavy metal ramps so cars can be driven onto the back, and maintenance is easy as it has a simple-Simon ohv Chevy 292c.i. petrol straight six engine (4.8 litres 165bhp and about 280lbsft) with a single barrel carb, electronic HEI ignition and a 4 speed trans; an SM465 box where 1st is very low 7.06:1, so one normally just starts off in 2nd gear; 3.58 and it also has a two speed diff 6.40:1 and 8.72:1. Again I just use the Hi ratio over the Lo ratio. Have not yet tried it loaded to 10 tons. After the Feb 2010 earthquake, a lot of old houses and buildings were demolished, so I was able to buy a good amount of 100 year old oak beams nicely dried out, as I also enjoy carpentry; also making not-too-fancy rustic furniture etc, but each time I've had to pay from transporting them to my warehouse The speed limit for trucks out here is only 90 kph/56.25mph, whereas for cars it is 120kph or 75mph. Frankly I finally got fed up paying to transport cars as well or relying on friends to tow me here and tow me there with their cars. Well that is my excuse. As no salt is used on the roads out here and the climate is mild, the body is in very good condition for a 36 year old lad. Yes, it is thirstier than a comparable diesel truck, but they are much pricier to buy and also to maintain and I will not be using it that much. For smaller loads I have the 55 Chevy pickup built for 500kgs, but with stronger rear springs now good for 1000kgs. The C60 truck at the 90kph limit gave a little over 4 kms per litre, which is nearly 12mpg, but around town not hussling it too much, it is still reasonable. Luckily I still have my HGV licence obtained years ago. Now I can put it to good use again.

With no wife to complicate my life, only the odd girlfriend, whose opinion in such matters is not sought, (the less said the better), there is no problem about how silly I can get with my purchases. Another fancy purchase at a Chilean Army auction, was a lovely German Mahle compressor, with about a large 400litre chamber and twin V2 compressors a twin 3 phase motors, scarcely anything was wrong with it; just missing one of the copper cooling inter-connecting pipes and one of the compressor's rubber mounts, yet I got it for a song. It is very quiet now when running, not like those wee modern ones, that sound like they are revving their poor guts out and will seize up, at any moment.

My classic Mini also being restored is due for a mid engined Subaru flat six installation, mated to a Renault 25 UN1 transaxle, (Lotus used them latterly on the Esprit) just because I love the throaty yet smooth revving sweet sound that the 911 Porsches make. Future plans are to turbocharge it, just like the smaller Impresa WRX turbos, if it is not too skittish, with only an 80" wheelbase, shorter even than the Kitten's 84" wheelbase. Probably end up as skittish as a Go-Cart, but it should be fun to close in slowly and quietly on real Porsches and with that power to weight ratio, one should be able to out drag them easily and nip through traffic like a knife through butter.

Better cut the waffle, as I bet you have been extremely busy, cranking out the hallowed 100th Mewsletter. My congratulations Brian. I bet there are not that many mags in the UK today that make it that far.

Bye for now, please give my regards to Moira and Arleen and hubby; the happy couple restoring the Rebel.

Frank (old # 601, from the back-end of beyond)

Frank, many thanks for the up-date, as an aside I do know that Dick Goodall stopped writing to you because the last couple of letters he tried to send were returned to him many months later with, presumably, Spanish writing on the envelope, (no doubt offering some explanation as to why they had not been delivered) but sadly he does not have a local translator, and so he just gave up I'm afraid.

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# REBEL ROLL CALL

By Terry Horler June 2011

Interesting to read in the last edition, how many of our “wonderful wee cars” (as someone might say), are currently remaining on the road in the UK. I must say that I was surprised to see 37 Rebels were licensed at the end of 2010 compared to the figure of 25 that was published in Practical Classics magazine in 2007. To find out more, I Googled ‘How many left’ which produced the following –

|      |          | Rebel | 700                                            | 750 | Van | Total |
|------|----------|-------|------------------------------------------------|-----|-----|-------|
| 2011 | Licensed | 18    | 15                                             | 5   | 3   | 41    |
|      | Sorn     | 18    | 4                                              | 4   | 3   | 29    |
| 2007 | Licensed | 19    | 16                                             | 8   | 4   | 47    |
|      | Sorn     | 15    | 5                                              | 3   | 2   | 25    |
| 2000 | Licensed | 34    | 31                                             | 12  | 6   | 83    |
|      | Sorn     |       | <i>(No figures available as early as 2000)</i> |     |     |       |

This useful website, compiled by Olly Smith, is based upon information from the DVLA. This recognises the above 4 categories for the Reliant Rebel. It is stressed that the categories contain errors. For example, the website states that no 1972 registered vans were licensed in 2010, I know of at least 2 that were. This may be due to errors and omissions on the original registration documents which did not state the full model description. As we all know, a Reliant Rebel could be a 600, 700 or 750 saloon, a 700 or 750 estate or a 700 or 750 van, making 7 categories as opposed to the 4 that DVLA lump everything into. Although we should take the total in each category with a certain amount of salt, the overall totals should be correct for both licensed and Sorn (statutory off road notice) groups. What we don't see are all those Rebels hiding in the woodwork, the ones 'off the road' prior to Sorn being introduced. Now that both DVLA and the police will take action against an owner who has neither licensed or Sorn(ed) their car, these woodwork dwellers are less likely to make their Rebel's existence known until such time that they are being licensed. A Rebel being sold (mostly on eBay it seems) will require the new owner to apply for a new V5C and if not currently licensed or Sorn(ed), only then will be added to the figures above. There are believed to be around 120 Rebels still in existence although only 70 are on the DVLA database in 2011. It may be sometime before the other 50 or so creep out of the woodwork to receive a new red V5C.

The new policy of Licensing/Sorn is making new entries to the Rebel Register difficult. Owners of pre – Sorn(ed) examples may not want to make their Rebel's identity known in fear of the 'system' catching up with them. Hence, any photos or information that appears may have the VRM and VIN withheld by the 'keeper'. Added to which, the new red V5C removes the scrapping option portion. You now have to prove that a vehicle is disposed of correctly by an approved facility and a certificate obtained. Keeping either a complete vehicle, part of a vehicle or just the documentation of a vehicle that is otherwise unbeknown to the 'system', could be a touch clandestine these days!

Terry Horler - No. 755 from Bristol

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Another Rebel Story

Rebel Rescue – by Oliver Smith

Hi Brian,

February 6th 2011

The current story of this car started in 2009 when I was looking for another Rebel Project... Some R3W members had been to see a Black Rebel Saloon, and had disregarded it as too rusty, and far too neglected to become a viable project. I persisted and telephoned the fellow, we made some vague arrangements, but the guy never confirmed. I found another Rebel, and never gave the mysterious Black Rebel Saloon another thought...



In September 2010, on a Sunday evening, a gentleman rang suggesting that I wanted his car, I was not in the mood for games, or buying another car... but he explained that my consent was unnecessary as he was giving me the car! I confirmed that due to my vehicular fetish, he was correct, my consent was not required as my subconscious hastily made arrangements to collect the unwanted and very unloved, and possibly legendary, Black Rebel Saloon. *Yes Oliver, I too used to have that ailment – there is no treatment available on the NHS that offers a cure I'm happy to say! Ed.*

The car was collected and dragged to its new home for the resurrection to begin... Not having much experience of restorations I was confused as to why the car was deemed unrestorable... apart from surface rust, it looked mint (through my rose coloured spectacles ;)

The next day (a Friday), we began stripping the car with a view to taking the body off and assessing the situation...



We did need a couple of neighbours to help us remove the bodywork, but we used skilled craftsman to help us put it back on... (the neighbours used a bit too much brute force).

[By the Sunday evening the car was](#) looking absolutely amazing... or at least the chassis... all stripped back to bare metal, iron oxide and rustoleum gloss. *Aye Oliver, you make it sound sooo easy – Ed.*



Like all good children, I was brought up on a strict overdose of Blue Peter... so I had a lovely 4,500 mile engine ready, baby wiped inside and out with new seals, etc... and an alternator.

The car came with no radiator, but for some strange reason (it's another long story) I already had a brand new reconditioned one that would not fit my other car...

So the whole rebuild/restoration was going suspiciously smoothly, no broken bolts or shredded threads, just some nice lubricant and a bit of hot spannering (Mapp Gas Torch!).

Amsteer provided the 6 Track Rod ends and other parts, particularly brake components, were all renewed... Special thanks to CHGperformance, Poppy Old Shop and Gaskets for Classics...

Wherever possible, nuts and bolts were swapped for stainless steel and new lock nuts, etc... A set of wheels was painted and new tyres fitted...

The engine bay got dressed a little in a shockingly unoriginal orange, headlights were sourced and fitted, along with a new starter solenoid. Heater vents and other fiddling things were filled with structural paint and fibreglass resin where the metal was too thin... The ashtray and the hand brake surround were almost invisible, but with some magic resin and plenty of coffee, we reused almost all of the original parts...



There is always the odd job that you wish you had done before the body goes back, but access is easy... a few empty 25litre plastic drums and then lift the car onto the oil drum pillows.

The bodywork was, and is, generally appalling... but this is also the appeal... so although I want to keep the body original, some structural work to previous bad repairs was required.

Across the front, embedded in the fibreglass is a metal bracket that bolts to the front of the chassis, this was not attached... The inner wings were not well bonded and the seat belts mounts were a joke. That said, it only took a few hours of fibreglassing and the body was structurally perfect...



As you can see... at this point, there is no battery and it looks a bit untidy... The wiring seemed like it needed replacing, but instead, we cleaned all the bullet connectors and a few switches, and it came back to life... *(you listening Colin? Ed)*

Some aluminium brackets were used to fabricate a bigger battery tray, the original small sized batteries are fairly useless and expensive... Notice the big green cross member? Why was this only done on 600cc Rebels?

The DVLA, a lovely bunch of clowns - they must be clowns because they always make me laugh! 5 different V5 documents were issued before they got it right! I must explain that while we think of ourselves as customers of the DVLA, they do not, their customers are the Police and the Courts. The DVLA's job is to provide accurate information to the Courts and the Police... I was asked at one point whether or not I was sure it was a saloon, and how could I be sure it wasn't a van?

Anyway, the car is sporting its historic tax disc and was apparently safe enough to pass an MOT and it only took 3 months... Now the work really starts... I have done about 1,000 miles in it, maybe more... (in 3 or 4 months of running) the speedo doesn't work so its hard to say... but it does well over 50 mpg.

Problems so far have included the gearstick coming off whilst changing gear, the exhaust falling off (it was homemade!), heater problems (switch related) and general intermittent electrical niggles.

The exhaust was an issue... the chassis allows the exhaust to go through the centre of the car, later cars had the exhaust located down the passenger's side and through the outriggers. This car has both options due to having later outriggers fitted.

I already had a manifold section of exhaust with a bit of a bend that was almost suitable, I had a Reliant silencer, I had a friend with a welder but no time... and a few friends with nothing but good intentions and plenty of time.

So I bought some straight exhaust pipe for £20 and using a scaffolding pipe and an old drive shaft we bent the exhaust carefully into shape, made some flared sections on one end for joining it and got some exhaust

clamps... But the rubber we used to mount the exhaust at the back was just a strip of rubber... so it lasted 3 weeks... The solution was a proper rubber exhaust mount I found on the floor of a mechanics workshop which bolted straight to the exhaust and the chassis in place of the broken rubber strap.

I know there aren't many of these little precious cars left... I met a crazy upholsterer today who has offered to do the inside... do I let him have free reign, or keep it original? The plan was to keep the outside looking as tatty and original as possible, especially as it will take me forever to address all the stress cracks properly and it's not really going to deteriorate. Instead my intention was to focus my attention on an amazing interior... much like the surprise you get when you open the bonnet!

Sorry about the orange wheels Brian, I know you have a preference for the original Olde English white...

Oliver (Smith) No. 863 from Accrington

Thank you Oliver. That story, and the pictures, bring back memories of similar exploits I used to be involved in a couple of decades ago. I used old tyres (just tyres, not wheels!) rather than plastic drums to protect the body when the Rebel was tipped up on its side, my friends – roped in to help with the lift – were always amazed at how far up it goes before it starts to tip. A reflection of the car's low centre of gravity.

Sadly that was long before the days of digital cameras, and, a bit like my desk and my computer, my old photographs are in boxes in the loft awaiting sorting – must get round to that task someday!

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## **The Hollingworth Kitten Saga part 1**

Why am I here ?

Well because I bought a Kitten of course, but there is a story behind that purchase.

Back in 1976 I left school and started work as an apprentice mechanic in a small local crane hire firm, I got the job of maintaining my mother's 1976 Reliant Kitten – PEH 293R, it was all good experience but boy did that car pay for my lack of experience – first lesson – Reliant Kittens are not for the total novice, they are full of gotchas – like a 700mm versus a 710mm fanbelt depending on the radiator – except it has taken me thirty five years to learn that little gem, a propensity to leak oil paralleled only by a Land Rover and a desire to overheat and blow its head at any opportunity if not set up correctly.

I am now relatively comfortable, the wrong side of fifty and need an excuse to get off my fat behind and do something before ongoing health issues mean that I can no longer. I therefore set out to find the car and buy it for sentimental and nostalgia reasons as much as anything but alas I have failed, you can't imagine how hard DVLA make finding a car even though it isn't reported as scrapped or exported.

So figuring that I will never find it I instead purchased a one owner 1977 Kitten DL Estate (actually manufactured in 1976). I have obtained with the car a phenomenal amount of history right down to a log book that details every gallon (and subsequent litre) that has gone into this car, the mileage duly entered alongside the fuel quantity, every tax disc and MOT, all bills and receipts back to day one. The former owner was a Dr. C. D. Bartlett who, until this car was laid up, owned the car I now possess from new.

That said if anyone knows PEH 293R – A Red DL Estate - I want her back. This is the car that I drove on a UK road LEGALLY for the first time solo way back in 1978.

## ***Impressions of a Newbie.***

Well I thought I would start my particular Kitten saga with some thoughts, I don't even have the car yet, I also haven't told the wife what I plan, or have done.

That is the problem, no car and an enthusiasm that I am sure will not last, you know the typical project phases.

1. Enthusiasm
2. Disillusionment
3. Panic
4. Search for the Guilty
5. Punishment of the Innocent
6. Praise for the Non-Participants

But, I am preparing for the restoration and in doing so am scouring the web for parts/sources of parts, information, the experience of others, partly to help plan and partly to avoid repeating the mistakes of others. This has led to a certain amount of concern, confusion and stress.

I have been immediately presented with masses of information much of which is contradictory, a lot of which seems to have no supporting evidence, a lot of which doesn't seem to be based on sound engineering or genuine knowledge. Don't get me wrong this isn't unique to the Reliant community, I think it is just a sickness that appears when too much information is too easily communicated, you end up with a kind of information overload where good and bad is all thrown into the pot and is readily available.

I don't feel that I have the right to say what I think simply because I am a newbie in the Reliant clan, problem is that I am not a newbie to vehicle mechanics, like it or not regardless of whether the vehicle is a Reliant, Rover, or Rolls Royce, certain principles of automotive engineering remain consistent.

Some of the advice given on the forums is worthy only of scorn and I don't care how long they have been running Reliants, bad advice is bad advice, anyone who doesn't know better is likely to follow it. Many of the problems that I have read through can be directly attributed to the parts selection and maintenance / work standards of the owner, many criticise parts for failing or causing failures with no thought or consideration that the part was unsuitable from the start, the manner in which they were fitted, poor or incorrect parts to begin with, are the most likely candidates for the failure.

Failure to read labels and inserting a GL5 gear oil gets the oil manufacturer slandered and yet anyone with experience will tell you that a GL5 grade gear oil is totally unsuitable in a gearbox containing yellow metals. So many of the myths and old wives tales get reported through the forums as if they are facts simply because somebody has heard it elsewhere, I am not going to highlight any here because people believe them so vehemently that challenging them just leads to confrontation, even when you have the evidence to prove that they are wrong, confrontation is something that I can do without.

Clearly there are people running these cars daily, but to keep them on the road in the absence of genuine spares there seem to be as many modifications and options as there are cars on the road.

Despite this there doesn't seem to be a properly managed definitive list of parts and alternatives for these cars, particularly Kittens, sure some of the basic service stuff is covered but it doesn't seem to extend very far into the other items. Much of this seems to be down to Reliants propensity to fit whatever they had to hand on some of the cars, some of it seems to be down to the poor standards of Reliant documentation, certainly the parts manuals I have seen (2 now) don't match any of the parts book cross references from QH (Quinton Hazel), Lucas or even SU carburettors.

Take the brake drums, it seems that these items are a minefield and yet they are, in my opinion service items, so why is it that replacement drums that will 'definitely fit' are such a pain to find. The Quinton Hazel number for a front brake drum is T882718 this cross references to Austin part GDB105 and Reliant part RT21A2200 and yet in neither of the Reliant Kitten part manuals that I have access to does the part RT21A2200 exist, the part number in both Reliant parts books is 25606 front drum, 25605 rear drum. Worse still the GDB105 is a reference for a standard mini brake drum that pretty well everyone seems to agree will not fit. This source of confusion is further highlighted by the distributor, Lucas parts manuals are adamant that the 848cc Robin and 848cc Kitten distributors are identical, right down to the Lucas body number 41626, yet many I have interacted with say they aren't the same, there is a disconnect here that I find hard to deal with. Just WHO do you believe, frankly I find it hard to accept that Lucas are wrong in this case – they made the damned things after all.

I have also found a number of 'younger' people buying Reliants simply as a platform for some boy racer butchery depressing, it seems that the Saxo brigade are now buying Reliants, especially the ones with 4 wheels purely on the grounds of some YouTube video of a V8 Kitten and such like, they have no care nor regard for the heritage that they are destroying. Most of these projects will never be completed and another Kitten or Fox will bite the dust.

There are also those clearly buying up old Reliants with the sole intention to profiteer by breaking for parts, on the surface they claim to be enthusiasts but their real motives are simply profit related.

Well enough of my ranting, I won't do it again, well maybe not.

The space in the garage has been prepared, 11 trips to the tip in a Land Cruiser !! (it's a double garage) first time I have seen the floor in there for 4 years, still don't have the room for a body off restoration though thanks to 2 marquees, but I can at least get the Kitten in with space to work.

I have also made what could be regarded as the first and second purchases as part of this project aside from the car that is, the first is a genuine Reliant Kitten parts manual.

The second purchase is a story in its own right. I made a conscious decision 5 years ago to never touch a spanner again, so I sold off most of my tools. I decided to take stock of what I had left given the imminent arrival of the Kitten, the toolbox was a very sad sight, much of what remains in there pretty much has only scrap value.

I have as a consequence made my second purchase in the Kitten Saga – replacement socket set and spanners, speaking of which it is even hard to find decent quality imperial tools new these days never mind bits for the Kitten. I purchased a 61 piece Draper Hi-Torq set number 02360, 11 Draper Hi-Torq metric spanners number 68234 and 11 imperial Hi-Torq spanners number 29546.

I still have yet to decide the scope of the restoration, a body off would be the ultimate but I know how such projects can grow arms and legs, I know I should do this but I don't know if I have the heart, enthusiasm or stamina for a long drawn out project. Now all I need is the car ... and the guts to tell the wife.

PS : if anyone wants to respond, do so through the Mewsletter

Neil Kirkland - No. 916 from Cheshire (AKA Garfield)

~::~::~::~::~::~::~::~::~::~::~

## Children Are Quick

TEACHER: John, why are you doing your maths multiplication on the floor?

JOHN: You told me to do it without using tables.

TEACHER: Glenn, how do you spell 'crocodile?'

GLENN: K-R-O-K-O-D-I-A-L'

TEACHER: No, that's wrong

GLENN: Maybe it is wrong, but you asked me how I spell it.

TEACHER: Donald, what is the chemical formula for water?

DONALD: H I J K L M N O

TEACHER: What are you talking about?

DONALD: Yesterday you said it's H to O.

TEACHER: Winnie, name one important thing we have today that we didn't have ten years ago.

WINNIE: Me!

TEACHER: Glen, why do you always get so dirty?

GLEN: Well, I'm a lot closer to the ground than you are.

TEACHER: Millie, give me a sentence starting with ' I. '

MILLIE: I is..

TEACHER: No, Millie.... Always say, 'I am.'

MILLIE: All right... 'I am the ninth letter of the alphabet.'

TEACHER: George Washington not only chopped down his father's cherry tree, but also admitted it. Now, Louie, do you know why his father didn't punish him?

LOUIS: Because George still had the axe in his hand....

TEACHER: Now, Simon, tell me frankly, do you say prayers before eating?

SIMON: No sir, I don't have to, my Mum is a good cook

TEACHER: Harold, what do you call a person who keeps on talking when people are no longer interested?

HAROLD: A teacher

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Tempest update – June 2011

Hi Brian,

You asked for a page on the Tempest project to keep you up to date :-

We (Reliantspares) have been running a Tempest as rolling test bed for a while (trial tuning parts etc) so when the opportunity came to acquire John Melody's Tempest project (and as we're completely surrounded by Reliant spares) it seemed a good fit.

After a good a sort out to see what we've got, we've made a gentle start.

Laid down the bare bones for car No.1 ,a Fox based 850 road car, our first set of panels made out of the original moulds.



Car No. 2 has a super lite panel set using woven roving cloth with no gel coat gives 50 percent weight saving with Kawasaki ZZR1100 motorcycle engine to drop in, it works out at close to 300bhp per ton! Fancy pointing that up Shelsly Walsh? All this More go, gonna need more stop, John designed a disc conversion, so that's gonna get used.

Car No. 3 has Fox front end and rear swinging arm wheel etc. out of a motorcycle propped against it, this is a long long way off.

Apart from car No.1 we've taken the opportunity and smoothed out a few lines in the fibreglass, round the rear mudguards and covering the front suspension .

Big believer in less is more, so all cars have lost separate seats and have floor mounted squabs for longer legs and wider bottoms, the 80s interior has gone and simpler 60s Regal \ Rebel switches and clocks fitted.

Loads of ideas rattling around, lower roof line, hard top coupe
Any feed back and ideas welcomed, still not to sure what direction to go in.

So far things we can do are :-

- carpet set / interior trim / Hoods
- Any amount of 2ndhand Reliant parts.
- Tuned big bore four branch exhaust / Tuned inlet manifold
- Solid state electric fuel pump / Electronic ignition
- Front Disc conversion plates
- 2 types of fibreglass kits standard and lightweight.
- New badges (first things first.)
- New ball joint conversion\adaption

I think I can make up 1 full kit out of John's parts. Still pricing and sourcing materials so may be a while till can give any quotes for fully built cars and kits, but Tempest is still living, breathing and going forward.

Getting technical

Rebel tasks - Gearbox removal

(UPDATED BASED ON EXPERIENCE FROM 10/4/2011!)

It should be noted that there are two different gearboxes used on Rebels. The early one, with no syncromesh on first, the very smart remote gearlever, and a rod operated clutch, and the later (750 with one exception) one with full syncromesh, no remote gearchange (big long wand like gearlever, and a hydraulic clutch) which neither needs nor has the engine steady rod present on the earlier cars. The cross members are both different and slightly differently mounted and so not easily interchangeable. That does not matter, but can be useful to know.

The above is of course confused over time by people, like myself, who converted the one to the other, and, better yet, the few clever people out there who have modified their Rebels to use the later Kitten / Robin gearbox.

Anyway, here we go on an early one (fitted with a unique chassis mind you!):-

Disconnect the gear lever – an inside the car job.

co-ordination with the top guys is needed for the following!

Underneath tasks :-

Drain gearbox oil, collecting it in a suitable container – re-fit the drain plug!

Now, before you start, I know that there was a batch of Rebel gearboxes made that managed to avoid having drain plugs fitted, but most of them had, if yours hasn't, I'm sorry, too bad, improvise (it can be dribbled out the back of the tailshaft once the propshaft is removed).

Disconnect the speedo drive at gearbox and secure the cable, (tucking it in somewhere works fine). Disconnect clutch operating rod from operating lever at pedal end (just straighten and remove the split pin – saves undoing the locknut and adjusting nut at this stage)

Disconnect earth strap(s).

Remove the propshaft (4 nuts at rear flange at front of diff) the prop shaft then slides back out of the gearbox, and can be removed, cleaned, painted if you like. Take the opportunity to inspect and grease the two hardy spicers. Most Rebels have hardy spicers with grease nipples.

Carefully note exactly which way the prop is located at the diff – i.e., mark it in some way – it is essential that it goes back exactly the same way it was. Either use one of the bolts or scratch it (and the flange in front of the diff) with for example a hacksaw blade.

Remove (from underneath) the 4 ½” AF nuts (2 at the bottom and one at each side) that hold the bellhousing onto the block.

On early Rebels (those without a hydraulic clutch) the engine steady rod prevents access to one of those nuts, the engine steady rod must be removed, the connection at the rear engine plate needs addressing from beneath, the front nut and bolt, near the bottom of the radiator on the chassis cross member, needs addressing from above.

Remove the gearbox cross member retaining bolts – 8 off. Supporting the sump (with a thin block of wood on the chassis crossmember) as the back of the engine comes down – check with those above that the top rad hose is undone (carefully lowering the coolant level first of course – Rebels should have radiators that

are fitted with a handy drain plug in the bottom tank of the radiator at the driver's side of the car) and that the fan will clear the radiator – if in doubt, remove the fan (or the radiator if you are more comfortable with that)..

Remove the gearbox. (It may be easier to remove the big transverse bolt and separate the crossmember from the gearbox, but I find it just as easy to remove the box and crossmember together, for all the extra weight, it makes a useful handle and gearbox steady / support when it is on the floor beside the car, or on the bench for cleaning and inspection.)

Remove the clutch cover assembly – 6 set screws – not one at a time, bit by bit each one.

Watch out for the friction plate, the two dowels which accurately locate the cover assembly can cause it to stick a bit after all 6 set screws are out, when it does come clear, sometimes, suddenly, there is nothing there to help the friction plate defy gravity, never mind hurting the mechanic, we don't want it damaged in the fall!

Remove the flywheel – tab washer and 3 set screws. (you may as well inspect and replace if necessary the rear crankshaft oil seal when you are in there anyway!

If necessary remove rear crank oil seal carrier to facilitate replacement of rear crankshaft oil seal. If you were really organised you might have used a spare housing and fitted it with a new seal in expectation!

Clean rear of crankcase and rear engine plate.

Under bonnet tasks :- *(these can in the main be carried out simultaneously by a second individual)*

Disconnect remove and put on charge – the battery.

Remove (from above) the 2 ½" AF bolts that hold the bellhousing onto the block (at top) (NOTE These two bolts are different lengths, Manifold side has the longer bolt). It is critical that you do not put the long bolt in the driver's side on re-assembly, it will bottom in the hole before it is tight, and if you force it you will strip the threads – you do not want to do that.

Remove (from above) the other 2 ½" AF nuts that hold the bellhousing onto the block – exhaust side, the lower one may have an earth strap attached also.

Disconnect power lead from starter motor – replacing the nut on the starter

Drain some coolant and disconnect the top radiator hose.

Make sure the fan will clear the radiator – if in doubt remove the fan. (or, as mentioned earlier, the radiator, but it saves draining the whole system if you are brave / careful / lazy!)

It may be necessary to disconnect the exhaust pipe from the manifold – two nuts.

On early Rebels the engine steady rod must be removed, the connection at the rear engine plate needs addressing from beneath, however, the front nut and bolt, near the bottom of the radiator, driver's side to the left of the steering box, needs addressing from above, just a nut and bolt at the front.

Top and or side tasks :-

Remove 2 starter motor securing nuts and bolts – the top one can be accessed from under the bonnet, the lower one can be accessed from the side through the wheel arch - leave the starter in place, it will come out more easily when the gearbox is out the way. (otherwise the oil filter may need to be removed – I say may, there are two very different sizes of oil filter that can be used, the correct, short, but expensive one, and the more common, much cheaper and larger capacity one, which does make it impossible to remove the starter without first removing the filter).

While the gearbox is out, clean it, (inside the bellhousing as well as the external casing) free off the clutch operating rod locknut and clean the threads so it can be easily adjusted to adapt to the new clutch. Prepare new split pin.

Inspect and replace if appropriate, the clutch release bearing.

Inspect and replace if appropriate, the rear gearbox oil seal.

Inspect and replace if appropriate, the front gearbox oil seal.

Once re-installed, fill with oil!

It had been my intention to include a number of pictures with the above, but, as so often happens, compromise struck. Perhaps one day I'll put together a technical bulletin on the subject, with pictures!

~::~::~::~::~::~::~::~::~::~::~

Kitten brakes

I had been asked if I knew where to acquire a new brake master cylinder for a Kitten. This made me realise that one source was no longer trading, and a reliable supply could be had from either Rimmer Brothers or James Paddock. There is the possibility of a minor difference in bore diameter, and possibly mounting hole centers, but none the less an acceptable cost effective and readily available compromise.

Keen to have some feedback (it is all well and good doing what we can to point people in the right direction, but it is much better to know how they got on, and, very importantly, if the information we gave was useful and accurate!) on such experience, I asked our man in Harrogate for an update. Here is his reply :-

Dear Mr. Marshall,

29th June 2011

In reply to your query the markings on my Kitten brake master cylinders (both the original and the replacement) are :-

- 1 On the plastic cap, "Lockheed" in a triangle.
- 2 On the top of the cylinder around the rim, "Only use Lockheed fluid"
- 3 On the sides of the cylinder in two opposite places, "Lockheed made in England"

There are no number markings of any kind.

Cheers.

Malcolm James McHugh - Harrogate - No. 687

As a postscript Malcolm asked if there was any way of testing the old master cylinder once it was removed from the car to confirm its failure? Now I am quite sure there is, or could be. How you would do that without spending more than the cost of a new cylinder building a test rig I am not certain. Your thoughts / suggestions and ideas are awaited.

It is one thing to put some fluid in and press the operating rod, whereupon fluid should spurt out of the orifice into which the outlet pipe should attach. Making up a short pipe and attaching it to a slave cylinder, which could easily enough be held in the "off" position, could easily tell you if it was capable of providing any force worthy of mention, but how, safely, could you determine the level of performance? If one were to attach a pressure gauge instead of a slave cylinder what reading would you expect? Obviously if the master cylinder could achieve a suitable reading, it would also have to be capable of maintaining it for some time to prove the condition of the seal, bore and piston, and indeed the integrity of the cylinder casing itself.

Where one would get such a pressure gauge, and what pressure it would want to be capable of recording I do not have the technical expertise to answer – or there may be a far simpler solution, as I said, your thoughts or suggestions are welcome.

Sales and Wants

For Sale : A pair of brand new bottom ball joints for a Kitten or Fox. Contact Paul Stevenson

For Sale :- 4 Kitten brake drums £5 each, Kitten fuel tank, only done 250 miles from new! Complete with sender unit, latest type, and 4 Kitten / early Robin multi switches – headlamp / indicator horn etc. Contact Stuart Hale

Wanted for fox a pair of half shafts. Will buy compete axle. Can collect. Contact Hugh Fowler email oldbikeman@live.com

Wanted :- anyone with some spare Fox brake drums knocking about? I could do with a pair of good back ones. Regards, Les

Wanted :- Tow bracket for a Kitten estate, contact Alan

I hope to have a separate list of things I need to re-locate from the lock-up – I really want to get the Rebel in there before the winter sets in, and I hope to be down south of the border in September – so, please check the enclosed list and talk to me if there is anything you are interested in. Ed

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## Epilogue

Ahh, right, it is July the 27<sup>th</sup> now, back from a wonderful day at Erddig, **thank you Malcolm**, off 2 weeks later for our holiday this year, in the event just for 10 days, then home to lots of post, e-mails and a full telephone message mailbox, and then we had 8 ½ month old Aaron for his first overnight stay with his grandparents, then a day to recover (and watch Lewis Hamilton work his magic in Germany), then – a name from the past (well, he has not had much published in these pages for a few years,) but our Rebel expert and old friend John Blagburn took a day out to visit us on Monday – showing off his latest wheels, very Smart John, – then the youngest cat had to go to the vet, (the little b....r disappeared on Monday and we had to cancel and re-schedule!) and I realised we had been home for 5 days and I had not dealt with any of the post, only sent a holding e-mail response to those on that side, and had done nothing whatever on this (Mewsletter) front!

So, realising that I need to make progress if I am to avoid becoming completely bogged down (we are going to be looking after the wee chap 4 days a week from the end of August), I have made the decision not to extend this edition, rather get ahead with the next one. So, if you are one of those who have kindly supplied material and do not see it here, bear with me. That said, if you had intended something to be in here and it is missing, (I am thinking here of things like adverts) please remind me.

I realise that I have omitted an update from the Federation, and there is always stuff from them that I ought to keep you in the loop about – you may recall that I was hoping to delegate that task – but no takers so far – feel free to jump in here and help me out - please nicely.

Aaarrgghhhh, I've done it again, for the second edition in a row, last minute adjustments to articles and pictures to try and get things in the right place have suddenly left me with a spare half page or so – plays havoc with trying to get things done on time! 2 things are amusing / frustrating me with this edition right now, one is – possibly my fault - the detail disclosure question on the application form – not everyone answers it, and those who do – well, let's just say I wonder if those who decline understand what I meant? It is currently causing me great frustration on the new subscribers page as there are a couple I am in doubt

about – I do not have everyone’s telephone numbers (more incomplete form filling) – and so I am frustrated, because – as often happens, I have been so close to getting this away to the printers – am doing a stint in the wee small hours (not sleeping well in this heat!) and can’t complete it without either even more compromise, or communication with folk I can’t get a hold of instantly – grrrr.

Then there is the perception frustration situation, see near the bottom of page 5, Frank’s letter, where he was clearly impressed by my driving. I was pottering along that day, seldom over 60/65, saving fuel and allowing Frank to take in the countryside – yes I corner quickly, and yes I knew the roads quite well, but I hardly ever use the brakes – only touched the big pedal that day to let anyone close behind that I would be easing off – aye, perceptions – I don’t know!

Traffic lights, (those at red!) junctions where you have to stop, and pedestrian crossings with pedestrians, are generally the only time I use the brakes, other than to light the brake lights to warn the traffic behind that I am about to be slowing down.

Oh well, I think this is probably the first edition in which I have made reference to 3 Austin 7’s – not sure the significance of that! (pages 4 and 5 if you remember!)

On a personal note, my attempts at reducing my fuel bills by curbing the mileage took a knock in July, Erddig followed by our holiday and my insistence on seeing the Liege guys, twice, on their way from Land’s End to John O’Groats, meant that the target daily average mileage of between 15 to 20 (it really wants to be no more than 12, but that seems unworkable!) was exceeded somewhat, it was a daily average of just over 45 for July – oops! (the best laid plans – squeek! Oh, that reminds me – LUBRICATE!)

Oh bother, I have only just read the article on pages 17/18 (all to do with confident cutting and pasting, then doing no more till making the proof reader’s corrections!) in very few words, that is why I don’t get involved with on-line forums! And I guess I ought to look again at the Kitten Alternative Parts List!

Till next time, take care, *Brian*

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