

RELIANT KITTEN

REGISTER

Mewsletter 117

March - April 2014



Despite Brian's promise that this year we would feature a few Kittens on the front cover (for a change!), 2014 being the 50th anniversary of the launch of the Rebel, here is one..... Back on the road following a very comprehensive chassis up rebuild here is Terry Moore's superb example, just needing the bumpers fitting to complete. There's a blow by blow account of the trials, tribulations (and skinned knuckles) of this restoration on the Reliant World forum..... <http://www.reliantworld.co.uk/>

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The Kitten Register caters for all the under 1 litre Reliant 4-wheeled vehicles - plus all of their derivatives: Fox, Rebel, Tempest, Salamander, Ciper, Jimp, Asquith, Vantique, Liege and all other specials.



The Reliant Kitten Register

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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.

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

Dinky Cars

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**SALES, SPARES, REPAIRS,
ENGINE RECONDITIONING**

I N D E X

Edition 117

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E & o e

My apologies for the morbid epilogue last time, I had a really good day on January the 24th, no idea why, but a cloud seemed to lift, and I have a quarter of this edition typed up and it is only the 25th of January!

10th of March now, just about to drop this off with the printers before I head south, and the next edition is half full already – what joy!

I think it was Adrian Hanwell some years back who suggested we should, (at least those of us with a collection, whether it be of vehicles, documents, spares, or any kind of archive,) be taking account of our motoring heritage when making out our wills, and I must confess that I have not done so, perhaps we should all think about that!

Moving on (head firmly buried in the sand for now), I am annually faced with the decision of what to do about the comments on many of your renewal notices. They fall into three main categories, polite encouraging comments, questions that require an answer, and changes to details and or circumstances. I suspect that, other than those who ask specific questions, you do not expect a reply or acknowledgement, I really do not have the time or energy to reply to everyone individually. I do however thank you very much for the kind thoughts and encouragement, it is all greatly appreciated.

That said, I realise all too well that some people have not enjoyed the best service in recent months, and to them I can only offer my sincere apologies, no excuses, just been struggling a bit of late and for no particular reason other than possibly more on my plate than I can cope with, (a situation I am addressing) some things have slipped.

On a positive note, it is almost exactly a month since I mailed the Christmas magazine, number 116 I am told is ready for collection at the printers, your renewals have been coming in thick and fast, past the half way mark already, the printer turned the last edition round in under a week, which left me scrabbling to organise the membership cards in time!

Most of January, grandchild duties first of course, has been spent on Register matters to the exclusion of my other responsibilities, so I must alter my focus for a couple of weeks, but I do feel that, for now, I have not only caught up on this front, but am ahead of the game – I wonder if I will still be feeling so confident come the end of February!?! (See note at the bottom of the last page for an update on that!)

At the risk of wandering off subject I am going to do so again in this edition, please bear with me. My Thanks to Mike Oakins for sharing his memories from a recent tour of a large top end British located car factory in Crew, see page 17.

Asquith owners might like to know that I plan an article about you, and of course your vans. It dawned on me that we do not hear much about you, but your renewal notices remind me that we have more Asquith owning readers than Jimp ones! Please feel free to contribute with either a picture, or article, or both! Ed.

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## Notes from some more of your renewal notices

Dear Brian,

21/1/14

Apologies for the late return of the enclosed renewal form and thanks for M. L. 115. On page 5 I was delighted to learn that you have other readers who have not embraced the electronic age.

Perhaps they also use a black and white T.V. as I do, the licence is so much cheaper.

About 18 months ago when you supplied a re-con steering rack intended for future use, I agreed to send the spare old unit I had acquired quarter of a century ago but then could not find it.

I've just had another fruitless search for it, the real problem is that my garage is too small. Apart from the usual garage contents, bench, shelves, tools, old Morgan Coupe, etc., it also contains 4 classic marine engines and associated spares. A Kelvin Diesel - Scottish engineering at its best, and 3 small Stuart Turners – beautifully made in Henley-on-Thames. In addition it also currently contains a friend's large and heavy Fowler – excellent Yorkshire engineering from another era.

Sometimes I feel my garage is shrinking! I hope that the enclosed cheque is adequate to compensate for the missing rack (*it is thank you, Ed.*)

Oh, by the way, do you have any Fox door seals?

Kindest Regards, John (Noton) from Birkenhead No. 929

*John also pointed out that I had misspelt Birki(e)nhead on his address, such errors are very easily fixed if people just tell me about them! Thanks John, I had printed the set of address labels this comes to you in before your renewal arrived, it will be correct in future! Ed*

Hi Brian,

18<sup>th</sup> January 2014

How do you do? Here is my membership renewal. My Kitty began the New Year with ease, due to a long awaited front suspension and brake overhaul.

I had powder coated the wishbones and springs from the many spares I have, changed the silentblocks, made new Dural bottom spring retainers to fit a pair of unknown dampers bought some years ago at the Beaulieu autojumble. I changed front and rear brake shoes and cylinders, front back plates (Mini) and overhauled the master cylinder and cleaned the pipes to fill the system with silicone fluid, better for long term use.

I had a pair of new Minispares ribbed aluminum drums with inbuilt spacers which, after a bit of halfshaft flange turning on my faithful Myford lathe, were put on the back axle.

Best wishes for the New ear.

Patrick (Vallet) Porrentruy (Switzerland) No. 702

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One thing I think I ought to do but seldom if ever achieve, is to congratulate both those who keep their Reliant on the road year in year out, and also make special mention of those who get one back on the road after either a rebuild, or a prolonged time off the road.

Two who, for no particular reason, spring to mind at the moment are Dean Howells, whose Fox I see is running, and Stuart Vickers who took not a lot of time putting David Myres' old Rebel estate back on the road after acquiring it through an advert we ran last year (It had been lying in David's back garden for over a decade!) – a good unique towbar with that car Stuart, it (the towbar) came from Glasgow!

I do not doubt there are many others deserving of a mention, but I felt that saying something was better than saying nothing – my apologies to those worthy who are not mentioned. Please do tell me of your success (or indeed frustrations) with pictures if possible.

Ed.

Terry Horler from Bristol of *Rebellious Conduct* fame, tells me that his Rebel is still doing the daily commute, and is still shedding flakes of paint and jumping out of gear on a regular basis along the way.

The Rebel had been expecting, as had Terry, to retire this March, but I am told that both will need to soldier on for a while yet!

Terry, thanks for your good wishes, I am sorry that we can't help get your gearbox fixed, it really would make the car much more enjoyable – character is all well and good, but some traits are just a blooming nuisance.

I do have two Rebel gearboxes in the lock-up, one of each type. The early one, complete (at the moment) with its remote gearchange linkage, is jammed in first gear, the latter one is believed to have been reconditioned, but I have never used it. I really ought to move these on as I will, sadly, never need them. The remote gear change I have promised to loan to Simon as a test sample for the Ciper – I do hope the rain stops before March so I can go round and remove it from the box in the lock-up!

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Bev Crook from Milton Keynes, who has always regretted selling his Jimp, tells me that he loves reading the magazine, but lack of space and advancing years prevent him from getting involved in another vehicle, (*if only I had had his wisdom a few years ago, my life might be simpler now!*) he has over 35 two wheelers, a Midas, and a 3 wheeled Ranger Cub, so he never gets bored. Good to still have you on board Bev.

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Dear Brian,

31st December 2013

Thank you for the invitation to renew my RKR subscription, I enclose the form and cheque. Had I been better organised you'd have received it sooner, though I did promise myself I'd respond before the end of the year, so I just made it!

Thank you for including the article in the last Mewsletter (115) it was good to see the photos in print. I'm currently fitting a pair of alternative seats, the original ones were surprisingly good for their age, but I decided to search for some with adjustable back rests to make things a bit more comfortable.

When I tried removing the nuts and bolts that held the original rails to the floor I found the nuts were well and truly rusted, so I drilled the heads off the bolts, and out they dropped. When I came to do the second one I did not waste time with spanners and simply drilled the bolt heads off straight away, of course when the remains of the bolts dropped on the floor, the nuts unscrewed easily – typical! I've made some adaptor plates and box sections for the "new" seats so that they bolt to the floor through the original holes, and fastened it all together with stainless bolts and nyloc nuts this time.

Thank you for the great magazines over the past 12 months, I look forward to seeing more of the same in 2014... and seeing some kittens on the front cover!

Many things to do here so I'll close now and wish you a Happy Healthy and Prosperous New Year.

At the best, Tony (Wiese) from Wakefield No. 967

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Tricia and hubby Raymond Nash from St. Albans, no longer have their Kitten (their yellow saloon succumbed to chassis corrosion a number of years ago) but they still very much enjoy the magazine and appreciate my efforts. Keep telling me that and I'll never stop! Ed.

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Hello Brian,

12th February 2014

And a Happy New Year to you and yours. I thought you would like to know that your latest mewsings arrived safely yesterday and was duly absorbed in detail last evening.

As usual the net result was to make me, once again, wish that there was not so much distance between us, there are some very attractive offerings to be found on the supplement sheet which would make life easier for ageing car carers!

I also noted with interest the comments from your Rebel Editor colleague with regard to restoration of a Bug which had been converted to electric propulsion. The very first Reliant 850 engine which came into my hands , many years ago when A7 specials were "my thing", was given to me by a fellow who had it under his bench for about twenty years (when dismantled there were mushrooms growing in the sump!). He lived in East Sussex and had told me that the engine had originated from a car which had been converted to electric drive, so electric conversion must have been attempted over a long period.

These thoughts on engines cause me to ask you, "is there any definitive archival writing to which I might refer which would make possible the identification of year of manufacture, intended use, and /or detail specification differences such as comp. ratio, by the engine number or other numbers, marks or features?" I have often seen reference to rocker cover colour in Mews and Liege News but unless the engine is from a known source that method of identification is obviously flawed.

I shall be interested to receive your comment when you find the time.

Best wishes, Bob (Riches) NSW Australia No. 457

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Bob, the answer to the engine dating data is yes, however I am all but out of space this time, it will be in the next edition. (with due thanks to John Pearce). Ed.

~~~~~

Hi Brian,

6th February 2014

Having just received the latest Mewsletter, I thought I would comment on the picture on page 10. This is a Radnor van, made by G.B.

Cars. I sent you a photocopy of this or a similar vehicle and information some time back. Styled, or inspired by, an Austin Seven van with 'C' type cab.

All GRP costing around £9- £10,000 when new on a Fox chassis. The man behind it I was told was Garrett O'Hearn (not sure of the spelling), and there was also an open car version. G.B. Cars also made Bugatti look-alikes with VW Beetle chassis.

Hope you are well.

Best Regards, Andrew Norman from Shrewsbury No. 291

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Hi Charles (and Brian),

7<sup>th</sup> February 2014

Sorry to hear of OYC321P's engine troubles in the latest "Mewsletter". You realise, that was a "new" replacement (official reconditioned) engine that had done fewer than 5,000 miles (plus what you've added since acquiring the car Charles). We really only used the Kitten to keep it running over the last few years. That doesn't say a lot about the workmanship of Reliant's reconditioners, Beans or otherwise.

I'm not sure about the 3-inch issue with the gearstick. The previous engine wasn't original; I was told it came from a scrapped "Robin" but not which year. The gearbox wasn't original, either. Both came from the time between my two periods of custodianship. The original gearbox slipped out of 3rd (I think) so the current one was a distinct improvement from my point of view.

I hope that all is well with you and yours, anyway, it's good to know that the Kitten is in safe hands (and thanks, Brian, for another great "Mewsletter", much appreciated!).

All the best, Rob (Wilkes) from Lower Radley No. 428

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Hi Brian,

10/2/14

Just a note to confirm that my Kitten, MPD 950P, has been given

to the following educational agency, that aims to train the motor engineers of tomorrow : -

Paragon & ITE
Station Approach,
Ashley Road,
Bournemouth,
BH1 4NB

Best Regards. Bill Flint, No. 141 from Dorset

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Rebel round up

Right, Rebel owners and enthusiasts are welcome to contribute to a special Rebel feature edition of the Mewsletter to help celebrate the Rebel's 50th birthday – talk to me guys! (And please provide me with some recent, and old if you like, pictures)

Ed.

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A Reliant by Dave Aikin

January 2014

In 1977 my new job would require a better car than my ten year old Regal 3-25.

I would have to pass the driving test as I only had a motorcycle licence at the time.

Buying a metal bodied car, for it to rust away was not on.

After looking at Reliant's Scimitar, too expensive to insure and run economically, I was told about a small Reliant, this was my introduction to the Kitten.

I bought the Kitten and had the chassis Ziebarted before taking delivery. I had already had to replace the chassis on the Regal 3-25.

The Kitten ran well until 1978 when, still under guarantee, the clutch and gearbox had to be stripped and completely rebuilt.

Winter snow caused problems. I could not keep the car going in a straight line, this problem was solved by putting snow tyres on the rear. This improved the handling so much that on occasions I was able to keep going through snow up to 6" thick. Above this depth the weight of snow in the front bodywork would finally stop me.

Using the car for work, touring around Wales, Scotland, and the Lakes and Dales and many other journeys built up many mainly trouble free miles.

Modifications to the car include :- Rooflight, clutch release bearing, cylinderhead work to run on unleaded fuel.



The gearbox, every few years, would start jumping out of 2nd gear. The last time it did that I had a replacement gearbox fitted.

Over the years I have done what maintenance and repairs I could, leaving the complicated work to various Reliant garages.

Most of my maintenance work had to be done using small car ramps on my drive. My garage proved too small to do most work in.

Oil changes and greasing replacing most small components, cleaning and undersealing the chassis and suspension were done each year.

Larger problems like sheared clutch lever arm, worn out clutch plate and carbon thrust pad and support, cracked rear leaf spring, renewing the timing chain and associated oil seals etc I left to the garage.

At the last MoT I had to have the chassis welded in two places.

The Reliant dealer I use has advised me to treat the engine gently. It sounds to be in great condition for its age, but it is tired.

Starting the engine is no problem and it runs well at 45 – 55 MPH. Occasionally for short distances I will let the speed build up towards 60 – 70MPH. It will still reach 70, but I am now going to restrict myself to no more than 60MPH. I have noted that oil consumption is still very low, and for an engine that has now done 231,00 miles it is fantastic. Mileage most years now is about 6,000.

Members of the public quite often make comments on its appearance and age, and ask if I would sell it.

One motorcyclist I passed parked on the M1 hard shoulder near Sheffield, pulled out and fell in behind me. He followed me all the way up the motorway into and part way through Leeds until I had to stop at some traffic lights, there he pulled alongside. “Would you sell me your car?” was his request.

The Kitten has been my only car since 1977. Hopefully we will continue to motor on together.

Dave Aikin from Leeds No. 646. RWT 466R

Tempests

Hi Brian,

10th February 2014

The Register now has 40 Tempests and the 11 Vantiques listed. However, it is not clear how many still exist, certainly one was dismantled and one written off. We then have 2 where the registration is not known - one is being built and the other is chassis number 170199 KH000613. Many of the cars are currently off the road and details for some are minimal, notably TFB 687S, PNA 597W and L645 KFR

Reminder to Tempest owners that the Stoneleigh Kit Car Show is on 4th-5th May and they will be very welcome on the ShACC pitch at 27C.

Regards Roger

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By the way, do you know where the stalk switch comes from?  
And how many does yours have?



Ed.



## Specials!



Tony Shaw's special – more when time and space permit!



## VISIT TO CREWE or ----

### HOW THE OTHER HALF MOTORS

By Mike Oakins

Just before Christmas, I was invited to visit Bentley Motors at Crewe for a tour round the factory, where we spent a very interesting three hours. The tour started with a brief history of the company from its foundation in 1919 by W.O. Bentley, using an £8,000 grant he received for work on aircraft engines during the First World War through its various owners until it was acquired by the VW / Audi group in 2002. It was at this stage that having been part of Rolls-Royce for 70 years, the two companies went their separate ways. VW injected a lot of money into Bentley, hopefully securing its long term future as a car manufacturer in Crewe. They have recently committed to almost doubling production with the introduction of a 'Sports Utility Vehicle' (SUV) and enlarging the factory accordingly. Incident they have installed the largest array of solar panels in the country, on the factory roof to improve their carbon footprint, courtesy of the German Government.

The recent improvements in the design process were explained to us. The time scale for a new or revised model has been reduced from ten to three years, computerisation speeding up the traditional process. The early drawings for the Continental GT were made on the back of an envelope in a pub!!! Sketches become full size drawings and then proceed to quarter scale clay models and finally a full size clay model (see over the page). We were shown one of these models which from the near side looked like a road going car but the off side was in clay (not sprayed) and had been cut away to show its construction. (We were allowed to take pictures here but not on the production line). Behind the model, which emphasised the modern methods of design, were three iconic cars from the W.O. era – the second car built, EXP 2, 'Old Number 2', which was involved in the famous 'White House' crash at the Le Mans Race in 1927 and the 'Blue Train' car in which Wolff Barnato (Chairman of Bentley Motors) beat the 'Blue Train' from the South of France to London. Just before entering the factory proper was a new Mulsanne with all the 'gizmos' for close inspection and then to remind us that the factory was originally built in 1938 to produce Merlin Aircraft Engines was a Merlin engine on display.





The factory covers an area of one square mile, soon to be enlarged, and the main assembly area stretches away into the distance. The three current models are produced on two assembly lines, the Continental GT / Silver Seraph line travelling more quickly for a much greater through put each day (with six or seven people at each work station) and the Mulsanne line, slower with only two working at each station. Each car takes about three months from start to finish but the Mulsanne, which is more bespoke takes six months. The movement of the assembly lines are computer controlled but the assembly is all manual. There is a workforce of about 4,000. No cars are sold directly by the factory and all the authorised dealers are allocated so many production slots per year. Each car is made to order, so there is no such thing as a standard car, all are individual with regard to colour, trim and equipment. The bodies are mostly metal, largely aluminium, but the boot lid is composite as this has the aerals for the communication equipment built in. The bodies for the GT and Seraph are imported from Germany with finished paintwork and doors fitted. They are fed onto the production line on an overhead gantry where the first job is to remove the doors and wings for safe keeping and then the build process starts with fitting the wiring loom (which weighs about one hundredweight) and

is tested before and after fitting to the body shell. If a fault was found later, the car would have to be totally dismantled to replace it. A loss of at least two weeks. The next stage is to lower the body onto the engine, transmission and rear sub frame which have been assembled on a jig. This is lined up manually and the bolts tightened with a hand held computer controlled torque wrench and so have to be done in a prescribed order. After the engine and transmission, the largest items to be fitted are the dash board and the seats. The dash is assembled off the main line but the team that put it together go on to fit it into the car, (continuous accountability). The seats, as well as being examples of the upholsterers art, are also marvels of technology, each incorporates its own sub computer. As well as all the usual movements (height, rake, fore and aft), they have adjustable thigh supports, a massage function, hot and cold temperature control and on the open cars when the roof is down, a vent just below the head restraint allows hot air to warm the back of your neck. I am investigating fitting this to my Liege! As long as you approach the car with your own key, the seat will automatically adjust to your own setting – the height of luxury!!!



We left the production line to visit the woodwork shop. Most cars are still produced with the classical wooden dashboard, door cappings etc. and the most commonly requested timber is burr walnut which

comes from Californian trees, cut down after their useful fruiting life. Each root stock providing enough veneer for about ten cars. There is a large range of other timbers available and polished samples for customers to view. Special effects such as cross banding are among the list of options. On the GT the veneer is applied to an aluminium backing for lightness, but on the Mulsanne the dash, door cappings, picnic tables etc are on hard wood frames.

Then onto the trim shop, most of the cars are trimmed in leather. The hides come from Northern Europe as they have fewer blemishes and they are all bull hides as these are slightly thicker and firmer. The large Mulsanne takes up to 17 hides, the smaller cars fewer. The trim shop is a very large room with, at one end, tables for laying out the hides which are computer scanned to decide on the most efficient way to cut them into the required shapes. The cutting is also computer controlled. At this stage the pieces are allocated to a specific car and transferred to one of the many, mainly lady, machinists to stitch them into seat covers. Ready moulded foam cushions are put on seat frames and the leather covers and electrics fitted. Each seat is then individually tested to make sure all its electrics function correctly and then into a machine called 'Squirming Irma' which replicates 'sitting many times' to make sure the cover is up to standard.

Back to the production line and the cars slowly come together. One of the final checks was a chap with a set of feeler gauges measuring door gaps and alignment. All new cars have to be ordered through an agent. Specification is down to the customer, 17 standard colours are listed but any colour is available as a special order. There are a large variety of trim and special options and customers are encouraged to tour the factory to see and choose from these lists. There are two engines available, a big V8 and a bigger W12 in various states of tune. Armour plating is only fitted, as a factory option on the Mulsanne as the other models have floor level petrol tanks under the seats and so cannot easily be protected.

The title of this article was inspired by touring the factory and seeing the numbers of people 'hands on' and the repeated checking at every stage and by two comments from our guide. For those who have almost everything – 'You can have ornamental cross stitching, in a contrasting colour, on the side seams of your seats (a la Saville Row suit) for a mere £2,000 extra (this has to be hand stitched and takes 37

hours). He also told the story of the Saudi Princess who ordered her car and wanted it the colour of a dress in a previous edition of Vogue. The Bentley representative had to find the relevant magazine to get the colour replicated but then two weeks later she rang up to ask if they had started to paint her car. Fortunately the answer was no, as she had changed her mind and wanted it to match her nail varnish! Perhaps it is now easier to understand why the motor cars cost as much as they do.



## Getting Technical

### Leaf springs

Always trying to combine good value with top quality and, where appropriate, improving the spec, I found myself, not for the first time, floundering through a combination of a lack of relevant experience and technical knowledge.

So an email was sent to four of the individuals most likely to have the appropriate knowledge and experience, and indeed a couple of the vehicles that were causing my concern (I can remember the day when I had more than one model of four wheeled Reliant, having owned and run several Rebels over a forty year period and a few Kittens at the same time, though only for about a quarter of a century in the case of the Kittens, but I have never owned a Fox!) These were the Fox and the Fox based Tandy camper van springs that were causing me concern. (There is nothing wrong with the latest Reliant spec for the 4 leaf Kitten springs).

Our chief engineer however is not "on line" and so a telephone call was duly made with my thinking outlined, the options readily available presented, and a written reply duly arrived, many thanks Alan.

The standard spring steel used originally was 3/16" thick, what is on offer these days is metric. 4.76mm thick is the current readily available (metric) equivalent, we can however easily (ex supplier stock) also have leaves in 5.55mm or 6.35mm to make them stiffer / stronger, also I can easily have the second leaf extended by a couple of inches (I do just love mixing my units!) at both ends to make it better support the top leaf.

Now I remember from past discussions with our chief engineer, that the stiffness of a spring varies with the cube of the thickness, so a wee bit thicker makes a pretty big difference to performance.

I am inclined to have the new batch of Fox ones, as well as the Tandy camper ones, enjoy an extended second leaf, and was open to thoughts about the thickness of its top leaf.

On the Tandy I will be guided by feedback from owners as well as our technical advisor (chief engineer), but am inclined to go with a heavier top leaf, the question is do I go with 5.55mm or 6.35mm? Again, I would tend to go with an extended second leaf for the Tandy as a number of owners have been experiencing problems with their Tandy top leafs bending near the ends, due I don't doubt to a combination of a lack of support and a lack of strength. Assuming the quality of the spring steel was up to scratch in the first place of course! My problems arise because firstly I am making an assumption – about the quality of the material – it is never a good idea to make assumptions! Secondly I do not know, nor am I aware of any easy way of finding out, how much of the problem is down to poor specification in the first place, and, perhaps more importantly, which aspect might be at fault – i.e. the thickness (and so strength) of the top leaf material, or the length, and so limit of support offered to it, by the second leaf. We have an opportunity to vary either or both.

Now one line of thought was simply do both, but I know from two owners who have strengthened the springs on their Foxes (they both frequently carry heavy loads in them) that the ride when unloaded is pretty bumpy / rough, improving greatly when loaded. Sounds like my old arch enemy – compromise – is rearing his ugly head again!

Now the chosen supplier for the new batch of springs does have testing facilities, indeed they can re-temper old springs, so they are pretty clever folk and know their stuff. However the logistics and costs of having even one spring removed from a vehicle, transported to Yorkshire, tested, the report analysed, and then a decision taken as to how best to proceed would double the price of a single new pair of springs, not an attractive prospect. Given that in total over all the different number of leaf combinations we are about to order, we are talking of less than 20 springs, even spreading the cost over that number is not attractive, and the delay in placing the order just too long,

compromise and ill informed decisions prevail again!

The general consensus from everyone asked was that extending the second leaf to be almost as long as the top leaf does offer better support to the top leaf, and as a general guide is a sound idea. The cost difference is minimal, and the potential benefits good. So that is one decision made for the Fox and the Tandy. They have 5 and 6 leaf springs respectively by the way.

As to which thickness to use, the jury is still out, but so far only one owner wants that to be increased, so, do I have a special pair made for him, and use the original spec for the stock ones? Watch this space, or feel free to enter the debate. That said, I expect they will be made by the time you read this, but your input would nevertheless be welcome.

I am in fact planning to collect the new batch on Wednesday, two days after dropping this edition off at the printers!

Ed.

~~~~~

Federation News

Usually I struggle to choose what to put in here, but the following has a direct bearing on a number of Rebel owners, so, from the January edition of the Federation's Magazine, the following :-

VED exemption for historic vehicles

At Budget 2013 the Government announced that it will extend the cut-off date from which classic vehicles are exempt from VED by one year. From 1st of April 2014 a vehicle manufactured before 1st of January 1974 will be exempt from paying VED. Because this is a tax rates and bands related matter no draft legislation was issued for public consultation as part of the publication of the draft Finance Bill 2014 on 10th of December 2013. The Government will publish the legislation when the final Finance Bill 2014 is laid in Parliament shortly after the Budget 2014.

Also, from the same source, another motoring myth laid to rest! :-

Supermarket petrol

A recent invitation to receive Tesco Club Card points when purchasing fuel from an Esso petrol station led to a conversation which revealed that Tesco sell Esso petrol and diesel, hence the Club Card arrangement. As one of the Big Three fuel retailers in the UK, Esso have always been keen to protect their quality image, so the sale of Esso fuel by Tesco is an interesting development which might go some way to refute the popularly held myth that supermarket petrol is of lower quality than that sold by the oil majors.

Automatic SORN Renewals

Any SORN (Statutory Off Road Notification) which expired after 16 December will be renewed automatically. Previously the default after a SORN had expired was that a vehicle needed to be taxed unless SORN was declared. With the new continuous SORN system, there is still a requirement to notify DVLA of any changes in vehicle or keeper details, including an address change. The consequences of not notifying DVLA of an address change of any vehicle can be quite significant.

There are some desirable vehicles where the registration number and chassis number is in the public domain. If someone wishes to clone that vehicle all they have to do, if they want a V5C, is to fill in a V62 form, indicating the registration number, and chassis number. DVLA then write to the last registered keeper, and if DVLA don't get a reply within *two* weeks of posting, a new V5C is issued to the owner of the cloned vehicle. If it is years later when DVLA is notified of the correct address of the original competition vehicle then it can be quite difficult to unravel things, particularly if the cloned vehicle has been sold on. The cloned vehicle owner suddenly finds out his vehicle is not what he thought it was, and possibly worth a much smaller sum. It would lose all rights to display the replicated registration number, and depending on circumstances could be allocated an age-related number or even a Q plate. It is likely that both vehicles will have to subject to a close inspection by DVLA/the police. There will be a delay in the issuing of a V5C to the genuine vehicle owner. Much of this would have been prevented if the genuine vehicle owner had notified DVLA of his new address, when the change occurred.

As ever my thanks to the Federation of British Historic Vehicle Clubs for allowing us to freely use articles from their publication. Ed.

~~~~~

## **Epilogue**

Oh well, we have been utterly spoiled this time. A few good articles and you are spared from too many of my witterings, how lucky are you?!

Seriously, it makes my job so much more rewarding, not to say easier, when I have a few good articles to fill up the magazine. It does wonders for my stress levels and makes the whole thing so much more rewarding and enjoyable.

I have cut back on some of my other responsibilities recently, and putting together an edition like this is simply a delight. I cannot tell you how grateful I am to those who have made this edition so quick and easy to put together, Thank You. (He said in March, just before heading off on his trip south.)

Oh well, I lost the plot there, I thought this was edition 118!! Yes, I was working on it today too, John had just sent me the updated engine numbering story in response to Bob Riches' question on page 9. It (edition 118) is more than half way there on the 8<sup>th</sup> of March, and you won't see it till early June in all probability!!! Organised or what???

While I remember, odd place to put this I know, but it is unusual for a number of reasons - Wouter van Oploo has a Left Hand Drive turquoise Kitten estate for spares going free to a good home. Wouter, as regular readers may recall, lives in the Netherlands, which is where the car is. You can find his contact details on the supplementary sheet.

I had originally intended a Fox page in this, and every other edition! However I had a really sad and frustrating situation that did not end well when trying to organise a clutch cable for a Fox recently.

The one useful thing I learned was that Fox clutch cables do seem to be coming within our remit of hard to source parts, and so



moves are afoot to have a small batch produced. If you would like one, please get in touch and we will possibly have a larger batch made (like ten rather than five!)

So, more words and less pictures in this edition, is this a trend? You'll have to wait and see!

Right, that is about all for now, I do not expect to be sending this out for a few weeks yet, so anything that crops up meantime I will cover in the supplementary sheet.

Drive carefully, and do please remember to grease those ball joints!

*Brian*

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