

RELIANT KITTEN

REGISTER

Mewsletter 120

September - October 2014



This issues picture displays the very tidy Kitten Estate, formerly the property of the late John Flood from Lincoln. John owned this wee car for a great many years and looked after it very well indeed hence its current condition. Now with a new custodian.

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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, CIPHER, Jimp, Asquith, Vantique, Liege and all other specials.



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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>

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INDEX

Edition 119

Page 3	Index & Editorial
Page 4	Letters
Pages 5 & 6	Rebellious conduct 26 by Terry Horler
Page 6	A Fox we don't know!
Pages 7 - 19	Brian's Diary – March 2014
Pages 20 - 23	Kitten high level brake light by Simon Fitch
Page 24	One the rack – by Wouter van Opplo
Pages 25	An update from Malcolm Rush
Page 26	Parts
Page 27	Fox windscreens – Duncan Bradford Last chance!
Page 28	Federation News
Page 29	Epilogue
Page 30	Advert

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I usually begin with a page or so, but given that my diary of my March trip south fills 12 pages of this edition, I thought you will be suffering enough. So, I open with a suggestion from Simon about how I might be helped to harvest relevant information from “the net”

I do need to delegate more, as life is just too demanding with my current commitments, and many opportunities are being missed due to my inability to rise to all of the challenges.

Hi Brian,

June 2014

After our discussion I was thinking and perhaps it would be worth advertising for someone to be "Internet Monitor" in the mewsletter? - certainly I know the RSSOC SS1 Registrar does something similar, as you can mine a fantastic amount of information out of the ebay listings - and its useful to know, especially if there is a member after a rare car. The RSSOC bloke gets not only the registration number, but condition (MOT status), photograph, sale location and sale price from it - certainly it would be a useful thing to monitor if possible - perhaps the person could compile it all and provide it as a yearly update to the register ?? - if it wasn't too much work.

Best Wishes, Simon (Fitch) No.939 from Leamington Spa

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Hi Brian,

July 2nd 2014

Thought it was about time I got in touch. How are things at your end? We are still very busy. Continuing to do a lot of work on the van trying to get it to run 100%, getting there.

The main problem now is hot starting and fuel evaporation / vapour lock. I have rerouted the fuel lines, had the exhaust manifold ceramic coated to cut under bonnet temperature, and installed a heat shield under the carb. We shall see what difference this makes. I have been thinking that part of the problem may be the ethanol in the petrol, so I am considering whether to try super unleaded. I have contacted the main oil companies and wondered if what I have found out may be of interest to you and other subscribers to the R.K.R.

Esso Energy Supreme does not contain ethanol except in Devon, Cornwall, Teeside and Scotland.

BP Ultimate does not contain ethanol except in the Southwest.

Total Super does not contain ethanol.

Shell and Texaco super unleaded both contain ethanol.

Also I have been thinking about the Kitten's 40th next year, and wondered if you would like me to organise something? There is a small motor museum at Llangollen and I thought that might be a good venue if they will have us, I'm not too sure how much space they have. Let me know what you think and I will have a word with them.

That's it for now, I feel a coffee coming on.

All the best to you and Moira

Cheers, Malcolm (Rush) No.352 from Whitchurch

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REBELLIOUS CONDUCT 26

Somehow or other, both LRF 671K and I have survived into retirement, a pair of useless old articles that have nothing else to do in life other than sit around and leak fluids. Well, there is a little more. LRF was leaking a bit more than it should, the radiator incontinence had needed attention for some time but the pressure of a working life and 8psi of hot water meant that regular topping up had to suffice. Now with time on my hands and no need for daily Rebel duty, out came the radiator. I had been tempted to fit the later 750cc (mini sourced) radiator but then the repair to the original seemed an easy one. The top hose stub needed re-soldering to the top tank. **ARROW RADIATORS** of Avonmouth, Bristol offered a good quote subject to inspecting and testing the radiator. Sure enough, the matrix needed replacing as the flow test showed that it was restricted. A new matrix, top tank repair, pressure check and painting punched a £114 hole into my pension. The oil and filter was a bit overdue for a change, this seemed a good idea as I was in money burning mode, so that was done at the same time. The temperature gauge now gives a much more consistent reading over varying driving conditions and I no longer have to top up with water and anti-freeze every week.

Having made this substantial investment in a car that no longer has a purpose, the forthcoming MOT just had to be passed – which of course, required further ‘investment’. Fortunately, not very much. A quick

check-over revealed that one new front wheel bearing and inner track rod end should do the trick. I was not sure if the track rod end was a right or left hand threaded species so I purchased one of each. I just couldn't be bothered to check! The track rod ends were supplied by **AMSTEER** although their web page omitted to define that both right and left hand threaded types were available. Fitting the wheel bearing and track rod end is simple stuff on a Rebel so no more to say on that. I had to find a new (to me) MOT garage this year as my regular MOT station (**WESTERLEIGH CAR CARE**) of Downend, Bristol, damaged two of my cars in 2013. The Rebel came away with a broken driver's seat, which they omitted to warn me about. My Frogeye grounded out on their new Class 7 brake rollers and damaged the exhaust – again, they said nothing but I both saw and heard the crunch. A friend recommended **BRINE'S** garage in Wickwar, South Gloucestershire, a real olde worlde sort of place with helpful, friendly staff. Both Frogeye and Rebel have passed through their doors so far, (and passed the test) and I will certainly be taking my other olde worlde cars there too. Nice to find a garage that has a genuine interest and respect for older vehicles.

So, the Rebel is now fit for purpose, even though it doesn't seem to have one at the moment. My wife had a suggestion, "If you are going to keep that – get another job so it doesn't stand outside the house all day". I could be heading into a lose - lose situation here.

Terry Horler No. 755 From Bristol

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Foxes Den

Dear Brian,

25th June 2014

Hi, my Fox is not on the register that I am aware of...

I have done about 80k miles (on lpg) over the last four years, and I am very pleased with the car, I just use it as my everyday van for work.

(I am a motorcycle dealer). Unfortunately the driver's seat has more or less collapsed, you are right, it is not cloth, but I am really not

bothered, just want something to sit on!

Just put in a rebuilt engine, 4 branch manifold, and stainless exhaust!!!

Happy days! Chris

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Brian's Diary - March 2014

Having a meeting to attend in Birmingham on the 16th of March I was both bemused and delighted to receive an e-mail in January making me aware of a talk by Mike Loasby, a chap who I had never even heard of, but who sounded really interesting, about his life in the motor industry being given in Cound village hall (not a million miles from Telford) on the evening of Saturday the 15th of March to help raise funds to support the village hall.

Mike had served his time as an apprentice with Alvis in the early 1960's, and went on to work with the likes of Coventry Climax, Aston Martin and De'Lorean, so it sounded like a very interesting evening, and it was happening near Telford, which was less than an hour from where I was staying on the Saturday night, the day before my meeting in Birmingham, so a plan was duly hatched to accommodate the talk.

As I usually do when venturing south of the border, a term I hope does not have ominous connotations – I make a holiday of the trip to the Reliant Owners Club's meetings in Birmingham in March and September each year.

These days, with grandchild-minding duties, it is more difficult than it used to be to get a week off, but the fact is that Moira does the work, I just sit in my chair and supervise, and so my request for absence for such a long time was not resisted, thank you dear.

For the better part of a year now I have been attempting to reduce the volume of things I have, in both the loft and the lock-up, by selling them on e-bay, with some small success, though at the present rate of progress I will need a few decades at it to complete the task, and I really do not have that sort of time, so that is something that I need to

address – a task for another day, however, ongoing attempts do take up quite a lot of my time these days. (Because everything seems to take ages and exhausts me!)

One job I had taken on a couple of years ago, that of organising adverts in a certain car club's national magazine, was taking up a fair amount of my time at a time of year when I already had a lot on my plate, and as a result nothing was being done on time, and as a result I was both frustrated and somewhat distressed that I was letting many people down, not least myself, and so, reluctantly, I decided to step down from that post.

I had initially thought to spend a night in Wensleydale and take in a movie at Michael and Janet Bentley's, but I also wanted to see my three cousins in the York area, and one of them could only see me on the Tuesday night, which was my first day away, so Wensleydale would have to wait.

That phrase immortalised by Flanders and Swan, "T'was on the Monday morning that" my plans began to (come a) part, or at least come under stress summed up the start of that day. The first thing was a phone call asking me where a certain bumper I had been asked to locate for a three wheeler was? Well, I had forgotten all about it! It had become a casualty of me having more on my plate than I am able to cope with these days. To be fair the car in question I knew, had damage, the repair costs of which exceeded its market value two or three fold, and the garage contracted to oversee its repair fully expected the Insurance company to write it off, so, having located one, as requested, I had mentally put actually getting it on the proverbial back burner. What actually happened was that the owner bought the remains back from the insurance company, and ordered the vehicle repaired – but no one told me!

So, where was I? Oh yes, just about to dive off, and distracted by a phone call – the story of my life!

Aren't words and memories and or the imagination wonderful? It has been many years since I was able to "dive" anywhere, just a case of wishful thinking I'm afraid! I can remember in my youth I could be out the door less than 15 minutes after waking! (now that process takes a couple of hours, mind you, back then we didn't have a diabetic cat that

needed stabbing with an insulin charged needle twice a day! – I get to do the morning injection)

It had originally been my plan to meet John Graham at Carlisle for a coffee and a catch up, but John had another appointment that day, so we postponed our chat till my return journey.

Off then on what was to be a 17 pie trip (three bakers' trays no less!) before midday, tyres pumped up good and hard, and I was on my way to Skirpenbeck, east of York. Not needing to stop at Carlisle – I always stretch my legs at Beattock summit, about an hour from home, and while Tesco at Carlisle on the A69 makes for a good second stop, I was feeling fine and opted to keep going. The Little Chef on the A66 is sadly no longer open, and so I kept on looking for a place to grab a coffee and stretch my legs.

I decided to do that at a new – to me – place on the left, a few miles before Scotch Corner, I can't remember the name, but it had me quite agitated, it turned out to be a residential or holiday caravan park, with several large, well maintained looking outbuildings for various indoor activities, and the original house which seemed to serve as an office and shop cum cafeteria. The sign on the door said it was open till 5, here I was at 3:30, and it was shut! If I ever have time and can remember or look up what it is called, I will complain. So, I ended up on the other side of the A66 a mile or so further on, where a farm shop and large cafeteria was open for business, the only problem was the long walk through the farm shop to get to the café! I began then to wonder if opting to leave the wheelchair at home might not have been the best decision I had made that week!

Duly fed and watered, (one has to sample the local fruit scones, to gauge which are the best!) I was off on my way again. In the event I was closer to Scotch Corner than I had imagined, and so I was soon on the A1 heading south.

It did occur to me that had I got on the road as early as originally planned, I could have visited Dennis at Michaels today, and so saved time tomorrow, but...

And so I made it to Skirpenbeck, east of York, just off the A166, in good time for a meal and an evening catching up with a very busy family. Gavin is in agricultural sales, and Ruth had just failed to secure

the part-time pensionable post she was seeking with York University, and has had to compromise with a full time job, which does not leave as much time for their two children as she would have liked at this time in their lives – it is not just my life that is a series of, sometimes uncomfortable, compromises!

Everyone had to be on the road by the back of eight in the morning, which suited me just fine as I was going to see Gavin's sister Stella in Riccall, before going on to Michaels of Selby – sorry Dennis, the timing was just not right (Dennis, Michael's Dennis, also lives in Riccall, but I was going to be much too late to give him a lift to work that morning,) York rush hour traffic may not be as bad as Glasgow's, but it is not far off, and even though I was just skirting round the outside, from the A166 via the A64 to the A19, the traffic kept me back about a quarter of an hour.

After a second coffee of the day and a catch up with Stella, it was off to Michaels where I actually got to hold the door of the parts department open for the Reliant PartsWorld van driver Nigel, who was delivering bits to Dennis! Ryan will never know how close he came to getting an apple pie!

On then via Courtney, a lovely village where most of the houses have names rather than numbers, where I had hoped to catch up with a Kitten which lives there, property of one Alan Blacker, (whom I have never yet met), but there had always been doubt in my mind about whether I would have time for such a visit, so I had not tried to make arrangements, and, surprise surprise, there was no one home. So I headed on south west to collect the new batches of 4, 5 and 6 leaf back springs from the manufacturer.

It had been my understanding that they did not have enough of the half inch bore front bushes in stock, (as used on the Fox chassis) and so I had brought some bushes with me for them to fit to the 5 and 6 leaf versions – imagine my surprise when they had the springs all ready for me, complete with bushes! They had just reamed some seven sixteenths ones out to half inch, rather than keep me waiting while they pressed my bushes in! I have to say the (Honda) Jazz, does ride much better fully loaded!

Over one of my favourite roads then, the A628, to Glossop, (closed for a day this week – July – for the Tour de France cyclists to

enjoy!) where Graham kindly keeps the Kitten Register's stock of back springs for me. There are two Kittens that live there, one, a white saloon, which Graeme has owned from new, and the blue estate which is his workhorse. After a cuppy and sandwich, thanks Jane, just the ticket, I was off back to points east of York for the night with Gavin and Stella's older brother John.



No, that is only half the batch of Kitten and Fox springs, Graeme had the top layer out of the car before I got the camera looked out!



This is Graeme's hard working early Kitten estate, his since 1997, bought from an advert in this very publication! Still on its original engine and gearbox it has covered 280,000 miles. The white saloon you can just see in the garage, he has owned from new, a rare GBS Special it has covered just 115,000 miles.

I had hoped to be able to drop off a pair of the 6 leaf Tandy camper springs, specially made with thicker top and second leaves, with Karl at Pocklington, (I still haven't seen his Tempest since he got it almost two years ago!) but he in the event was not going to be home before seven in the evening, the very time I was due to eat at Scoreby.

In the event I left his springs at Riccall the following morning as he is often at Selby just a couple of miles away, and would pick them up later.

For once I had a long lie, and was not on the road till ten, yes, the A166 to the A64 again, this time to the A1 and south to Doncaster where I was to collect the latest batches of alloy rocker covers, three different types this time!

I am not often reduced to tears, but I left there feeling really emotional. Mike, the patternmaker, happens to holiday at Strontian on the shore of Loch Sunart, (the place where element number 38 was first identified and after which it is now named) and by chance Moira and I had been generously gifted a week's holiday across the loch from there in April this year, by a friend who had had an accident that imobilised her temporarily. I told Mike we were going there while leaning against his big speedboat, and he said to me, "Take the boat, use it, leave it up there, and I'll get it when we are up next month". Now sometimes in life I have been known to open my mouth before engaging the brain, and my immediate response was, "No thanks Mike, I haven't a tow bar, and the Jazz would never pull it anyway." At which point Mike disappeared off to his office and I had a chat with Paul, his son. Mike returned a minute later and handed me the keys to his big BMW estate and said, "Just take my car and I'll drop yours off on my way up" Well, sadly, suddenly, the harsh reality hit me, that I could not launch far less recover a boat, never mind one that size. The fact is that I kid myself that I can still get by in life reasonably normally, but every once in a while something happens to jolt me into reality, and brings home just how disabled I really have become, it was a shock that such a kind and generous offer had me virtually in tears as the reality sunk in.

20 or 30 years ago I'd have bitten his arm off, well, grabbed the keys, hitched up the boat and been gone with a grateful wave, but sadly I just could not handle such a thing these days, indeed not for many years past frustratingly – never mind the fact I couldn't afford the fuel for the huge outboard!

So I headed for Birmingham in somber mood, to collect the new batch of Fox clutch cables, yes, there is a story there too, but more on that another time.

On then towards Rugby where I was hoping to meet up with our (at that time) newest subscriber, Matthew Hewitt, I had written to him before I left, giving him a note of my mobile number, and making him aware that I would be spending the night less than five miles from his place with another Kitten owning friend, and could we possibly meet up? But I had not heard from him, However, I was at least an hour ahead of schedule that day, so I decided to key his address into the satnav and see if I could possibly see the car. Stopped as I was in a layby doing that, my mobile pinged to tell me there was a text message, not something that happens very often! It was from Matthew! Could I give him a ring sometime please as he was home now! Well I did, and we met 20 minutes later. The hurl in his Kitten and photo shoot that followed in the fast fading light, more than took up the spare hour I had had! Great to meet you Matthew, thanks for the hurl.



So, after an enjoyable meal and catch up with Tom, Sam, and Patience at Thurlaston, I was off on the Friday morning to see our Magazine front cover man John Pearce. John had just the previous day collected the “Jaffa” (as his orange Kitten saloon is affectionately known) from Joe, after its re-spray, re-trim, and disc brake conversion. John had had driven it the 90 miles home perfectly, but would it start today? No it would not! Just a loose wire as it happened.

Anyway, by the time I saw John on the Sunday at Birmingham, he had the Kitten's engine in the back of his Suzuki on its way to Hans for a full overhaul and power boost.

On south then for the night with my mum's cousin at Beaconsfield. I even had time to fit in a cream scone and coffee in the Old Tea House there, great background music at just the right volume, a really good atmosphere, great view across the green, cobbled pavements, really cute, but no fruit scones, just plain ones left! Jo James runs the establishment, and she has kindly agreed to let me share this picture with you.



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Contact was then made by telephone with a Kitten owner from the other side of Beaconsfield, who I duly arranged to meet the following morning.

After a wonderful candle-lit dinner for three that evening, and samples of not too many of Alan's comprehensive collection of malts tasted into the wee small hours, it was off to meet Meinolf and his Kitten, which needs another chassis, preferably a Fox galvanised one. I was

far too relaxed there, feeling good in glorious sunshine, I had parked in his drive very close to the Kitten, and had not even used a stick, nor brought my camera out of the car. We got distracted talking about some of his other interesting cars which included a Berkley, and two others I was not familiar with, one of which was a one off designed and built by an aircraft engineer, I think in the 1960's, I really should take notes and or pay more attention!

He had two stacked on a clever wooden frame one above the other in what could have been a generous two car garage, but in fact easily accommodated three, thanks to his clever stacking system.

Lack of time, and support! Prevented me from learning more, but to have seen six Kittens in three days was something of a record for me, especially given that two of them I had not seen for many years, and one not at all! Quite an adventure. Actually I am typing this up in the holiday cottage at Loch Sunart, (the very loch that speedboat will be on long before you read this) on a very wet and windy April day. We called in on Peter and Jennifer Linfield at Banavie the other day, (dropping off another pair of back springs!) great to see you both again, and saw their Kitten again too, and met Chester – their new Labrador puppy.

Sorry, wandering off topic again, back to March and England! I left Beaconsfield in glorious sunshine and headed off by way of the Pearce residence again briefly, then on to Keith and Glen's new house in Burntwood, where I was to meet up with Simon of CIPHER fame, in his Kitten this time, I was dropping off another pair of those new springs to Simon there!.

Things took a turn for the worse then when, on the motorway, the noise level in the Jazz suddenly multiplied several hundred percent, clearly the exhaust had had a major failure, however nothing seemed to be dragging along the ground, so I put the hazards on and limped the few miles at 35 MPH to the next service area, where I rang the RAC.

I spent the hour while I was waiting for them to arrive, putting my satnav to good use, it actually contains a list of local garages with addresses and telephone numbers, I was impressed, but very few were open on a Saturday, and none, not even Kwik-fit, stocked a Jazz exhaust! Almost everyone I spoke to believed they could have one available by mid morning, on Monday!!!

So, I was very relieved when the RAC man was able to effect a temporary roadside repair in the service area carpark, and get me going within 25 minutes of his arrival at the scene. They actually carry bits of tube and Jubilee clips! (and a tube of suitable jointing gunge of course!) And so I was only an hour or so late arriving at the Gittus' residence.



That is twice I have met Simon in the past year, both times since he acquired the Cipher, and both times he has come in the Kitten, third time lucky?



Keith and I were going to the Mike Loasby talk I mentioned earlier that evening, so we were a bit time restricted. I was also taking advantage of Keith and his well equipped workshop to open up a seized early Rebel gearbox I was giving Simon a loan of the remote linkage from. Keith instantly recognised the remote linkage as being very like those used on Triumphs, and given that the Rebel uses a lot of Triumph

front suspension, it set me thinking. (In the event Simon checked a few days later, the Rebel one is a couple of inches shorter than the Triumph one).

The gearbox failure was not, as I had suspected, a failed selector, but the usual Rebel gearbox failure of a broken tooth, which must have just got itself lodged in an inappropriate place, and caused things to seize!



Simon Fitch of Cipher fame with his Kitten, and Keith Gittus with his Fox.

Fortunately Glen was keeping an eye on the clock, and had organised sustenance for us, thank you Glen, appreciated as always. So we had to say goodbye to Simon, but at least the introduction, away from ROC events, had been made – more on how that developed anon.

And so it came to pass that Keith was subjected to the better part of an hour in the passenger seat of the Jazz while we made our way to Cound village hall.

On arrival there, there was a cone marking a disabled parking place on the grass right next to the hall door, with a white A5 sheet attached to it which said simply “**Brian Marshall**”. For the second time in as many days I had a lump in my throat! How nice to be recognised, and what a pleasant reward for a bit of forward planning and good communication. While I was by a couple of hundred miles plus, the

furthest from home that evening, I am deeply grateful to those concerned. Geraint Rees was the man responsible for organising the evening, and he had been kind enough to call me back in response to a message I had left asking about access and ease of parking close to the venue a couple of months previously.

What an evening it turned out to be, though he only scratched the surface, my memory lets me down here as I can't remember what his first car was, but his second car was an Austin 7, and, by chance, I had in the car, one of the new batch of *Austin* scripted Reliant alloy rocker covers, so, at the interval I asked Keith to pop out to the car and bring one in. Imagine then my absolute surprise then, when, on seeing it, one of the hall committee suggested I might like to talk to the octogenarian gentleman sat a few feet away on my left, as not only did he own an Austin 7, but a wee car I had probably never heard of, a Reliant Kitten!!! I ask you, what are the chances of turning up in a village hall over 300 miles from home, and meeting a man I had never heard of who had a Kitten we knew nothing about, and an Austin 7!

It turns out he bought the Kitten with the idea of putting its engine in his Austin 7, a long story here, another time perhaps, but wow, really, you could not write the script!

Mike mentioned the RS200 Ford rally car, a project he had been involved with, but of course he did not mention that Reliant made the bodies for them, so Keith pointed that out to him in the question and answer session at the end, and indeed I quizzed him as to why the only picture he showed of a DeLorean (I had not realised that they had their own banked test track round the perimeter of the factory grounds, reminded me a bit of Brooklands, complete with water splash!) was of a right hand drive version, something they never built at the factory! It was a truly wonderful evening, and the home baking the local bakers put on, well, let's say it sabotaged my healthy eating programme!

One of those all too rare marvelous occasions, memories are indeed made of such wonderful events.

The hall had been crammed to capacity, (over 90 folk) when I had spoken to Geraint a couple of months earlier, they had been genuinely concerned that they would go to all the effort, and have less

than a dozen people turn up – no chance!

We made it back to Keith's before midnight, though I put the fear of death into him at one point, approaching a crossroads in the country with no artificial lighting I did not slow down as much as he had expected, (I'm pretty sure he assumed I would be stopping) I simply killed the headlights briefly to satisfy myself there were no other vehicles in the vicinity, I don't think he had had such a fright before, sorry Keith, saves fuel and brake wear, not to mention time! (memories of my rallying youth sometimes surface!).

Thence after a sound night's sleep and a cooked breakfast, thank you again Glen, I was off to the meeting which had made this whole adventure possible.

Back to Keith's then in time for tea and to watch the Grand Prix, followed by an early night and up early in preparation for the long run home the following morning. In the event I opted to avoid any rush hour traffic and so did not head off till after nine on the Monday. I decided against calling in to see Alan Waite, which had been my original, intention, but I had not managed to make contact with him, and I knew that if we did meet, never mind the slight detour, we would no doubt have spent a couple of hours blethering about the Kittivan he used to own. So I meandered north on the M6 in time for afternoon tea at the old Tempest and Vantique factory canteen, great to see John and Jackie again, before heading off on the last leg of my journey home.

I made it home long before Moira returned from her Monday evening linedancing class, only to then remember that in my relaxed meandering mode that I had completely forgotten to try and tie up with John Graham, whom I had missed on the way down, on my way past Carlisle – sorry John, next time.

So, for a trip I was actually thinking twice about doing at all, it worked out really very well indeed.

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Fitting a high level brake light to a Kitten Estate

After seeing the increase in SUV's and Land Rovers in the local area, one thing that has been on my mind is that these monster vehicles are so high that they cannot easily see the brake lights on the Kitten. So in the interests of the Kitten's safety (which is the most important bit!), I resolved to fit a higher level brake light. Whilst there are several modern LED designs on eBay, I preferred something more in keeping with the age of the Kitten. To that end I searched the internet, and in the end alighted on the design used in the Volvo 840 estate (the 850 also uses a similar design). This would easily fit in the rear windscreen, just above the Kittens windscreen wiper motor and as the wiring could be routed with the rear wiper wiring, would be a nice solution.



I managed to acquire fairly cheaply the 840 estate light; one thing that was rapidly apparent was that it used a clip style connector to make the electrical connections. So the first task was to modify the wiring, and a soldering iron and a couple of bullet style connectors later - the electrics were ready. At this stage measurements were also made to modify the casing to fit. A small amount of plastic will need removing (just below the light unit) to make a small step to fit over the kitten's rear window seal. Additionally a slight filing of the base was also necessary to fit the slope of the wiper motor cover. Given my wiper motor cover was not a simple straight line, it is a case of filing and offering up the light unit to the cover regularly until a good fit is achieved.



Also at this point a hole will need to be drilled in the wiper motor cover to allow the wires to pass through, and also for the two fixing screws. The last step could possibly be omitted if you wished to fibre glass in the lights casing to the wiper unit for convenience. This is a possibility as the brake light unit can easily be removed from its casing by pulling apart two clips at the base of the unit - thus bulbs still can be changed, even if the casing has been permanently fixed to the cover.

The next step was to open up the rear driver's side electrical cover and examine the wiring. Normally these will have 4 way joiners for the brake light and earth - these will have to be replaced by a six way joiner. However, if you have (or have had!) a tow bar like mine, you may find these already have 6 way joiners (with one spare hole). As mine were so rusty, I took the opportunity to replace all of the 6 way joiners with new ones and clean the bullet connectors.

Once this was done, the wires from the high level brake light were threaded through the relevant holes on the kitten's door (protected by suitable rubber tubing) and plugged in to the appropriate joiners. At this stage test all the lights to ensure all the electrics work correctly. Once this is done, screw everything back in place - the light should sit nicely in the unwiped area at the base of the windscreen in a very similar fashion to the original Volvo fitting.



This was a very simple project, and is a relatively useful modification. Certainly I think it was well worth doing, and I think the Volvo 840 light does look very much in keeping with the kitten.

Simon Fitch, July 2014 No. 939 from Leamington Spa

See over for the external view of the finished job.



.....

Hello Brian,

16th June 2014

It's been a while since we had contact. Is everything all right on the other side ?

Over here we are fairly ok a little bit of struggling at the moment but I hope that will be over soon.

I have a question which puzzles me.

Some time ago I was lucky to be able to buy a new steering rack.

According to the seller it was intended for a left hand drive Kitten, he had sold his own Kitten so it was surplus stock now for him.

I had it lying around for some time until the time came to use it because my Kitten had a very bad steering rack.

To my surprise the rack didn't fit because it was slightly different regarding the fixing brackets compared to the (original) old one.

When I put both racks side by side the difference was obvious.

The rack was (in my view) not modified or anything.

I made some pictures so you can hopefully see the difference for yourself.

Perhaps there are some people on the Register who can tell for which car (Reliant ?) this rack was supposed to be for.

It is surely not for a Kitten but it is only in details different and the fixing brackets are 1 inch less apart from each other, the total length is also 1 inch shorter than the original one.

Or are there some differences in (lhd) Kittens which I don't know of ?

Regards Wouter. No. 412 from The Netherlands



Hi Brian,

August 15th 2014

Thought I would let you know that I have been in contact with the Llangollen Motor Museum, and they seemed very interested in having us there next year, We would get concessionary entry rates to the museum. Possibly camping on site depending on what else they have going on, not much in the way of refreshments other than soft drinks ice cream etc but there is plenty of choice in Llangollen.

On the Kitten paintwork saga I had a bit of a disaster, when our mechanic and I returned to his garage after having Kitten M O T 'd, we noticed paintwork damage to both doors and the bonnet, not large areas but whatever got onto the paintwork was powerful enough to eat into the top coat down to the primer and make the paint run. The next day I tried to flat the paint down to a good finish but, as expected, I went through both top coat and primer. I tried touching this in with a brush and then flattening it down but this still went through the top coat, so I decided to invest in an air brush (like a very small spray gun). The one I decided on was a Badger 200 series, this comes with its own canister of gas but can also be run off of a compressor, I chose this as it is a single action (just press the button, some you have to press the button and then pull the trigger backwards to make the paint flow.) This achieved a very good finish but you can still see the damage in certain lights so I think that now I have had a little experience of the air brush I will flat the area again and barcoat, prime and top coat hoping this will give a completely invisible repair. I was surprised that I didn't have to thin the paint any more than for normal spraying. In the past I have always had to resort to spraying the complete panel but I can recommend an air brush for those small areas of damage.

Hope this helps other owners who may be in the same situation.

Regards, Malcolm Rush. No. 352 from Whitchurch

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Parts

Suddenly it seems like ages since I devoted a page to parts.

Having not sold any lower steering columns for what seemed like years, we sold two in a week in July, and suddenly I needed to re-order them. Well, that shook me a bit, I know they are slow moving, but I had not realised that it had taken 8 years to sell the last batch of ten, and boy has the price changed in those 8 years!

Makes me realise that I ought to update the prices for our stock, taking account of replacement costs on some kind of appropriate time frame, though goodness knows what that might be, certainly no more than every 5 years, possibly quite a bit less if we are to avoid shocks like this one was! I was actually quite relieved that the company still existed, even more impressed that they still had us on file as a customer, phew, I really don't have the energy or drive to go seeking new suppliers these days.

Anyway, a lesson there methinks, but will I act on it?

Part of me says I should be delegating more, and I know a couple of folk have offered to help in that regards, but these offers are themselves some years old now, so perhaps, if it was you who offered to help me out, and if you still feel that way, you might like to confirm the situation?

The supplier of the lower steering columns, I say supplier, they make them, is on the outskirts of Coventry, the current lead time is 8 weeks, and I should be in Birmingham in 11 weeks time, so, to keep transport costs down, I plan to pick them up about the 19th September.

As to price, well, we were selling them for £55 delivered, I'm afraid they will in future be £78 delivered.

Now if we had just added even a pound or two a year to the price, the jump would not have been nearly so big, nor the dent in funds to replace them such a large percentage, when will I learn?

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Hi Brian,

4th July 2014

A quick one. Having a shattered windscreen the other day, I've now used my spare. New [laminated] ones aren't kept in stock now anywhere according to 2 companies searches, and it's a 4 - 6 week wait for Pilkington to make one, at £200ish plus VAT.

I'm trying to a] negotiate a lower price for a batch and b] find out how much interest there is in them.

Or am I barking up the wrong tree because having a stock of them wouldn't work through the Insurance side of things, as presumably they'd have to be sourced from an 'official' supplier due to warranties etc.

Scenario 1] I pay my insurance company the £110 excess and wait 6 weeks.

Scenario 2] I source one in a few days via the club and pay £200 + fitting from my own pocket.

Hmm. I personally could wait the 6 weeks. Some may not want to. Will post on the Forum.

Well, food for thought at least.

Plan B would be to get one of the national places to keep one in stock I suppose.

Dunc.

So, can you help here? Do you have any interest in getting a new spare front windscreen for your Fox? If so, talk to Duncan or myself as a matter of some urgency please. There would be little more frustrating than us getting a small batch made, only to have them sell out in a few weeks when a slightly larger batch could have reduced the price! Talk to us in you are interested...

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# Federation News

This time I thought a recap might be useful, and so I have elected to publish the Editorial of the latest edition of Federation News.

## EDITORIAL

We often get asked by club members what exactly the Federation does. Most people know about our role monitoring UK and European legislation and representing the interests of historic vehicle owners in Westminster and Brussels. Certainly this is a vital part of our activity, but we represent the movement and its supporting industry in many other ways.

This year more than most epitomises the variety of forms this support takes. We have already seen the biggest ever Drive It Day. This is more than just a season opening opportunity to blow the cobwebs off our vehicles. It symbolises the historic vehicle movement across the country exercising their rights to use their cars, motorcycles, trucks, buses and ex – military vehicles (and others for which I apologise for excluding) on the highway. This is a right which we fight hard to protect.

The focus this year in our legislation programme will be the European Directive on Roadworthiness Testing. Put simply this is the European Union's attempt to harmonise roadworthiness testing across Europe. The Directive is now in place and the UK's Department of transport has three years to enact it in domestic legislation. The Federation is already engaged with DfT over the implementation and I urge you to read Bob Owen's report of the initial meeting in this issue.

Finally, we have launched a Government recognised and funded apprenticeship in vehicle restoration. This apprenticeship has the potential to fill the skills gap that our research showed was looming. Enjoy the issue!

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I have to say that Bob Owen's report makes for very interesting and informative reading, but I simply do not have the space in here. If you are interested and do not have a copy, just ask. Ed.

## Epilogue

Right, here I am again, it is the 21<sup>st</sup> of August, the last edition only went out ten days ago, and I have this edition all but completed, which could be just as well.

My lock-up clearing operation is moving ahead, but far too slowly. Problems are the bulky things, doors, dashboards, and things like that. So, if you need a Kitten door, or estate back door (all red I think) or a Rebel estate back door, talk to me now – I should be heading south not long after you read this, and I might have room on board. If you live anywhere near the A1 or M6, delivery is a possibility about the 19<sup>th</sup> or 20<sup>th</sup> of September. There is a good condition Kitten fuel tank, Rebel wheels, Kitten exhaust front pipes, the long bit! Propshafts, Kitten and Rebel. GIVE ME A RING NOW IF YOU ARE INTERESTED - 01418866117.

Right, till next time, take care, and do exercise the grease gun and oil can.

*Brian*

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