

Reliant Kitten Register



Mewsletter122



January - February 2015



This issue we picture Barry Houghton's very tidy Fox..... What's special about this car you might ask? Well it's been converted, to a superb standard, by Barry to an electrically propelled vehicle, and very well it works too. Still under development it's nevertheless in regular use. The range isn't as good as hoped, but in every other area it's proved excellent.

Edited and distributed by Brian W Marshall, 16 Glendee Gardens, Renfrew, PA4 0AL

☎ 0141 886 6117

E-mail: info@kitreg.org.uk



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 Tel: **01723 341498**

New Kitten / Fox / Rebel parts stock held by Brian Marshall Tel: **0141 8866117**

E-mail info@kitreg.org.uk

Rebel alternative parts list contact: John Blagburn, Tel: **01670 862255**

E-mail: wirelessjohn@googlemail.com

Kitten alternative parts list: Contact: Alan Osborn, Tel: **01953 884681**

E-mail: alan@aloz.org.uk

Fox alternative parts list contact: Duncan Bradford, 6 Clabon First Close, Norwich, NR34HE.

Tel: **01603 663311** E-Mail hidunc@ntlworld.com

Our Mutual Aid Spares scheme is run for us by Phil Hallam 4, Greenhead Holding, Stevenston, Ayrshire KA20 4JX Tel : **01294 462089**

Tempest Registrar: Roger Brown, Brownhill House, Ruyton XI Towns, Shrewsbury, SY4 1LR

Tel: **01939 261121** E-mail tempest@eleventowns.com web site: <http://www.tempestregister.org.uk/>

Mewsletter pictures – should be sent to John Pearce at Todbury Farm, Slapton Road, LtBillington, Beds. LU7 9BP Tel: **01525 758171** 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>

DinkyCars

RELIANT SPECIALIST

Wennington Marsh Farm, Wennington Road
Rainham Essex RM13 9EE

Tel: 07958 246891

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

INDEX

Edition 122

Page 3	Index
Page 4	Editorial
Page 5	Our next get-to-gether – Malcolm Rush
Pages 6	Rebellious Conduct – 27 by Terry Horler
Pages 7 / 9	Life with 3 Foxes by Duncan Bradford
Pages 10 / 12	And now for something completely different!
Pages 13 / 14	Something profound
Pages 15 / 23	Getting Technical
Pages 24 / 26	Oh what fun we had by Jim McKillop
Page 27	A new insurance deal from P.F. Spare
Page 28	Epilogue
Page 29	Advert

E & o e

Welcome to our first edition of 2015. I must begin with an apology, when I set off back in early December to Phil (Hallam's) house in Stevenston, both to enjoy a lovely meal that Ursula had prepared, and then have much needed and greatly appreciated assistance from both Phil and John (Johnstone) packing our Christmas magazines and renewal notices. The task list I had prepared in advance, was incomplete! I had been in too much of a rush, and my planning was missing one vital ingredient, the labels which I usually produce and

attach to the renewal notices of our 5 year subscribers to remind them that the reason they have a renewal notice enclosed at this time, is simply so that I can keep the vehicle details up to date, and to remind them that their subs are not due till January 2016.

Not only had I forgotten to produce them and take them with me, but I also completely omitted any mention of them from our evening's task list. My apologies to those affected. One day I'll get organised – breath holding in anticipation is not recommended!

I had initially intended to contact each and any affected individual as if and when they tried to renew their subscription, but I have failed to do so, save in a very few cases. I do have accurate records and will address the situation at this year's renewal date.

So, here we are, 2015, a time to reflect, and look forward, half way through another decade, in the last year of our current 5 year subscribers time with us, yes, I managed to string their investment out for half a decade, I can say that because I still have about a thousand second class stamps left here (and am buying more in anticipation of a price rise coming soon). Looking back I should have bought more 4 years ago, but I was scared, what would happen if the house burnt down??

Though it is too early to tell what the effect will be, 2014 saw us sign up the smallest number of new subscribers in over a decade, a halving from the previous average of about one a week, but like corporation buses, these things go in fits and starts, I'll do some analysis after everyone has renewed this year (though goodness knows how I will know when that is!). It does want to be sooner rather than later as we have our dues to pay to the Federation in May, so please, if you have not already done so, send in your renewal notice now (unless you are a five year person!) Your membership card, (unless you have a 5 year one,) should be enclosed, if I think you have renewed. Please be so good as to let me know either way if you do not have a card enclosed.

Having just said that, about numbers, we have just enjoyed the highest number of new subscribers in a month that I can remember in a long time! My apologies to you all, creating this took priority over sending you your welcome pack out, I know it should not, but in times of stress, priority decisions need to be made.

Sadly I find myself both lacking in energy and rather too diversified with a number of family situations just now, and as a result I am typing this towards the end of February, when it really should have been with you a few weeks ago.

As I was saying to one of our number in response to a question about the delay, the Mews, which really should have been out a week or three ago, is not even at the printer's yet, I had hoped to get it there this week, fingers would be crossed but I find that makes typing even slower!

So, without further delay, and with thanks to Duncan Bradford, whose timely article has provided the much needed spur to help me get this done, I will press on.

Thank you for your understanding. Brian

.....

Hi Brian,

26th January 2015

I have gone and done it. I have booked Llangollen museum for the 19th July from 10:30am. If members could let me know if they are coming, and if in a Reliant, also if they require camping (Basic facilities) and for which night.

Cheers, Malcolm. (Rush) - rkrshowpostbox@gmail.com

Or telephone 01948 840896

.....

REBELLIOUS CONDUCT 27

By Terry Horler from Bristol

A reminder of how long I have owned my Rebel is when I have to start repeating jobs that I have done before. However, some come around quicker than expected. When I bought my Rebel back in 2005, the 850cc engine wasn't exactly running smoothly. The SU carburettor simply would not tune in to give a correct mixture throughout the whole operating range. Fitting a new throttle spindle, jet, needle and float chamber needle valve did the trick – up until recently. Initially, the idle

speed became quicker. Reducing this resulted in an uneven tickover which only smoothed out by weakening the mixture. However, light throttle openings produced uneven running under cruising conditions. This was a repeat of my earlier problems. As the throttle spindle was still OK and not allowing additional air to be drawn in, this left the brass jet and needle under suspicion once again. I ordered a new jet, needle and, just to be thorough, another float chamber valve from BURLIN SERVICES (£38 inc postage) which quickly arrived. Fitting this little lot was quick and easy and Bingo – a quick mixture and idle adjustment produced nice even running throughout.

Which leaves the question, why should the SU require refurbishment after just 30,000 miles? Firstly, the SU on my Rebel uses the 'swing needle' or spring loaded needle. This was introduced to replace the fixed needle type. This type required the jet to be properly centred around the needle to prevent the needle rubbing in the jet. No doubt for those who have done this will testify – it's a bit tricky to get right. The later type avoids this little ritual as the spring loaded needle is supposedly self centring but will always rub lightly in the jet. Hence, mechanical wear is bound to take place which will result in a gradual richening of the mixture. As the needle is tapered, the amount of wear manifests itself as a richer mixture at idle speed but a lesser error as the speed increases, hence, no amount of adjustment will restore a correct mixture throughout.

Current fuel specifications may be responsible for an increased wear rate compared to the leaded fuel that was current when 'swing needle' SUs were introduced. A possible way to improve this situation could be to revert to a fixed needle SU where there should be no mechanical contact between jet and needle when set properly initially. All jets for the HS2 type SUs have a 0.090" bore but there are dozens of different needle profiles to suit many different applications for these Carburettors. Fitting the correct needle is critical to ensure a proper fuel/air ratio throughout all conditions.

Although a simple and straightforward diagnosis and remedy, the condenser decided to play up during the course of this which added another dimension to the job. I may have replaced this once before too!

Terry Horler from Bristol No. 755

Life with three foxes - Duncan Bradford

While I fully understand why each year that passes seems shorter, because it represents a smaller proportion of my life, can anyone explain why each Winter seems longer than the last? – Even though we are going through a phase of mild Winters. Maybe the fact that ageing makes it harder to adjust to ambient temperatures plays a part.

Nevertheless, in between the cold, windy and rainy days I seem to have found time before the Rally Season gets under way to get a few items struck off my 'to do' list.

The red truck has been underused recently, due to a poor ability to keep its battery charged. I first suspected the battery, as it's approaching the end of its warranty period, but, fully charged then disconnected, it held 12.6volts over 2 weeks. I then measured the charging voltage and got a reading of 13.5volts. Not good. I always suspect the terminal connection at the back of the alternator, because it is prone to overheating, being so close to the downpipe, and once the connection has degraded of course the resistance produces even more heat and things rapidly deteriorate. Alternators have in fact got two output terminals, though our Reliant charging setup only uses one, and the connector lug burns up a bit. The remedy is to unplug and remove the wiring, both the plug end and the battery ring terminal together with the bullet connector to the yellow/brown ignition lamp wire. Once off, if too much heat hasn't melted the plastic plug casing, the main, bigger, spade and cable can be removed [bending the restraining tab away with a thin flat screwdriver] and placed instead in the centre position, where it can plug onto the unused centre terminal. At the same time all connectors can be cleaned and crimped slightly if necessary for a tight fit. When reassembled to the fresh terminal I was pleased to see the full 14.4volt charge, at a fast idle. I even took the opportunity to rinse away the slimy build-up in the washer bottle and scrub it out. Very pleasing! Note, added 2 days later: - The car soon got its own back though, by losing connection between the front pipe and the silencer on the way to work! Another messy job which I should have seen coming if I got under more often.

I recently fitted new uprated rear springs to the Tandy – to such good effect that instead of wallowing its rear end into the road it now sits

several inches taller. These springs have thicker leaves on the top two layers [Tandies have 1 more leaf than the basic Fox rear spring]. The first spin-off job from this was the need to adjust the headlamps upwards quite a bit! Then I noticed that despite having the 13" rear dampers, they were very near their upper limit, to the extent that in use the dampers banged against their upper stops over any bump or hollow. Kitten Register [AKA Brian] to the rescue again. Gaz, who make the new front dampers for us, were commissioned to make a batch of 2" over-length rear dampers. These are fully adjustable, and have improved things no end. You will probably know that the rear dampers across the later small-reliant range are actually from the classic Mini front end. They are available from many places, and in 12" and 13" lengths. I'd intended that Gaz make them 2" longer than 13" ones rather than the shorter ones, but the extra inch in length just does the trick. No doubt they will be of use to those Reliants who frequently drive in the rough, or go rallying, hill-climbing etc.

Note: the Tandy also paid me back – by alternately losing nearside rear lamp and nearside sidelamp. If one works, the other doesn't. There is no logical explanation to this, except 30-yr-old wiring, so it's bumper-off time to attack the front lights, and probably fuel-tank off too to get at the rat's nest that Reliant economically call the rear connector cluster. Oh, and the lighting switch burnt out at the end of a 400-mile round trip. Could have been worse...

Through all this the blue truck has gallantly ploughed on. This was its first winter for several years without any sign of mayonnaise in the rocker box, thanks to replacing the head gasket last spring. This had been leaking for many years, due to me losing my temper while fitting it! [It jammed half on, and my solution involved a lump hammer and a block of oak.] Understandably I'd not been looking forward to grappling it off, but it was now burning oil down the valve stems too, and in the event it slid up with only light use of the removal plate tool over the studs.

Now this head was an exchange head from Reliant, in fact a very reluctant warranty exchange for a so-called 'unleaded' one that blew the core plug [Core plug? – not part of the warranty, sir!]. Which could be why it was a poor fit, in revenge?

Anyhow it had only covered 18,000 miles but the valve stem oil

And now for something **completely different!**

I thought when I first became aware of the Kitten hatch, the unique one with the complete opening tailgate, (which I have yet to feature properly within these pages – I must push that job up the priority task list) that there would be no more surprises, wrong again Marshall!

My telephone rang the other afternoon, just before Christmas, it was Gavin Linfield, he was checking to see if we were at home before walking round the corner to see us. I asked why he did not just drive round, but he was concerned, as he did not know if it was possible to turn in our small cul-de-sac with a car transporter trailer behind his Mercedes Sprinter van. Duly assured that the task was well within his capabilities, he arrived a few minutes later, well, talk about surprised!



I had been made aware of the Comino, as it had been advertised on the internet last year, but I did not really expect to have the opportunity to see it in the flesh so to speak. Thank you very much Gavin, it was great to see you again.

While it had travelled a long way to be here, it had not actually covered very many miles in the decades since it was built!



Yes, that is an average of about a mile a year!



I have to say that I do approve of the mounting of the fuel tank forward of the back axle.



~~~~~

Right, it is a while since we had any humor, or even serious thought provoking alternative diversion within these pages, the following landed in my in-box the other week, and I thought, who should I share this with? :-

### VERY PROFOUND!

This made me think of where we are in life, and how much those of us who are still here have to be thankful for, especially old friends and wonderful memories. I hope this finds you well.

The Magic Bank Account's author is not known. It was found in the billfold of coach Paul Bear Bryant of Alabama, after he died in 1982.

Currency conversions duly made at the rate of one dollar to the pound!

## **The Magic Bank Account**

Imagine that you had won the following “PRIZE” in a contest :-  
Each morning your bank would deposit £86,400 in your private account for your use. However, this prize has rules :-

### **The rules :-**

1. Everything that you didn't spend during each day would be taken away from you.
2. You may not simply transfer money into some other account.
3. You may only spend it.
4. Each morning upon awakening, the bank opens your account with another £86,400 for that day.
5. The bank can end the game without warning; at any time it can say, "Game Over!". It can close the account and you will not receive a new one.

What would you personally do?

You would buy anything and everything you wanted right? Not only for yourself, but for all the people you love and care for. Even for people you don't know, because you couldn't possibly spend it all on yourself, right?

You would try to spend every penny, and use it all, because you knew it would be replenished in the morning, right?

ACTUALLY, This GAME is REAL ... Shocked ??? YES, read on!

Each of us is already a winner of this "PRIZE". We just can't seem to see it.

The PRIZE is TIME.

1. Each morning we awaken to receive 86,400 seconds as a gift of life.
2. And when we go to sleep at night, any remaining time is **Not** credited to us.
3. What we haven't used up that day is forever lost.
4. Yesterday is gone forever.
5. Each morning the account is refilled, but the bank can dissolve your account at any time **WITHOUT WARNING...**

SO, what will YOU do with your 86,400 seconds today?

Those seconds are worth so much more than the same amount in dollars or pounds sterling.

Think about it and remember to enjoy every second of your life, because time races by so much quicker than you think.

So take care of yourself, be happy, love deeply and enjoy life!

Here's wishing you a wonderful and beautiful day. Start "spending"....

"DON'T COMPLAIN ABOUT GROWING OLD...!"

SOME PEOPLE DON'T GET THE PRIVILEGE! |

..~.~.~.~.~.~.~.~.~.~.~.~.~.~.~.~.

# Getting Technical

Reliant gearbox service – when changing the clutch.

*Graeme Shaw probably provided me with the following, or something very like it, during my September trip south in 2014, but I failed to include the full text in the magazine at the time, which left unanswered questions. Graeme very kindly sent me the following at Christmas :-*

In reply to your two queries in Mewsletter 121. Removing a gearbox from a Kitten is hard work – replacing the front gearbox bearing is easy!

Simply unbolt the front cover and pull out the primary shaft and bearing (*this is getting to sound like a Haynes manual set of instructions to me, next you'll be telling us that re-assembly is a reversal of the above process! - Ed!*) o.k., shutting up now...

It helps if you heat the surrounding aluminium first, a hairdryer does that most effectively. Use a slide hammer to pull out the shaft, or, as Dennis at Michaels suggested, the way they do it is to hold the gearbox vertically by the shaft and knock the gearbox off it. (Two people are required for that technique).

For the sake of £15 (*retail bearing price, Ed*) and half an hour's clean and easy work (*it was only clean because you keep your car that way Graeme! Ed.*) you might as well do this when you are replacing the roll pins during a clutch change. I really don't think it is worth the risk of damage and a lot more work and expense to leave the old bearing in there any longer than every clutch change. (*Says the man who eeks a clutch out for over 100,000 miles, Ed!*)

On the question of new leaf springs, the new ones I fitted to UMA 271R 6 months ago are quite simply the best pair I have ever fitted. Ride height is perfect and the handling superb.

Graeme (Shaw) December 2014 Glossop - No. 362.

*Thanks for that Graeme, the leaf spring question arose because of concerns regarding a special pair of 6 leaf ones we had made, with a thicker spring steel top and second leaf than standard, to try to help better support the back of the Fox Tandy camper vans. The ones Graeme refers to are the standard spec 4 leaf Kitten ones we supply. So while good to hear, does not help with the non-standard ones we had specially made, (that said, we have them all specially made, just mostly to the original spec!) I guess the experiment was something of a failure.*

*On the gearbox bearing situation, I feel really stupid now, some decades after the events, I can well remember moving the front shaft of several Rebel gearboxes up and down and from side to side and thinking to myself, "that's not too bad", clearly it was far too bad, as most of those gearboxes subsequently failed on me, hindsight and good engineering practice are wonderful. When I think of the grief, work and expense I could have saved myself, and for a lot less than £15 in those days....*

*Oh, on the matter of using a slide hammer to remove the input shaft, just how do you attach that to the shaft? (he asked knowing fine well, well, suspecting strongly at any rate, that Alan will have designed and made an appropriate tool for that very task) Ed.*

*~.~.~.~.~.~.~.~.~.~.~.~.~.~.~.~.*

### *Staying technical - Catches?*

My telephone rang yesterday, that does happen, but what was unusual about this call was it asked a question which I promised to share with you, and it set me thinking, dangerous I know..

Peter Swan is the man to blame, frustrated by ever increasing prices and the diminishing thickness of carbon on the clutch release bearing thrust pads, he was asking if we could come up with a cost effective way of incorporating a ball bearing type of arrangement that could be fitted where the carbon goes on the existing thrust release "bearing" He is aware of the later type using what I believe is a Ford Fiesta clutch, but it involves a different flywheel which he has no desire to get involved with, not to mention a "nose" on the front of the gearbox which he does not have.



So, one for our technical experts, I know that there is also a new “nose” on the front of the gearbox that goes hand in glove with the Fiesta arrangement to, as I understand it, guide the bearing on its way back and forth during clutch operation.

Never having been involved in those “proper” clutch arrangements I am speaking in ignorance heresy and supposition, never a good idea, so please understand that this is the start of a conversation and research, rather than any kind of recommendation or suggestion.

It is also my understanding, and there are many grey areas here, in my mind at any rate, surrounding the introduction of pre-engaged starter motors, and so different gearbox bellhousings at about the same time as the different flywheel, and of course a different starter gear ring too. Well, within a few years at any rate!

My understanding is that the bellhousing was changed to accommodate the pre-engaged starter, which is smaller, well, in the sense that the securing bolts are closer together than those on the traditional type of starter, hence the need for a different bell housing. Given that in the Reliant design the bell housing is in fact part of the gearbox casing, and not, as in some designs, a separate entity. So, when I refer to the bellhousing, it is in fact the gearbox casing I am talking about.

The flywheel however, and this is something I don't know, the threads I assume went from imperial to metric when the clutch cover changed to match the “new” Ford release bearing, were the hole centers also different? or just the threads? I'm pretty sure, no idea why I feel that way, but pretty sure none the less that the dowel locations were changed at about that time too, possibly to make it obvious that things had changed, or is that an over simplification? (Or just wrong?).

What I do believe is that there were a number of changes, at about the same time in the mid eighties, late Foxes had the pre-engaged starter, but I don't think they ever had the Ford clutch, or am I mistaken? Was the Ford clutch, the one with the “proper” release bearing, introduced about 1990 / 91, a few years after the pre engaged starter?

Anyway, I digress from the question Peter asked, which was, why can't we, cost effectively, “dig” the remaining carbon out of our old

release bearings, and put a suitable ball thrust bearing in there where the carbon was? That set me thinking, of course that could be done, but would it be cost effective?, and would it work on its own?, or would some kind of guide be needed? Anyway that is (those are) the question(s), do you have an or any answers or thoughts? If you do, please get in touch.

Peter, like many (I say many, a decade ago it was most, but now a select minority) of our readers, does not have any modern electronic devices, and hence no internet access, so my initial thought to suggest to him that he looked at my ebay listings, which at that very time, (first week in January 2015) by chance, had a very good secondhand clutch release bearing, with a lot more carbon on it than the current new ones have, was pointless, given the bother, stress and hassle I have given myself in recent months by not being able to find things that I have advertised, and sold on ebay, I had no wish to further complicate things by removing an item already advertised, though perhaps that would have been the right thing to do, but hey, typing this up took priority in the short term. (before I forgot!).

That situation highlights one of my great frustrations, here I am at a stage in life where I am trying to re-home the contents of my lock-up, and to some extent loft, and the very people to whom I would like to give first refusal to are, to some degree, excluded because :- A. I am not organised or patient enough, and :- B. you do not have internet access.

I say patient enough, I could (should?) list everything here first, before offering it to the world on-line, but that would cause about a 4 month delay, and imagine the frustration, after offering an item through these pages, getting no response, then putting it on ebay and selling it, sometimes after several weeks if not months of listing and re-listing, to then have a call from you asking for it because I had advertised it in here a few months previously. You can see why I hesitate to try and do it that way I am sure.

Perhaps the discipline would be good for me, but in truth I am struggling a bit to cope with things at the moment, and while I am very grateful for the help given so willingly by a number of good friends, I find it challenging trying to maintain my 100% satisfaction record with my, very understanding, ebay customers, while doing my best, if at times not very successfully, to try and maintain a reasonable balance in life. I well remember being frustrated often, because I never seemed to have the

three ingredients needed to succeed with a project, namely, time, money and enthusiasm, all at once. While that is still true, I now find that that energy is often lacking too, something I don't ever remember being a problem before – if this is progress you can keep it!

Enough I think for now, well, perhaps not! I was talking to John Pearce about this today, 4/1/15, and the two things that became clear are the absolute need for concentricity (hence, presumably, the guiding nose that the late Reliant boxes have fitted) when using a proper bearing, and the fact that there is a VW release bearing which can be machined to fit the Reliant, and it uses a carbon faced bearing which gets you round the concentricity question, the question it does raise in my mind, is why more people have not adopted it?

Also, if you are using a proper bearing, without a carbon face as the VW one has, you would need to remove the bearing contact plate from the cover assembly, or use an appropriate alternative. Ed.

~.~.~.~.~.~.~.~.~.~.~.~.~.~.~.~.

## Technical still, back to gearboxes, well, gear selection devices at any rate!

By not getting involved with on-line forums I am aware that I exclude myself from some interesting discussions, however, I have quite enough on my plate without further diversions!

That said, the Rebel remote gear linkage of which I am so fond, has been the subject of some interest to a number of people in recent times, specifically owners of Liege (It was agreed some while back that the plural of Liege is Liege!), Tempests and Ciphers, all of which could benefit from such a device. (to be fair to John Box, he designed and made such a device for the Tempests he made and sold kits for, but that seems to have fallen by the wayside, unless you can tell us different Joe?) However, and more research needs to be done here, all three applications may require different lengths of extension. I must also remember, thanks to Keith Gittus pointing it out when he saw a Rebel one for the first time last year) that Triumph used a very similar device in the 60's and 70's, which was a couple of inches longer than the one used on the Rebel. I suspect the Cipher and Liege ones, possibly the Tempest too, need a shorter one, but how much shorter, and if these are

all different in that regard, as I said, more research required.

I only recently discovered that our man in Aalten in the Netherlands, Wilfried Dibets, had made a short one specially for one of Thomas Touw's Ciphers some while back, and, as regular readers will be aware, Simon Fitch is exploring the possibility of fitting one (a Rebel remote gear change) to his Cipher. Bob Riches and Simon Robson had expressed an interest for their Liege, and so it occurred to me that a higher profile for the situation might be of some benefit, as well as helping me fill a few pages! Wilfried kindly pointed me to a number of pictures he had taken of what he had done and asked me to forward them to Bob Riches, and I thought I should share them here as well, thank you Wilfried

Simon wrote to me as follows before Christmas, The gear lever is most interesting (and very different from the Robin one I adapted)





Above the rear of the extension shaft where the lever fits on the early Rebel gearbox.



The Robin / Rialto (or was it a Kitten one?) one before modification on the left, and after modification on the right. You can see how much neater the early Rebel solution is at the bottom of the previous page.

Discussions with Wilfred have highlighted something I had worried about - namely reverse gear. The Kitten box has a "lift" for reverse which the remote cannot replicate. Thus without removing the bar on the reverse shifter inside the gearbox, you have no possibility of selecting reverse. Of course the danger of removing the bar is that there is no way to stop you shifting into reverse accidentally, even at speed. One way I thought of achieving this protection was installing a "overdrive" solenoid from a Scimitar in an appropriate place to stop this happening - although it would need a switch on the gear lever to allow you to get reverse. I've emailed Wilfred about it as I'm interested to see how he solved this - currently though it looks unlikely that he'll be making too many more, so I think I'll have to think some more about making the Rebel option work. Interestingly Wilfred seems to approve of moving the handbrake on the Cipher - so perhaps its not such a crazy idea!!

My reply to Simon then was as follows :-

On the reverse thing, I seem to remember having to lift the Rebel lever to be able to select reverse, I don't ever remember selecting it by mistake, and we ran Rebels with that type of box for several years and tens of thousands of miles. I guess a good person to talk to would be - ahh, my memory and names, there is a Rebel guy (reading this now?) who has the Kitten / Robin box in his Rebel with that remote fitted to it. That said I know that a well-known Reliant specialist did work on a car for someone recently, (a Tempest I think) using the Rebel remote gearchange linkage on a later gearbox, and while it seemed to work, the car did not make it home without a failure to select any gears!

Then Simon responded as follows :-

Dear Brian,

I have just done some more investigation - and you are entirely right (with caveats!) - the Rebel lever does have a reverse interlock - but some modification to the Robin / Kitten reverse selector fork is required!

The main thing that foxed me (no pun intended!) is that I had made a modified Robin gearstick to fit the remote selector, without seeing a Rebel remote gearstick first - the shape of that gearstick and the casting it sits in are very, very important as they hold the key to reverse. My modified one (see picture and kitten one for comparison at

the bottom of page 21) sat nicely in the cup of the remote selector rod, and operated it well – however, at the time I failed to appreciate the engineering beauty of the little hole in the selector rod cup - something I now understand. If you look at the picture of the Rebel remote lever - you'll see the ball which fits into the cup - and a small metal shaft that extends below it. This shaft fits through the hole in the cup and extends beyond it - and is the key to the "lift to reverse" on the lever remote. When trying to select reverse with this gearstick, the stick protruding below the cup hits a cast metal bar which is moulded into the end casting (see attached photo and highlighted one as its difficult to see. When you lift the gearstick up, it pulls up the shaft, against a spring, into the cup and allows the remote lever to move sideways beyond the bar and so be able to select reverse.

However - despite this, if you stick the remote on a Robin / Kitten box, you still won't be able to get reverse (and is the problem Wilfred probably encountered). The reason for this is that there is a pin extending across the reverse selector fork which on a normal kitten box you manually lift the gear lever over to get reverse (and effectively does the same thing as the cast bar on the Rebel remote linkage). As the remote linkage cannot replicate this lift action inside the gearbox - the remote selector hits the pin and fails to select reverse. The solution to this is fairly simple - remove the pin! - as the reverse gear protection is provided externally by the rod on the remote linkage and thus it doesn't need the pin on the reverse lever fork inside the gearbox. With that done all works fantastically.

One thing to consider (which I'll check when the weather warms up enough for me to disappear into the shed to check) is the position of the bar may prevent it from being used on gearboxes where the reverse gear is next to fourth gear - I'll check this and get back to you, as it may mean that I have to retain the carbon release clutch gearbox on the Cipher rather than use the Ford clutch system I just installed on the replacement engine(!).

Hope this is all useful.

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

.~.~.~.~.~.~.~.~.~.~.~.~.~.~.~.~.

# Oh what fun we had!

Some memories of Reliants we have owned, by Jim McKillop.

## 1970 RELIANT SUPERVAN III 21e

Being a qualified Mechanical Engineer I have no excuses to offer for, like Brian, getting heavily involved with Reliant cars (and BX Citroens).

Having had a series of rather thirsty cars such as old Jaguars and a Land Rover, and planning to get married, in 1971 we went and bought what I thought was the ultimate cheap-to-run sensible car. It was a little Reliant Supervan III of the 21E variety, brand new from Havelocks in Minerva Street in Glasgow. A friend had been running a Regal (what a ludicrous name for a wee three-wheeler?), the Saloon version of the Supervan, and I had been giving him a hand to service it, so I had some slight knowledge of the model.

## 1970 RELIANT SCIMITAR GTE Se5

In 1973, having no old car to work on, I bought a wrecked GTE which had belonged to a Demolition Contractor. He had indeed demolished the car! I guess the insurance refused to pay out when he crashed it with bald tyres and worn everything else. This car got repaired and put back on the road to be used for short local trips when the kids were small. This was the early GTE with four speed / overdrive box, having a dreadful set of external gearchange linkages to accommodate the overdrive. An interesting point with these cars is the folding front seats. The idea is that the seat folds when a lever is pulled and goes right into the footwell allowing easy access for back seat passengers. For some reason the seats on some cars have been incorrectly assembled and spring back instead of forward so defeating the object of the exercise! Did nobody notice or bother about this at the factory or dealership? You were solemnly warned about the risk of the petrol pipe stub coming loose from the carb and gushing fuel over the hot exhaust. Yes, it happened to my friend Ian's SE5a on the M8 and it was a total loss because his sister was driving at the time. Another quirk I discovered with the Ford Essex engine in Scimitars is the crankcase



ventilation system does not work! Fumes were evident until I fitted a hose from the rocker cover to the air cleaner. The main bearings were beginning to rumble, so it was sold to a workmate who was keen and prepared to overhaul the engine. I am afraid a Fiat 127 interlude followed.

### **1974 RELIANT SCIMITAR GTE Se5a**

After a few Reliantless years we bought another used Scimitar GTE. This one had the excellent German close-ratio four speed gearbox. The car was good until large areas of the gelcoat began to craze and lift. The plastic dash also began to disintegrate and was held together with wire and Araldite. As with the SE5 we found the front footwells very awkward as they have a pronounced slope due to the chassis. Another annoyance was the unavailability of reversing light switches to fit this car. A cheap electronic kit was used to assist the contact-breaker points.

### **1978 RELIANT SCIMITAR GTE Se6a**

The 5a was sold to make way for a used 6a with Wolfrace wheels and a "Bigbasto" sunroof! The footwells are much better but the doors are larger and prone to sag. This one had lost its overdrive so I converted it to five speed from a 3L Capri, retaining the hydraulic clutch but requiring a change of bellhousing and slight mod to the propshaft. The Bigbasto got recovered but was never a good idea. Where we live there is fallout from trees which blocks the drain channels.

Make no mistake, a total loony "designed" the cooling system on the SE6. There have been reams written in the Slice magazine on how to improve cooling. Even the experts cannot agree. Do not mess about. You need to simply convert back to SE5 plumbing which has an extra pipe on the radiator and different hose arrangement at the water pump. Make sure you have a small coolant pipe from the rear of the engine. If not, fit one, otherwise all the circulation will be at the front. Use this hose to supply the heater and auto choke before going back to the pump ensuring rapid warm-up. I used a mains electric pre-heater on this line which has its own pump and saves fuel as the choke is not on at start-up.

A serious incident befell this car and please take note if you are

running a GTE. Someone had replaced the bronze trunnions on the bottom wishbones without changing the badly-worn uprights. No play was apparent until the suspension collapsed! Jean was driving and could easily have crashed, or at least been put off driving the car for good. Once sorted, this distinctive car served us well for many years.

### 1980 RELIANT KITTEN ESTATE

When our daughter Mhairi started at Paisley Uni we got her a light blue Kitten Estate for the daily trip. An event not unnoticed by our Brian, who followed her home one day, only to find out she was a McKillop! Nothing else major occurred and the odd broken rear spring was the result of her carrying pals and hay bales up farm tracks. You do need to make sure your MOT tester has read his Manual and knows how to properly check spring-loaded lower steering swivels. Poor quality rear dampers caused some trouble by losing efficiency when warm. Otherwise it did the job and may still be going strong?

### 1985 RELIANT SCIMITAR SS1 1300

Bought from the late Dick Martin (once the owner of Kitten estate OTD 711R) needing work. The chassis was well rusted, (pity it was not a galvanised one) and was welded by Richard Larter. All the brake lines were replaced with copper. The usual electrical fun ensued with the pop-up headlights creating a comic scene as they went up and down indiscriminately. A roll-over bar was fitted as I consider this type of car to be a death trap without one. (Derek Sloan, (one time Rebel owner) once said on telly that driving a Reliant was a “near-deaf” experience.)

The 1300 CVH engine was suffering from sticky hydraulic tappets so I got a spare head from the breaker. This was a 1600 head with larger valves and it fitted straight on. Mainly used and bought over by Mhairi, all in all a fine wee car remembered with affection.

After this we had some Citroen diesels.

Jim McKillop from Cardross.

~.~.~.~.~.~.~.~.~.~.~.~.~.~.~.~.



## **A New Insurance Offer for Reliant Kitten Register Members**

As many long-term subscribers to the Mewsletter will know, we at P F Spare Insurance Brokers have been supporting the Reliant Kitten Register for a number of years. At the inception of this relationship we were able to access, on behalf of members, a Classic Car policy particularly well suited to the needs of owners of a range of Reliant cars and vans. The result was a combination of price, cover and level of service you would expect from a professional insurance broker of fifty years' standing.

Following changes to the conditions of that scheme made by the insurer, we were sorry to lose a number of Reliant Kitten Register subscribers for whom cover was no longer available. Recently, however, we have added a brand new product which is already proving popular with owners of Reliants (and indeed other Classic Cars) and, at Brian's invitation, would like to share a brief summary of its eligibility requirements with you.

This product, made available courtesy of our partnership with Ageas, might be suitable should you own a Kitten, Rebel, Rialto, Robin, Super Robin, Sabre or Scimitar and require comprehensive or accidental damage, fire & theft (laid-up) cover for one or more of these vehicles\*:

- with a value of at least £2,000 (agreed value policies available);
- driven up to 5,000 miles per year;
- kept overnight in a garage or on the drive of the policyholder's home address;
- whose owner and keeper is least thirty years old having held the appropriate licence for the vehicle for at least five years.
- not being the only vehicle owned by the policyholder

Better still, this offer is available not just for Reliants, but for other classic vehicles which meet these criteria and which are at least ten years old.

Should you consider that you (and the vehicle you wish to insure) are eligible for

this insurance we encourage you to give us a call on 01530 270574; you might be pleasantly surprised at the combination of cover and price on offer.

In addition, should you own any of the vehicles listed above (but also the Reliant Fox, Pick-Up or Supervan) **over 20 years' old** then we have an additional product through Towergate (not subject to the same eligibility criteria) which might be suitable for you\*.

If you would like more information about either scheme or would simply like us to explore the wider market for you then please feel free to give Brendon or Kirsty a call on 01530 270574. We are open from Monday – Friday 9.00am – 5.00pm and Saturday 9.00am – 12.00pm.

\* This article is intended to provide guideline information only. The insurance policies in question contain limits, exclusions and conditions that are not detailed in this article. If there are any discrepancies between the information contained herein and your policy, your policy takes precedence.

.~.~.~.~.~.~.~.~.~.~.~.~.~.~.~.~.

### Epilogue

Right, I am running about a month late with this, sincere apologies, No excuses or explanations, we don't have the space or time, but I will try to do better in future (It has been a very long time indeed since I failed to get the Mews to you within the two months the edition covers, however, I fear that I won't make it this time – it is now the 25<sup>th</sup> of February and this is not at the printers yet!)

I have been asked to remind you about the ROC London to Brighton run, I'll see if I can squeeze those details in.

So, having begun this edition with one apology and ended it with another, surely things can only be better next time?!?

Do please help me fill a few lines (or better yet pages!) if you can, your words might not only make my task simpler, but save everyone else from being bored silly by my ranting. *Brian.*



# London to Brighton Celebratory Run

To celebrate 80 years since the first Reliants were put into production and 40 years since the launch of the Reliant Kitten, the Reliant Owners Club, Reliant Kitten Register and the Reliant Sabre and Scimitar Owners Club have organised a London to Brighton celebratory run.

The run will take place on

## Sunday June 28th 2015

Owners will need to register their Reliants prior to the run to receive their entrance plaques, upon completion registered cars will receive a separate award.

Registration is £10 per vehicle

To register your interest please contact Geoff Payne  
via email : [geoff@35reliant.co.uk](mailto:geoff@35reliant.co.uk)  
Or via telephone after 7pm : 07590825730

Please note you **MUST** be a member of one of the above clubs to take part in this event.

# WWW.RELIANTSPARES.COM

Contact: Joe Mason 07973470810 E-mail: [joemason@reliantspares.com](mailto:joemason@reliantspares.com)

We carry a huge amount of second hand Reliant spares.  
For Regal, Robin Mk1, Mk2, Mk3, SLX, Rialto, Kitten, Fox, Ant.  
Mail order or collection

100+ cars for spares/rebuild. 20+ complete cars for sale  
With stock changing every week. Have a look in our picture gallery or on YouTube.

We buy, sell, collect, deliver, restore, tune, hire, export any Reliant.



We also develop and manufacture new Reliant parts  
Race exhaust systems, 4-1, 4-2-1, big bore or standard pipes,  
Heavy duty race head gaskets, handbrake cables , roof linings, roof racks,  
carpet sets, Rebel race inlet manifolds, disc conversions, ball joint conversions.



How to find us: Woodend farm, Cradley, Bromyard Road, Worcester WR13 5JW  
On the end of the Malvern Hills. Opening hours 9 till 6 (ish) Monday to Saturday.  
Camping in the Summer, good Pubs, B+B and Cafes local

Home to the “Tempest of England” sports car. Complete Tempests in stock and under construction. We’re also (gradually!) building Tempest parts list up.

E-mail: [info@tempestcars.com](mailto:info@tempestcars.com) Web site: [www.tempestcars.com](http://www.tempestcars.com)

# GRAHAM WALKER LIMITED



28 Bumpers Lane  
Sealand Road Ind Est  
CHESTER CH1 4LT



**RETAIL AND TRADE SUPPLIERS OF  
RELIANT PARTS WORLDWIDE  
ROBINS TO SCIMITARS**

**OVER 10,000 LINES STOCKED  
MAIL ORDER PARTS ARE OUR SPECIALITY  
NEXT DAY NATIONWIDE DELIVERY SERVICE**



**SHOP BY PHONE FOR FAST MAIL ORDER  
ORDERS RECEIVED BY 4.00PM WILL BE DISPATCHED  
SAME DAY**

**ALL MAJOR CREDIT CARDS ACCEPTED**

## TELEPHONE

**Mail Order: 01244 381777 - 7 Lines**

**Fax No: 01244 381262**

## OPEN

**Monday - Friday**

**8.00 am - 6.00 pm**

**Saturday**

**9.00 am - 1.00 pm**

**WEB : [www.grahamwalker.co.uk](http://www.grahamwalker.co.uk) E.Mail : [tracey.jones@grahamwalker.easynet.co.uk](mailto:tracey.jones@grahamwalker.easynet.co.uk)**

**COMPARE OUR PRICES, OUR QUALITY AND OUR SERVICE  
FULL WORKSHOP FACILITIES AVAILABLE**

**pfspare**  
insurance

**Insurance Brokers**

**for Personal and Commercial Insurance  
since 1962.**

**Is your Reliant**

- worth at least £2,000?
- driven up to 5,000 miles per year?
- kept overnight in a garage or on the drive of your home address?

**Proud Supporters of**



**Are you**

- at least thirty years old?

**And do you have**

- the appropriate licence for the vehicle which you have held for at least five years?
- another vehicle (car or motorcycle)?

**If yes, call us and see if we can save you money on the cost of your motor insurance!**

If no, do still get in touch and let us try to find the right classic car insurance product for you.

**Call: 01530 270574**

**email: [info@pfspare.co.uk](mailto:info@pfspare.co.uk)**

[www.pfspare.co.uk](http://www.pfspare.co.uk) | [www.pluginsure.co.uk](http://www.pluginsure.co.uk) | [www.nicequote.co.uk](http://www.nicequote.co.uk)

34 High Street, Measham, Swadlincote, Derbyshire, DE12 7EB

P F Spare is authorised and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority.