

# RELIANT KITTEN REGISTER



## Mewsletter 125



July - August 2015



*Yes it is a Kitten!! This issue's car is the amazing Batmobile Replica which is the mascot of the Bournemouth Carnival band. Fully road legal, it's used throughout the summer to promote the band and raise money, costumes and all!! It's also taken to classic car shows in the area, specifically the regular "Classic Cars on the Prom". It was built for the band by a group of trainees from Elford Motors in Bournemouth in 1989, based on a 1977 Kitten DL. Grateful thanks to Louis Davies, Dean Mueller -Davies and Alan Hooker from the band for the history and picture.*

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*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.....*



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

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

# Dinky Cars

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E & o e

I did think of calling this the “John Pearce chassis edition”, and perhaps I should, read on to find out why!

You know, this was all going so well (as you will read in the Epilogue) but then I suddenly realised, not for the first time – I console myself with the thought that consistency is a good thing! that I was one page short of completing this one, certainly 4 days ahead of my already, as I thought, very ambitious self-imposed deadline, oh well, no more Jowett pictures this time, I promise!

On that subject, I did get a caption suggestion from Brian Midgley who was brought up just outside Bradford, near Idle where the Jowett works was situated, ***“I know they put them together upside down, but this is ridiculous”*** was his suggestion.

Which is very fair comment, and tempts me to include, in spite of my promise a few lines ago, a picture to show you the Javelin assembly line, they did indeed run the bodies, as supplied fully trimmed by Briggs, upturned in a cage, through the factory while they fitted engines and gearboxes, axles and the likes before rolling them the right way up for finishing off with liquids and a battery. But a promise is a promise, so you are quite safe!

Good news, I had a telephone call from our man in Dunfermline Dickey Daws this evening, 4<sup>th</sup> of July, telling me that I should not be too concerned about my memory because, not only had I remembered to run his wanted advert in the last supplement – for a Fox rear bulkhead, but he had had a positive response, and would be organising its collection over the coming days.

It left me with a warmer feeling than the one I had just after mailing the last edition when I realised that I had not made much mention of the lower wishbone (or indeed top wishbone) positions, which I should have done in light of Paul Johnson's efforts getting three quotes... Thank you Paul.

Now we have a bottom ball joint position to consider too, and all this at the very time that I am to be spending a 4 figure sum, which will amount to about half the cash in the spares account, on a variety of new springs. I think I will need to delegate more in future!

Anyway, our gathering at the Llangollen Motor Museum is now history, (well, actually it isn't yet!) but, if I am organised enough this will have gone to print before the event.... Pictures next time.

One thing I am intending to do with this edition is to use it to jog my memory, and open a few matters up for discussion and the invitation of ideas and thoughts or suggestions.

Before I forget, thanks are also due to Ian Dunning, who has very kindly donated some interesting brochures and road test reports to us – you would think we had all of them by now, but there were a few in Ian's collection we were not aware of. In particular the Steven's Sienna test and some Reef Cub literature we had not seen before. Thanks to John Pearce as well for digitising them for us. You will get to see some of them eventually, but meantime my thanks to John and Keith, and others, for helping me to fill this edition easily. I have suddenly run out of room!

You must excuse the duplication, I have been keeping a diary of sorts, of progress with this edition in the Epilogue, and there is a mention there of this, but it is such good news, and lets me fill another gap from the last edition, at 13:36 today, July the 7<sup>th</sup> my phone rang, it was Dennis! you remember Dennis, Michael's first class storeman don't you? well he is back, just one day a week at the moment, a Wednesday, but there you go. They are doing vehicle sales and servicing as well as parts supply again, phew. I in fact knew by the time I took the last edition to the printers that rising from the ashes of Michaels, thanks to Jonathan Haynes (Micro car U.K.) who came to the rescue (John Box was talking to him at a recent Daimler event) there is now **West View Garage Ltd Unit 4A Barlby Road, Selby, North Yorkshire, YO8 5BE**

**01757 270001/2 is still the number to call.**

March 30<sup>th</sup> was the fateful day, and I should have rung back a second time, having been well aware, as I said to you at the time, that Michael had been understandably very harassed when I last spoke to him, and in my disorganised way I only rang them back today 10/7/15. I had a chat with Nick, who along with Pete, with the backing of John Powell who owned the building and fixtures and fittings (Michaels only leased the building, complete with the ramps and all fixtures and fittings) They were in fact up and trading again very quickly. See their facebook page for more details if you are so equipped, just look for :-

West View Garage Ltd

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Lindsay Thomson writes as follows :-

Presently I am trying to make friends outside of Facebook, while applying the same principles.

Therefore, every day I go down the street and tell the passers by what I have eaten, how I feel, what I have done the night before and what I will do after.

I give them pictures of my wife, my daughter, my dog, and of me gardening and spending time in my pool. I also listen to their conversations and I tell them I love them.

And it works! I already have 3 followers,

2 police officers and a psychiatrist.

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## **Notes from more of your renewal notices.**

If there is one man who writes to me every year, sometimes several times a year, even answers some of my technical questions , yet seldom sees his name in print, it is Mr. R. Smith, latterly from Swadlincote mid-way between Birmingham and Nottingham, now resident in the Highlands of Scotland, or Nairnshire as he tells me Amazon call it.

I honestly do not know why it is that so few of his words make it into print, certainly it is most unfair and unbalanced of me not to include more of his thoughts and words for you to peruse. Just blame the editor (note the small e!)

Anyway, he is rubbing down the body of his Kitten estate, and salvaging the Fox chassis with a view to putting the Fox chassis under the Kitten.

He tells me it took ten and a half hours through the night to tow it up to Scotland on an “A” frame.

I have, as regular readers may recall, been planning to publish a list of subscribers for well over a decade now. If I enlisted the help of a decent software expert it should be possible to extract the information in the form of either one report per model, or even a grand summary, however, though there is a flag, set to “Y” or “N” depending on your answer to the question – “May we disclose your details to other subscribers” a surprising number of folk have chosen to be anonymous, and working out what to do with them has prevented me from publishing a list for far more years than it ought to have done.

Part of me thinks, why, if someone wants to be anonymous, as they are obviously quite entitled to be, should they get to see everyone else’s details? And in any case I lack the expertise to create a report that checks that flag and it would need to do that to omit them.

Then there is the matter of what details do we publish? Name obviously, address? Phone number? Email address – I must adapt the application form to include that, though the opportunity, taken up by

many, to make me aware, is on your renewal notice each year. Then there is the matter of vehicle details, do we include them? and if so what exactly? Just the model or should I go further?

Right, did you notice that? I got sidetracked, yes again! But, as I mentioned elsewhere in this edition, I am beginning to wonder if I am the best man for certain aspects of this job!

.....

## Liege Page

After the brief mention last time, when I actually had to look up a name, and rather than waste ink and paper printing off a list, I thought, for all of them there are, and less than half of them registered with us, it would be very quick and easy just to do a search on Liege, well, that revealed that we have details on no less than then 21 of them, yes I know I ought to check for duplicates, if only I felt I had the time! Something else to add to the low priority task list...

.....

Dear Brian,

7<sup>th</sup> July 2015

Oh Dear, Oh Dear, Oh Dear! For a moment I thought the "Screws of the World" had been re-issued!! Factual inaccuracies in every line, failure to correctly identify vehicles and persons, etc. etc!

And then I re-read the first line of your opening paragraph on page 3, paused, and smiled internally as I realised that I could immediately associate myself with those sentiments too :-

Just for accuracy Brian, the "very clean looking yellow Liege at the bottom of page 22" (or maybe even page 23?), is none other than my "Tweetie Pie" which yourself and Arleen followed around the first Liege "Hills & Valleys Tour" social run in Peter's "Number One" back in May 2003.

The big question is, how could you fail to recognise the handsome young(ish) looking chap on the far right of the picture? (Should have gone to Specsavers?) Is that you starring as the Scottish

shepherd, shearing the sheep and the sheep dog in the advert, Brian?  
*(Honest, it's not me! Ed)*

In your Epilogue, on page 29 you believed the car belonged to "David Rush" who had been to visit Joe Mason @ Reliant spares. In fact David's name is David Bush and he is currently building his Liege. He and I went to visit Joe to have a look at his disc brake conversion with a view to the ability of it fitting a Liege.

I can tell you that it is a very tidy and cost effective conversion for the Tempest, (and I guess potentially for the Fox and maybe the Kitten too?). It does need some modification and an alternative caliper for use on a Liege.

As you have not received much from the Liege fraternity recently, hopefully attached you will find a picture of myself and Ginny enjoying a Falcon Motor Club's "Fish & Chip Run" last Friday - a beautiful summer's eve social / routefinding run through the lanes ending at a chippy for a fish supper - and afterwards a drive home in the dark on a balmy night looking up at the stars for our hood - what could be nicer?

Tweetie and I also went to the National Kit Car show at Stoneleigh back in May and met-up with other Liege owners for the Liege Car Club AGM, plus I also met and chatted with Paul Johnson who is re-constructing the red Ciper he purchased from Thomas Touw. I was able to help him with some original Minifin brake drums he wanted to source. He told me that Simon Fitch was there as well, but I didn't see him unfortunately.

Lastly, some members of the Liege Car Club are about to depart on a week or so's tour visiting many of the lumpy bits of Switzerland, and having a bit of fun up and down the Stelvio Pass into Italy (remember the original film of The Italian Job and the bus at the end). So hopefully one of the participants might write up something on that and submit it for the Mewsletter.

All the best for now Brian,

Simon Robson No. 513 from Hitchin

*Well, as I am sure you can imagine, I was delighted to hear from*



*Simon, and to be reminded of that wonderful weekend that Arleen and I spent with old number one, Fladbury, home of the best apple and rhubarb crumble I have ever tasted! I had forgotten the year mind you, and it is a sobering thought to realise that it was over a decade ago, which encourages me to (re)consider introducing a – “where were we a decade – or two – ago” feature within these pages.*

*I did think that someone out or up there has a really subtle sense of whatever that brought about the situation that the picture that Simon sent me with his email had a Ciper following Tweety Pie into a ford!, what are the chances of that, I ask you, you couldn't write the script, I mean really – oh, sorry it was an MX5! Oh well without the Ciper it would probably not exist, certainly not looking as smart as they do. Tony, take a bow, and try not to dwell on what might have been.*

*Oh, yes, the picture :-*



~~~~~

## Chassis / Vin Numbers, Rebel, Kitten & Fox

Over the years I've heard numerous stories concerning the chassis / Vin numbering for Reliants. In a bid to finally sort out the "old wives' tales" from the truth, I embarked on an exercise to try to get a handle on this. It's turned into a bit of a monster, and it has thrown up many curiosities, but finally I'm able to understand the history of our wee cars!!

I've collated all the chassis and registration details on the Register into an easy to search Excel spreadsheet. This makes locating a vehicle straightforward. I've only concerned myself with chassis and registration numbers, plus status (if known), engine numbers being excluded. All the cars in this exercise are 30+ years old now and many will, by now, have had their engine changed..... Of course, no way does the Register have all the numbers of all the cars, but with over 1,000 cars recorded, it does have a very fair representation.

### Rebel

It's long been rumoured that Kittens started their chassis numbers from zero again half way through production (they did, see later) but, surprisingly, the factory did something similar with Rebels too!!! The first Rebels were all saloons, starting, in 1964 with the chassis number FW100001. The FW prefix appears to have been applied to only the first few cars, thereafter being just a number, as were the Regals at the time. The oldest on the Register is FW100003.

When the 700cc engines were fitted, they added a prefix of R. The last 600cc Rebel on the Register is 100331.

When the Estate was launched in 1968, the chassis numbers were prefixed with an E, but started from 1000001 again!!! Meanwhile the saloons continued as before so we had two different numbering systems in force. Later still, when the vans were launched, these

continued alongside the estates, still using the E prefix and were consecutively numbered within the Estate numbering system. Confusing? – it gets better!!

Roll on to 1972 and the launch of the 750cc engines and it was all change again. All 750cc Rebels had their own prefixes, S94/ for saloons, E94/ for Estates and V/94 for vans. The actual numbering now continued consecutively from the old estate numbers, dropping the first three digits (1 & 2x0), the saloon numbers simply ceasing. The last 700cc saloon number on the Register is R1001052.

This system continued until Rebel production ceased, the last recorded one we have being E94/1733. So if we add the two final numbers on the Register together, 1052 + 1733, we get 2785, which makes the oft-quoted production figures for Rebels of (approximately) 2600 appear somewhere near the mark.

Unlike the later cars, the Rebels did not have paint codes and similar within their chassis numbers (again as was the practice for Regals at the time). Neither were left-hand drive vehicles identified in the chassis number. All this would change with the Robins and Kittens.

## Kitten

The launch of the Kitten in 1975, heralded a completely new system of chassis numbering, with the model, colour plus year and month being clearly included in the number. The system was extended to all models of Reliant, being a variation of the system used on the Scimitar GTE's. The codes have previously been published in the Mewsletters at least twice down the years, nonetheless I will repeat them here.....

The first digit of the number is the last digit of the year of manufacture, therefore this would be a number between 5 and 9 (1975 and 1979).

The second character indicates the month of manufacture, and is a letter between A (January) and M (December), the letter I not being used, to avoid confusion with the number 1.

The next number is the colour to the following key:-

- 1 Venetian Blue,
- 2 Virginia Brown,
- 3 April Yellow,
- 4 Tropic Green,
- 5 Caramel Beige,
- 6 Arctic White,
- 7 Pimento Red,
- 8 Orange,
- 9 Turquoise,
- 10 Primer.

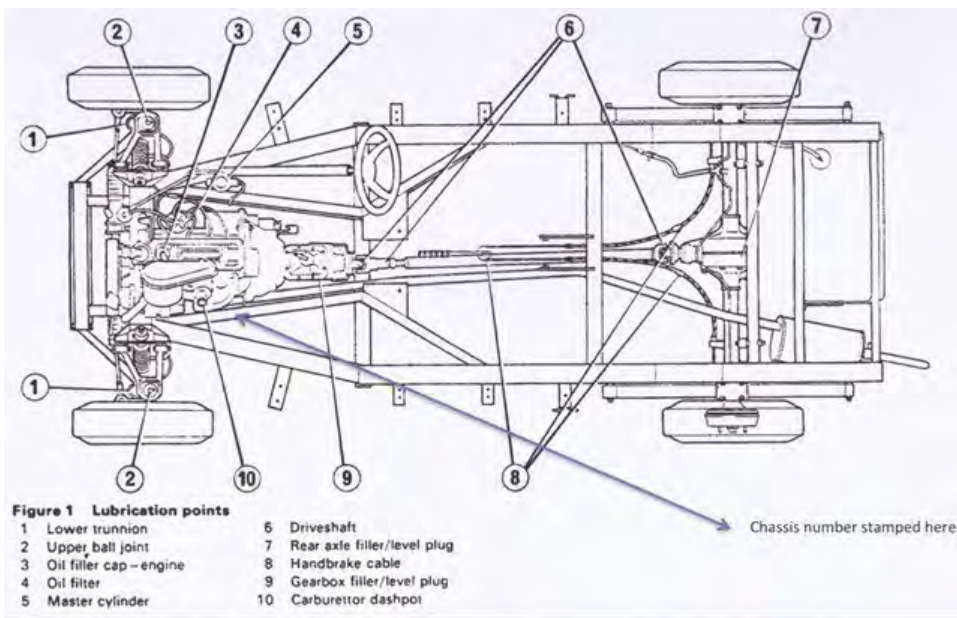
Then there is a forward slash.

The following 3 digits indicate the model.

- 141 - Saloon
- 142 - Estate
- 143 – Saloon LHD
- 144 – Estate LHD
- 145 – Saloon DL LHD
- 146 – Estate DL LHD
- 147 - Saloon DL
- 148 - Estate DL
- 149 - Van
- 150 – Van LHD

The next part of the code is the actual chassis number, and should be a five digit number.

Some of the data plates on the bulkhead are extremely difficult to read accurately, as the numbers were always hand etched, so it is better to check the number stamped on the left-hand chassis rail in the engine compartment, just behind the alternator.



The chassis numbers were prefixed by the numbers 01, starting at \*\*\*/\*\*\*\*01001. So the earliest number on the Register, chassis number 5K3/14101031 would be a yellow Kitten saloon, made in October 1975, and the 31<sup>st</sup> built.

The launching of the DL range in August 1976 brought about the confusion mentioned briefly above, in that the actual numbers started at 01001 again!!!! The standard cars would appear to have been discontinued at this point as well as the Register has no 141's or 142's recorded after August 1976, all being 147's and 148's (plus their LHD versions). The last standard Kitten we have on file bears chassis number 6H1/14203256. This suggests a total production of standard Kittens of at least 2256 (remembering that numbering started at 1001).

At this time the number of available colours / codes increased too, there now being 20 paint codes, the first 10 being as before plus :-

- 11 Olympic Blue,
- 12 Festival Red,
- 13 Parrot Green,
- 14 Riviera Brown,
- 15 Yellow Ochre,
- 16 Sierra Tan,
- 17 Blaze,
- 18 Mexico Brown,
- 19 Capricorn Blue,
- 20 Mineral Blue.

I have it on good authority from two very reliable sources that, prior to 1979, Reliant chassis were not always numbered during production, the numbers often being stamped and chassis plates fitted only when the vehicles were dispatched to dealers for sale. This is supported by the fact that bare chassis sold to be made into other vehicles (Jimps, Salamanders, Asquiths and similar) were supplied without numbers, all these manufacturers applying their own numbering systems. This would also explain numerous other anomalies, where the actual vehicle appears very much older than it's chassis number would suggest. I'm aware of two Kitten DL saloons, one 1976 and one 1977, both of which have type 1 chassis (with rear anti roll bar mounts, slightly different front wishbones and brake flexible pipe mountings amongst other minor differences). These were possibly development cars, stored then sent out for sale when demand peaked in late 1976, or maybe new vehicles built on old stock chassis – either way, Reliant rarely let anything go to waste!!

Things changed dramatically in late 1979 when Reliant adopted the international Vehicle Identification Numbering (Vin) system (ISO 3779) which became compulsory worldwide for all vehicle manufacturers from 1980. Each country and manufacturer had a unique prefix code, in Reliant's case "SCD" which had to prefix all chassis (now called Vin) numbers. The Vin numbers had to be configured in a standard format, plus, as an audit path, had to be allocated to a vehicle/chassis throughout the manufacturing process, following through from the first

laying down of the chassis. All bare chassis supplied by Reliant after this date had to be numbered and the finished vehicle would have to be registered using that number. As Reliant had no way of knowing the colour of the finished vehicle, all bare chassis were sent out with the paint code of "99". From 1979, Reliant now listed 98 colours available, which I will not reproduce here because a) there isn't room and b) I don't know all of them anyway!! Whereas all the earlier colours were taken from the BL (Austin/Morris/Triumph/MG) palettes, now colours were sourced from just about any manufacturer.....

ISO 3779 Vin numbers have to be 17 digit. The first 3 being the manufacturer and country identifier (SCD). The next 6 being a model and colour identifier with the final 8 showing year and month of manufacture plus the actual vehicle number. So a typical post "Vin" Kitten might have the number SCD140860/9L/003055. This would be a DL Estate, in "Buckskin" made in November 1979. The year and month codes being almost the same format as the earlier system. 9 being 1979, A, 1980, B 1981 and so on. The actual numbers carried on sequentially from the previous ones.

The model codes for post 1979 Kittens were 1407, Saloon, 1408, Estate, 1409, Van. I have no post 1979 LHD examples recorded but must presume that if any were in fact made they would have followed the same convention as the earlier cars, as these do.

As has been reported before, it's believed that few, if any, Kittens were built at the factory after 1979. By this time, demand had dried up somewhat and the factory had many unsold cars in stock. If a customer ordered one that couldn't be supplied from stock, maybe a colour they didn't have for example, then a kit of parts was sent out to the dealer to assemble. These all had "99" paint codes. Some later "Dealer builds" were even supplied with Fox chassis..... I know of two 1984 registered dealer build estates, one B registered, the other on a Q plate. I'm also aware of a couple of late registered Kittens where the earlier numbering system has clearly been over stamped on the chassis with a later SCD number, which also appears on the Vin plate.....

Of course given the very late chassis tendency to corrode, it's possible that both these cars have been re-chassied on earlier frames, then the number transferred over but it's just as possible that they were supplied new from "stock". From 1980, no production vehicles could be registered by DVLA without an ISO 3779 Vin number.

The final number we have on the Register is 3292, less the 1000 prefix equals 2292 cars post August 1976. Adding this to the pre-August 1976 number gives us  $2256 + 2292 = 4548$ . Again the oft-quoted production figure of 4074 would seem to be a reasonable estimate...

## Fox

These are easier, a lot so. Only one vehicle identification code was used on Foxes, 1701, otherwise the convention is exactly the same as the post 1979 Kittens. Again, bare chassis carried the paint code of "99". The highest Fox chassis number I have is 616, so the oft-reported production number of 600 is not too wide of the mark.....

Not all Kitten Register subscribers have declared their vehicle details on the form provided when renewing membership and the records themselves are somewhat out of date, particularly concerning the status of the cars (on road, SORN, undergoing rebuild, scrapped) so it would be much appreciated if such details could be brought more up to date. I'm also poised to expand the database to include three wheelers (did I say it was turning in to a monster?) for reasons I won't expand on here. All I require is the registration number, the chassis or Vin number and the current status. I neither want nor need engine numbers, owner details or locations. Any updates or new details on small Reliants, either three or 4 wheeled, can be posted to me or e-mailed via the Register e-mail address - [info@kitreg.org.uk](mailto:info@kitreg.org.uk).

John (Pearce) No. 304 from Leighton Buzzard



*John, many thanks for that, not only was it needed, but the timing was incredible – I had just about run out of steam today, starting very early this morning (04:30 8/7/15) answering Simon’s email then moving this edition forward from about 7 pages to 10, and now another 7 with no effort from me – so good I can hardly put it into words.*

*Getting this away to the printers before Moira goes into hospital on the 14<sup>th</sup> now looks achievable! (Or so I currently think!!)*



## **APHORISMS**

*(Aphorism: A short, pointed sentence that expresses a wise or clever observation or a general truth.)*

1. The nicest thing about the future is that it always starts tomorrow.
2. Money will buy a fine dog, but only kindness will make him wag his tail.
3. If you don't have a sense of humour, you probably don't have any sense at all.
4. Seat belts are not as confining as wheelchairs.
5. A good time to keep your mouth shut is when you're in deep water.
6. How come it takes so little time for a child who is afraid of the dark to become a teenager who wants to stay out all night?
7. Business conventions are important because they demonstrate how many people a company can operate without.
8. Why is it that at class reunions you feel younger than everyone else looks?
9. Stroke a cat and you will have a permanent job.
10. No one has more driving ambition than the teenage boy who wants to buy a car.

11. There are no new sins; the old ones just get more publicity today.
12. There are worse things than getting a call for a wrong number at 4 a.m. - for example, it could be the right number.
13. No one ever says "It's only a game" when their team is winning.
14. I've reached the age where 'happy hour' is a nap.
15. Be careful about reading the fine print - there's no way you're going to like it.
16. The trouble with bucket seats is that not everybody has the same size bucket.
17. Do you realise that, in about 40 years, we'll have thousands of old ladies running around with tattoos?
18. Money can't buy happiness, but somehow it's more comfortable to cry in a Mercedes than in a Ford.
19. After 60, if you don't wake up aching in every joint, you're probably dead.
20. Always be yourself, because the people that matter don't mind, and the ones that mind don't matter.
21. Life isn't tied with a bow, but it's still a gift.

And always remember - Politicians and nappies should be changed often, and for the same reason.

*I just thought it was worth the distraction! Ed.*

.....

## **Parts**

I had listed a number of headings to be included here, as well as the nuts and bolts of the Kitten / Fox front suspension (incomplete) details which you will see on page 25.

These are :- Lower ball joints, Lower wishbones (and the “strut” that in effect forms the forward arm of the lower wishbone), and also, presumably, Upper wishbones as well. Though I can’t help but wonder if we should have them made of round, or even square tubular material instead?!? I lack the expertise to know what would be best.

I had intended bringing you up to speed with the good work done by Paul Johnson on the lower wishbone and strut front, but, like other quotes we have had for these in the past few years, the price, without bushes, was going to be the wrong side of £100, and that is each wishbone!

I just dread discovering that a set of front suspension for a Kitten could cost over £1,000 to renew – wishbones, bushes, dampers and ball joints, and that ignores the uprights and steering arms, oh my did I sell the old ones I had far too cheaply!

Back to lower wishbones, I know that that would seem to be the going rate for having a small batch made, but I can’t help but wonder if we can’t do better, while maintaining quality and material spec. (The last batch I had made, the firm is now out of business sadly, were only £20 each). Such ponderings are keeping me back, as the spares fund is mostly invested in parts, the current order about to be placed for rear springs will use up well over a thousand pounds, half the cash in the fund, and if we were to do the “right thing” and go down the route of having forgings made rather than casting the main body of the proposed new batch of lower ball joints, well, it is all too easy to spend money!

Our pattern maker has promised me contact details of a firm / individual? Who specializes in doing small batch forgings, and once I talk to them I will have a better grasp on that front, but I will need a sample and need to talk to Alan about that and the nylon “pads” and the double coil spring washers too. I should be writing letters not thinking out loud in here!

So, what with everything else I have going on in my life at the moment, I am hesitating and uncertain of how best to proceed, and wondering if I am the best person to be looking after all this.

Then there is the matter of Fox exhausts, which, apart from letting me know that he was back, is the other reason Dennis rang me. He has a customer who needs one, and I was stumped. Frustratingly I

am not sure if it is a memory problem, but while various names spring to mind, the fact is, that unlike Kitten ones, I do not know off the top of my head where you would go to purchase such a thing! One day...

Brian promptly abandons this to create an appropriate email and send it off to those most likely to know about Fox exhausts :-

Right, that done, and responses arrived, I feel that I can, for once, actually answer the question, and in the process fill a few pages, sounds like a win win situation to me!

## **Fox Exhaust systems**

It would seem to be the case that new ones if they exist, are likely to be in someone's garage or loft and certainly not readily available from anywhere that we are aware of – **please speak up loudly and promptly if you know differently!** (Thanks Duncan).

Secondly, it is possible, with relatively minor modifications to hangers, to fit a Kitten system to the Fox, though you might want to extend the tail pipe by a few inches to help prevent the gasses coming in through the tailgate.

Completely by chance, you can see a reasonable view of a Kitten exhaust at the top of page 13.

Going back to the beginning, always a good place to start, especially when you have bought a Fox as a project, and it had no exhaust on it at all, which is the situation Eric Blades was in, and it was his request to Dennis for a Fox exhaust system in July this year that got this particular ball rolling.

I roped Keith and Duncan into this, and Keith has pictures (a wonderful way not only of filling a few pages in here, but better yet of explaining things with a degree of clarity that your Editor might struggle to cover verbally!).

Anyway, in the beginning, the Fox had one silencer at the back of the vehicle, beside the fuel tank running roughly parallel to the propshaft, i.e. fore and aft. The exhaust gasses being fed into the front of it from the engine, and exiting it, going forwards through a second pipe beside

the first one in the front face of the silencer taking the gasses forwards, then, once in front of the axle, a sharp ninety degree turn to exit out of the side of the vehicle in front of the rear wheel.



A picture of the new one Keith had, no tail pipe though!

So, it had a hanger at the back of the chassis to support the the silencer, and one on the big bent tubular chassis crossmember.

In keeping with the original side exhaust, Keith, well, I'll let him tell you :-

Hi Brian,

9<sup>th</sup> July 2015

As you know I have made my own Fox exhaust system up using a 1500 MG Midget silencer box, 100 cm of 38mm diameter stainless tube, and you may need a pipe reducer to match pipe and manifold. The silencer is mounted upside down with hanging brackets added and the end pipe reduced to be inside the mirror when viewed from the rear of the car. See pictures attached.

Keith. (Gittus) No. 154 from Burntwood



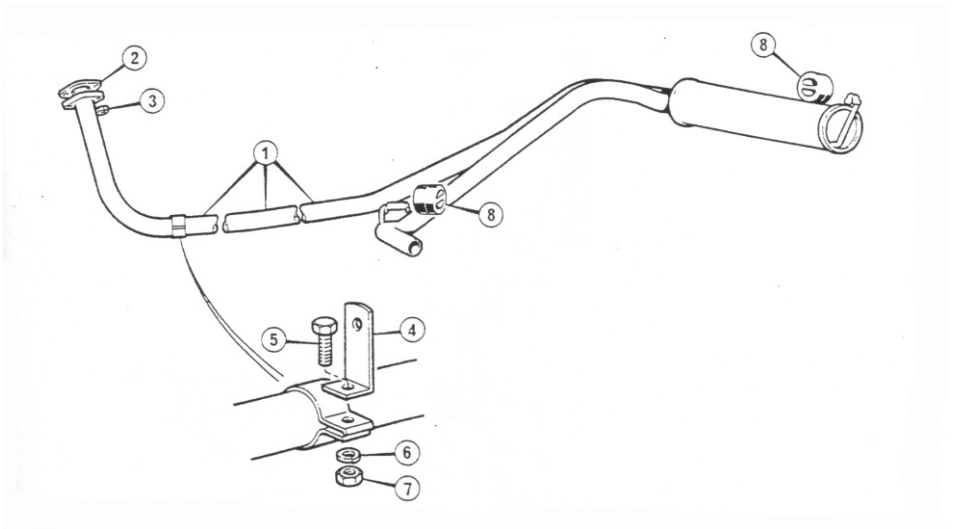


*I just love the way those very capable engineering types use the language :- “using a 1500 MG Midget silencer box, 100 cm of 38mm diameter stainless tube, and you may need a pipe reducer to match pipe and manifold.” He makes it sound oh so easy, which, if you have the skills and expertise I do not doubt it is, but for the rest of us mere mortals, well, it could present ever so slight a challenge I would imagine.*

*Still, how lucky are we to have such expertise to hand, thank you Keith (Yes I did ask if he would be prepared to knock out another one, a few even, but Keith is a wise man, and has mastered the No word, sorry!)*



*Not much of that red paint left on the tail pipe now Keith! Oh and here is the parts-book view of the original item :-*



*Why, I wonder, is the tail pipe not shown, just what is so secret about original Fox tail pipes? Can you show me a picture of one?*



## The **nuts and bolts** of your Kitten (and Fox) front suspension.

This is something I should probably have done a long while ago, and it requires more work to complete the story, you may know the answers, if nothing else, this should get the ball rolling.

I have from time to time been asked about the nuts and bolts that hold the wishbones on our Kittens and Foxes, I have always shied away from getting involved in any part that is believed to be readily available from any of a number of sources. However, given that we hold stock of the poly bushes, it does seem reasonable that (if you are fitting new bushes, you will presumably be wanting to use new nuts and bolts to hold them on with), and with UNF nuts and bolts are becoming harder to get these days, perhaps it is time, especially if the price is right!

The first thing to do as always, is define the task – so, out with the parts book, not as it turns out as helpful as one might have hoped! A quick call to Graeme Shaw revealed the following :-

| <b>Rough description</b>                     | <b>Part no.</b> | <b>Sizes</b>     |
|----------------------------------------------|-----------------|------------------|
| Lower wishbone nut plate                     | 23640           |                  |
| Wishbone to chassis Bolt to go with it       | 50126B          | 7/16 UNF By 2 ½" |
| Front strut (Kitten only)                    | 50126B          | 7/16 UNF By 2 ½" |
| Nut strut to frame                           | 50844B          | 7/16" UNF Nyloc  |
| Bolt from wishbone to ball joint / shocker   | 23619           | no size listed   |
| Small ball joint to wishbone bolt            | 50048B          | no size listed   |
| Associated nut                               | 50842B          | no size listed   |
| Top wishbone – 2 securing bolts              | 50086B          | no size 3/8" UNF |
| Nut                                          | 50843B          | 3/8" UNF Nyloc   |
| Bracket to chassis nut top wishbone to frame | 50843B          | 3/8" UNF Nyloc   |
| Lower wishbone to strut                      | 50046B          | no spec          |
| Nut                                          | 50842B          | no spec          |

Hello Brian,

June 2015

Your e-mail is fortuitous and has prompted me into action. I've been meaning to call you for a quick chat about the anti roll bar location and vertical links as that is the part of the project that currently has my attention.

My point of reference is a technical article by Alan Shaw in Mewsletter 80. Alan suggests lowering the anti roll bar by 3/4" but if I set the vehicles ride height in accordance with the Reliant drawing of 'caster, camber and king pin inclination' where the underside of the upper wishbone arm is shown as horizontal, I find 1 1/4" is closer to the mark. I appreciate it is quite sometime ago now, but are you aware as to how Alan arrived at his figure?

I'm sure you are aware (*I was not! Ed.*) that the alternative drop link Alan has given details of is : FAI part no. SS414, and is dimensionally very close to the original, but given quality issues I have encountered with FAI, next time, I would source the part from one of the many alternative manufacturers.

Where would we be without the back issues on-line for reference? As for Mewsletter 123, it arrived without issue and was read from cover to cover, and I look forward to reading 124 when it arrives.

I'll call you in the next couple of days for that chat.

All the best. Andy Shaw From Preston No. 919

*Well, Andy did call, and in the event I dropped the ball, just realising now that the letter I had written to Alan about this was never printed and posted – one day....*

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

Right, an odd corner to fill, if you can help with any of the missing bolt sizes, see page 25, please get in touch.

I fear that in my enthusiasm this week – early July - I must have missed something, hopefully nothing important!

## Epilogue

I really ought not to do this, give you a running commentary of progress, but it helps keep my mind on the job. I have been working on this for the past hour or so after answering Simon Robson's email about Tweety Pie (his Liege) and my appalling memory. It is now almost half past six, in the morning, and I need a coffee. The point is that it is the 8<sup>th</sup> of July and this edition is about one quarter done. (8 pages completed so far) The problem is that, to get back on top of things, well, RKR related things at any rate, I really want, no need, this to be at the printers by the 14<sup>th</sup>, which right now is looking ever so slightly doubtful. Oh well, we will see. Thinking positive thoughts!

Right, I have been typing frantically for the past hour, still not had that coffee, it is now 07:20 and I need to get on with other things, but we are up to ten pages now, so there does seem to be hope!

I sold 6 items on ebay at the weekend, to 5 people, and I have to finish the parcels and get them away today.

O.K., that's done, it is still Wednesday the 8<sup>th</sup>, and John Pearce's chassis article has just arrived, wonderful timing John, how did you know? So, we are more than half way through this edition now, 17 pages complete and only the one picture (and the chassis drawing of course!)

Then today got even better, much better, I had a call there from Dennis, you remember Dennis, Michael's storeman, don't you? well he is back, just one day a week at the moment, a Wednesday, but there you go. I am just delighted that Dennis' expertise is once again available, and that I am in touch with him again.

So, suddenly we are two thirds of the way through this, less than 10 hours after I began today with only a quarter of it done. I don't think I have ever made so much progress in one day, certainly

not for many years, and yes it feels not just good, but great!

Still on a flyer on Thursday, the responses to my question of Fox exhausts were answered very promptly, and, after including some of them, I find myself with only a couple of pages to go, wow, what progress in the past 30 hours!

Duncan, my apologies for not including your helpful input on the Fox exhaust situation, your comments were shared by email with those involved.

I had 7 phone calls between 08:58 and 11:30 this morning, well, I had 4 and made 3, one of them to check something for one on the incoming calls while he held on, and it is time past for elevenses now, but getting this to the printers by the 14<sup>th</sup> looks like it is going to be a piece of cake now. Thanks chaps.

My goodness, I have just had another phone call, the result of which being that I will be going out at 1:30 rather than 2:30 this afternoon, so I only have an hour left, and lunch to fit in, but hey, that, if not a record, must be up there with my best ever efforts ever in terms of Mews production, that is 17 pages in 30 hours, and that is real time, only about 5 or 6 of those 30 were actually spent working on this. John Pearce and Keith Gittus deserve most of the credit, but Simon Robson and Andy Shaw as well, thank you one and all, this can be so easy at times, really inspirational and motivating. Thanks too to Eric Blades, James Holland and John Noton, not to mention Graeme Shaw, Dennis, Duncan Bradford, John Pearce, yes again, and John Box, all 8 of whom I have spoken with in the past couple of days on a number of subjects ranging from Fox exhausts through bottom ball joints to chassis, springs and Tempests.

Well (as an alternative to Right!) my in box is sitting with 33 items in it, my target is to keep it in single figures. So whilst I have really made incredible progress on one front, things are slipping on others, and that call I mentioned that is taking me out earlier than I

had expected, needs some preparation before he gets here – oh, he has just acquired a Mk I Robin estate, he used to have a Rebel, but is not a subscriber! (Yes Phil, Derek has been hooked again!)

Moving on as they say, I am aware of the need to make progress as regards Bottom ball joints, wishbones, adjustable rear dampers, and possibly Fox exhausts in the foreseeable future, but not today I'm afraid!

**Take care, enjoy the summer and remember to grease those ball joints!**

*Brian*

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