

Reliant Kitten Register

Mewsletter 130

May - June 2016



This issue's picture is the very pretty Tempest belonging to John and Carol Wilks from Evesham.... John bought the car in 2014 as he felt he was getting a tad old for motorcycles – You're never too old John!!! Apart from an annoying squeak from somewhere, it has performed faultlessly.

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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.....



The Reliant Kitten Register

Hon. President John Box

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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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**SALES, SPARES, REPAIRS,
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E & o e

One of the drawbacks of being well ahead typing up the Mews is my inability to include recent communications, well, I could, but the effort and re-organisation involved in doing so is just too much like hard work, so I must apologise to you, and particularly our President, for the fact that his communication appears in this edition rather than the last one.

John was considering some serious structural work to his house so that he could address future communications to us from the oval office, but I felt that we could not afford to make the necessary grant to permit work to proceed, sorry Mr. President.

Closer to home I find myself in an embarrassing situation. Last year I did not have to write many words within these pages, this year, so far (and long may it continue!) I am even more spoilt for choice, thank you to those concerned.

In some ways, well, one way in particular, it is a pity, because I had a wonderful 11 day 1,800 plus mile trip south in March, which I was intending sharing with you under the "Brian's Diary" series, but there just isn't room! I know, lucky you....

That adventure was closely followed by a wonderful and unexpected week away at the lovely Leckmelm house, just a few miles outside Ullapool. Lucky us!

The cumulative effect of these two holidays in two successive months was the straw that broke the proverbial camel's back as far as the paperwork on my desk was concerned, and the up-side of that is that I have, finally, been forced into actually doing something about it.

That was an enlightening experience which may well affect you, for example the envelope this edition comes in might have two address labels, (one on top of another) though I need to keep a very close eye on the thickness this time with the extra sheet(s). I put the s in brackets, because I am as yet undecided if the application form for those, and please do if you possibly can, who wish to join us at Llangollen at the end of July to mark our 25th anniversary, will be a separate sheet, or a page in the mag, decisions decisions! Just in case, the dates are the 30th and 31st of July. I, indeed we, hope to see you there.

Anyway, once again my voluminous thanks to Malcolm Rush, who is doing all of the research and preparation for us, Malcolm, it is greatly appreciated, thank you.

Right, it is now May the 10th, and after telling the guys that I would be able to focus on this, and Llangollen, after a certain AGM last Sunday, I find myself with work to do as a result of said AGM, when will I learn the No word?!?

The fact is that this edition is half full, there is none of the planned Tempest input in place, I have yet to include part two of the Sienna rebuild story, even though I am now in possession of part three

as well, (thank you Grant) it is just wonderful to have so much material, but now I find myself actually having to edit!!

While I remember, John Whitfield, of course you know John, he has been looking for a Fox back axle for a very long time indeed, well, he is up and running again, not that it was off the road, just most unpleasant to drive, due to the extremely excessive backlash, but his Fox now enjoys a refurbished axle, thanks to Keith Gittus, and new rear springs and dampers. John wanted me to thank Keith and Duncan (Bradford) in particular, and us of course for the springs and "U" bolts. Delighted it is all sorted John.

I think I am right in believing that John, like Duncan, has owned his Fox from new.

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Yet more from your renewal notices

George and Emma Rees from Doncaster, tell me that their Asquith has another MoT after fitting a replacement engine, new distributor, and all hoses, (both fuel and cooling system), and it is running well.

Good to hear, we hope it continues to serve you well.

George, if (WHEN!) you find a way of effectively getting to the bottom of that "to do list" will you please share the method, I really need to find a better way through mine!

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Kevin Clark, you remember that lovely red Liege on the cover of our Christmas edition? well, him, he tells me that he hopes to soon have all weather gear fitted, which will extend the range considerably, (*not to mention that it will add about 10MPH to its top speed! Ed*) and he plans to have the Liege at the BVAC meet at Thurlstane Castle at Lauder in the Scottish borders on June the 5th – that is only about 75 miles from here.... I wonder?? Mind you, that will probably be tomorrow (if not last week!) by the time I get this to you!

Word from the, not quite, Oval office

It is obviously a great honour to be adopted as President of the Register, one can only wonder in which dark corner of a Dickensian pub such a decision was made, and by whom.

Not only is this position cherished, but it comes with the gratification that, despite my great age, members believe I may last another three years.

It is a little ironic that my Tempest design has caused the destruction of many Foxes and Kittens, but perhaps those picked for conversion were doomed in any case?

As many readers may be wondering who this Box bloke is, I append a short history of my Reliant involvement.

I bought my first Kitten in 1976 to use for my factoring business, and spent most of my Kitten motoring around the lanes of Westmorland with a big grin from ear to ear.

This was followed by an estate car that got badly damaged in an accident with another driver at the wheel. Rather than waste the remains, it was rebuilt as the Bobcat sports car.

In 1987 the first Tempest was designed, and negotiations with Reliant took place to supply Fox chassis for conversion. By 1990 Reliant were in trouble, and chassis supply dried up just as the first Vantique had been built.

Beans, the new owners of the ex-Reliant business, were able to supply a few new chassis, which all became Vantiques. From then on Tempests could only be produced from donor cars.

By 1992 the engines Reliant were making had deteriorated, and I helped them with a development programme to improve the engine's power output.

Following this work we designed an installation to fit the BL 'K' series engine into the SS1 Sabre sports car, of which about fifty were

built. A prototype was also built with a BL 2 litre turbo engine, but this was stillborn due to the demise of Beans.

My final fling with Reliant was to help put the last version of the three-wheeler into production at their new plant at Burntwood in 1999.

John

Mr. President, my thanks for that summary, mostly known to those who have been with us for a while, but news to many I am sure, and for agreeing to accept the position.

On the dark pub corner question, I am afraid that I must confess to slipping into the clutches of modern technology, for all I fear it will be our undoing, it was a virtual pub out there in the ether of the web! Ed.

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Right, an odd corner, not perhaps the best place for it, but Llangollen this year, as a special treat to mark the Register's 25 year existence, is to be a weekend gathering, including an optional run through some lovely Welsh countryside.

Malcolm Rush is the driving force behind organising this for us, thank you Malcolm.

We are hoping to have what I loosely refer to as "commemorative devices" the only, closely related, problems, are costs and quantities.

You can help here by telling Malcolm if you are going to be there, to which end there will be a **booking form enclosed**. You can respond electronically, or by post or telephone. The key point is that if you want to have such a commemorative device, we need to know you are coming. Indeed if you are wishing to camp, we need to know you are coming. **In short, we need to know numbers, even if you are only coming on one day, so please, let Malcolm know, now would be a good time to do that. Last weekend of July at Llangollen near Wrexham.**

REBELLIOUS CONDUCT 28

It has been such a long time since I last contributed anything to MEWSLETTER concerning my Rebel Estate, LRF 671K. I had to thumb through my back copies to find out what the last report number was! Indeed, it was at the end of 2014 when I wrote it. So what's been happening during this gap? Well, it could any one of the following –

1. I sold it.
2. I parked it up and forgot about it.
3. I died.
4. I just could not be bothered to write anything.
5. It's been so reliable that there has been nothing to report.

Obviously it's not number 3! Numbers 1 and 2 were quite feasible, number 4 highly likely, number 5 unbelievable.

Well, it is number 5! However, I should qualify that, since my last report and this, the Rebel has covered just 2,000 miles. During this period it attained 10 years in my ownership (August 2005 to 2015) and a total mileage to date in my ownership of just over 34,000 miles. The lack of mileage since 2014 reflects the retirement of the Rebel as my daily commuter, co-indecently as I retired from being a daily commuter.

Now I have to be honest, my wife hates the 'Plastic Pig' as she calls it. She rejoiced in 2009 when I bought what I intended to be its replacement, a Smart Brabus Roadster. This was great for the summer commute of 2009, but no good in the winter. Fortunately, the Rebel was not sold, so it resumed duties, and pretty much stayed that way until I retired in 2014.

Again, my wife rejoiced when she thought the Rebel would now be pensioned off into the nearest skip as being surplus to requirements. I had a job explaining that one, as I still had the Smart, and no intention of selling it. To make matters even more challenging, the day after I retired, totally unplanned, in a fit of opportunity and inability to see sense, I bought another Frogeye Sprite. Well – everyone needs a retirement project don't they? With another car to work on there was no time to sell the Rebel, or the Smart Roadster, both of which remained serviceable, useful and of course – fun.

The only job on the 2015 Rebel list was to replace the windscreen wiper switch. 2016 has been rather different. Straight after New Year, my daughter phoned to say her Audi A3 was making a strange noise on the way home from work. Further phone calls were received as the noise became worse, the final one containing the cry of 'HELP' as further homeward progress had now ceased. Just great, rush hour, and right in the centre of the Bristol evening madness. The Rebel was chosen as the rescue vehicle, being on the end of the drive and with enough fuel for the 30 mile mission. Something seemed wrong, the oil light came on when I turned the key but not the ignition light, no time to investigate, probably just the bulb or a loose connection.

This was the first time I had driven the Rebel in the dark since I finished work, were the instrument lights always so dim? or do I need to go to Spec savers? Similarly, the headlights were far worse than I remembered, the wipers seemed slower too – uh oh. I reached stranded daughter and dead Audi, but by now we were running low on amps. Within a mile of picking her up, the sparks ran out. For the first time ever, the Rebel had died in service. Daughter couldn't believe she had suffered two break downs within an hour in two different cars!

The nice man from the RAC finally reached us through the traffic, walked around the car, counting the number of road wheels, then again to ensure he wasn't mistaken. "Yes, it is supposed to have four wheels". He soon confirmed my self-diagnosis, a duff alternator. He boosted the battery from his van and offered to follow me the 14 or so miles back to Yate, most of which I completed on just sidelights, without heater blower and just very occasional use of the wipers – we made it. I thought that was pretty good on a 15 minute boost charge into the 'ride on mower' battery that Rebel's have as standard.

A new alternator was ordered via eBay for £55 which arrived within 24 hours. Daughter was not so fortunate; she needed a complete replacement car.

I have been putting off one long standing job though. The rear axle input shaft oil seal has been leaking for years. I bought a new seal but failed in an attempt to fit it. I could not undo the input flange nut, the handbrake and chocking the wheels would not produce enough solid resistance. By now, the leak was excessive and it had to be done. This time, I bolted a 3 foot length of angle iron to the flange and rested the

'outboard' end on a jack. With a suitable size socket on the end of a breaker bar, the nut shifted with a considerable input of torque and sweat. The seal is carried in a removable housing, and required a suitable sized socket to press it home to prevent damage.

No oil was lost when the old seal was removed, which proved the axle oil level must have been quite low. Indeed, it took around 1.5 litres to refill it, so not a moment too soon on this one. The Rebel not only sounds quieter, but no longer leaves its mark when parked.

I have to face the fact that I now need to reduce the number of vehicles I own. Even retirement is not allowing enough time, let alone the money, to either use or maintain the 'fleet'. I have recently, and very reluctantly sold my Mk1 Escort GT, but which will be the next to go? It could be the Rebel if a suitable buyer emerges, but I am in no hurry at the moment.

Will there be a Rebellious Conduct 29 and if so, will a new owner be writing it? Watch this space, or better yet make me an offer and write the article yourself!

Terry Horler, No. 755 from Yate near Bristol.

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Fred Heath's next stage of his Irish adventure in the Rebel will have to wait till we have room, sorry Fred.

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If anyone is seeking to purchase a Rebel Estate, I might be persuaded to sell. It is a back burner idea at the moment but almost inevitable that it will have to go at some point in the future. I would like to see it go to the right home and get the attention it deserves. I think it may have been a factory development car for the 750cc version, it has a 'crossover' specification twixt 700 & 750 versions and was owned by Reliant for almost two years. And while I was smart enough to put that in here at the time, I did not think to include the name and contact details of the Rebel's current custodian - help! Check with? I can't remember who asked me to advertise this. Ed.

A Kitten's second rebuild

By Patrick Vallet

I took apart my Kitty late in November to offer it a second needed rebuild, after 12 years of hard and continuous use since I own it. The chassis I had let to sand blast and zinc coat during the first rebuild, only needed a brush cleaning and a coat of black paint.

I changed all the front suspension bushes and had the elements powder coated, with new mini brake back plates front and rear, new front wheel cylinders and hand brake cable, the rolling chassis was ready in December. My good friend took care of the body at his bodyshop, and mended all the fibreglass where I had encountered solid objects on or at the side of the roads.

The better than new dark blue thing we fitted back to the chassis two weeks ago, in the meantime I had rebuilt a spare engine to as new condition, pistons, liners, Piper camshaft, I opened and matched exhaust manifold and cylinderhead, water pump, powder coated engine support plates and sump, Liège twin SU manifold bought from you at Burford and an oil cooler.

Tomorrow, I'll spend the day fitting the battery into the left hand side of the back seat upholstery, an unused volume as the twin carbs take the place of that battery.

The complete carpet and headlining will be changed, and the small Healey Sprite bucket seats are to be remade in green leather like the one of my Marcos. The hides were really cheap at the last Beaulieu autojumble, so my Kitty deserve a fine set of clothes. I'll send you some pictures of the rebuild, after that, I'll avoid using it during the winter month, the salt doesn't any good to the gleaming new bolts, nuts and aluminium parts.

I can't wait to drive it with all the mods I've fitted, it surely should go even faster than before, and it wasn't slow.

I wish you all the best, Patrick Vallat, No. 702 from Switzerland

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Front Wheel DISC BRAKES for my Rebel

by John Parker 2015

I had been contemplating fitting front disc brakes for some time and heard conflicting stories as whether Herald or Vitesse brakes would fit.

With Brian's help I got in touch with Mark Jones whose article appeared in Mewsletter 109. He had fitted complete suspensions from a Spitfire. This meant changing to 3.5" PCD wheels which was the Triumph standard, but I did not want to change the wheels, so I decided to see if I could build onto my existing stub axle & vertical link.

I browsed the internet looking at various Triumph related web sites - Rimmer Bros in particular was helpful in assembling a list of the parts needed though some were no longer available. Merlin Motorsport (based near me at Castle Combe Race circuit) could supply aluminium front hubs to fit Herald or Vitesse suspension and kindly measured the internal diameter of the bearings they supplied which confirmed that it was Vitesse parts that I needed. The hubs complete with bearings and drilled for 4" PCD wheels and fitted with appropriate (longer*) wheel studs were duly ordered. By now I had assembled all the parts I needed though from several suppliers (Canley Classics, Merlin Motorsport, Rimmer Bros).

I bolted the discs to the hubs using 3/8" UNF x 2" HT Hex Head bolts, heavy washers & Nyloc nuts obtained from Namrick (www.namrick.co.uk).

Bearing in mind the 12" wheels of the Rebel, I had gone for the original Type 12 calipers from the Vitesse 1600. On doing a trial fit, they just cleared the wheel rims. Original dust shields were no longer available, so I took a chance and bought the stainless steel ones designed for the later brakes. The first problem was the holes for attaching through the (used) caliper mounting plates to the vertical links did not match, but with a bit of judicious filing this was sorted. There was also minor fouling of the caliper mounting plates, but a friendly local motor engineer kindly ground away the small amount of metal needed to achieve a good fit.

At this point I decided to let my friendly local garage man have

the job of removing the old drum brakes and fitting the new disc brakes. It was not long before I had a telephone call !!



When the new hubs were slid onto the stub axle he found that the shoulder of the alloy hub fouled the heads of the 3/8" bolts securing the steering arm to the back of the vertical link. I acquired socket headed bolts in an attempt to solve this but the shoulder of the hub still fouled these. The man who supplied the hubs was not happy when I told him about this as he had never had this problem before, and the hubs had been sold all around the world. I did not take him up on his suggestion to bring the vertical link & stub axle in to show him the problem. We decided to get a local motor engineer to take 2mm off of the shoulder of the hubs though in the event he took 1mm off the radius! (We should have drawn a picture!!). However, when the hub was offered up yet again this was sufficient to avoid the fouling and so the assembly of the brakes could be completed.

It may be that the thickness of the caliper mounting plate could have been reduced to avoid the above problem. Also the discs and calipers did not line up exactly, but washers (see photo) between caliper mounting plates & calipers solved this though again reducing the thickness of the caliper mounting plate might have avoided the problem. We used the original brake hoses.



At this point the brake master cylinder refused to bleed the brakes. After stripping down and cleaning it did, and so I was saved the cost of having it re-sleeved.

I collected my Rebel and took it straight to have an MOT as by now it had run out. The MOT man was happy with the installation, and my Rebel got a new MOT. The total cost of the parts was about £700 and I have a list of them if anyone is interested.

The disc brakes do not seem significantly better than the drums, but at least will not need adjusting to get the car through the MOT in future.

In hindsight the longer wheel studs were a mistake as I had to buy a long reach socket in order to be able to get the front wheels off (to take photos of the brakes!!).

As a consequence of the above, I have available a complete set of front brakes (i.e. back plates c/w wheel cylinders & brake shoes and hubs c/w brake drums) if anyone is interested.

John Parker No. 301 from Bristol

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Dear Brian,

May 18th 2016

My petrol tank has decided to leak from the region of the n/s rear support bracket. Can you advise me if there is anyone out there who stocks or can build such petrol tanks.

From the article on pages 11 to 13 of Mewsletter 129, I deduce that it might not be a good idea to try and get the old one repaired (?) and also that Graham Walker stocks tanks for Kittens. Does he also stock Rebel ones?

Thanking you in anticipation of your reply,

John Parker Member No. 301, still in Bristol

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Brian,

11th March 2016

I note that there is still some confusion, and in some cases more than a little skepticism, about the "Rebel Racer" inlet manifold modification. There need be no misunderstanding about this. Folks shouldn't expect the mod to work on a standard Reliant engine using the standard inlet system with an SU carb, simply because it was never designed to do so (nor was it ever claimed to, especially by Hans Kirima)!

Having discussed this with the inventor, almost fifteen years ago, I was given permission to place a photo of his modification in the Mewsletter and things "took off" from there, albeit sometimes in a slightly skewed direction. That initial photo was actually taken by Bob Morrison, a Bond Bug owner from Daventry who modified two manifolds, one for me and one for himself, after I described the mod to him over the phone. Although that very same photo has been reproduced many times in many places since (including by someone cheekily selling modified

manifolds on Ebay), it is seldom properly acknowledged to Bob.

In an attempt to put things straight, it needs to be made clear that this mod was first done in an attempt to alleviate a suspected fuel mixture imbalance across the cylinders of a Rebel Racer engine fitted with a **downdraught Weber carb** (hence the usual name of "Rebel Racer" inlet modification). The imbalance was found during early dyno testing by the owner, Hans Kirima. The engine under initial test was not developing all the power that it should have, and Hans noticed that two alternate headers of his 4 into 1 exhaust manifold were bluing up, two weren't. He wanted a quick way of fixing this apparent fuel mixture imbalance so he decided to experiment by quickly milling away the "bridge" between the wall between each pair of inlet tubes at the cylinder head end of the manifold.

This immediately resulted in a large improvement in output, very measurable on the dyno. There was no further "bluing" of the exhaust manifold headers.

As it was such a simple thing to do, he decided to carry out the mod on all the racing engines he built. For those that don't know, all Rebel Racer engines for Hans' racing series are built to his specification and factory sealed. They are designed to be identical in output. *(50bhp if memory serves, Ed)*

The most relevant point: As already stated: Those racing engines are fitted with a single choke **downdraught Weber carburettor**, which means the heated plenum is removed from the Reliant inlet manifold. The purpose of the heated plenum is to ensure good fuel vaporization, and mixing of the fuel and air before it enters the manifold itself. If the plenum is removed, it's understandable that a mixture imbalance might well occur. The fuel issues from the Weber carb much closer to the inlet manifold itself, and there is far less volume/space for full mixing to occur. Once the mixture enters the individual runners to the inlet ports, there can be no more mixing because each cylinder has already been given its "share" of fuel.

The Rebel Racer engines are designed to rev a lot higher and to produce a lot more power than any 850 engine that Reliant built themselves (around 50% higher). A different cam is used and because the cars race on a short oval circuit, only first and second gears are used

(the third and fourth gear selectors are blocked off). As a Reliant's inlet manifold runners are smaller in diameter (and rougher) than the inlet valves and ports on the cylinder head, it's possible that a very high revving engine might suffer from a gas flow restriction because of limitations inside the manifold, because of the much higher gas flow velocity needed. Cutting away a section of the inner wall allows each cylinder to draw through two inlet runners, not just the one. Whether the latter is true in this case or not, a Rebel Racer engine output exceeds that of the standard Reliant 850 by a very large margin. Measured, on a dyno, and not just hearsay.

This link gives some idea of how these engines go:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uMOhT58diQs>

Best regards, Paul Wheatley. No. 422 from Shireoaks.

Many thanks for clearing that up for us Paul. Ed.

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Brian,

April 2016

I had thought we were too late to get a mention of this in the next mag., so I delayed sending this on to you until I could find out more. However, I've just had an e-mail from Paul Chesney from the FBHVC explaining that the survey dates have been extended (I had mailed him and told him our approximate publication dates) – obviously we were not the only group to have this problem. I had planned to forward the survey to all the subscribers I have records of, plus to you to do the same when it comes.....

So please include a mention in this in your editorial, maybe asking any members that do get a copy of the email to respond as it won't be "spam"..... here is the link <http://fbhvc.co.uk/research/survey-2016/>

As you will read it's an e-mail only survey. Unfortunate for those of our subscribers who don't do computers, but that I fear is the way things are often done nowadays.....

John (Pearce)

Stevens Sienna Prototype Resto – Part 2

A classic car restorer of note once told me he would always favour an earlier automobile with a separate chassis, over the more modern integral construction; 'providing the chassis is good, the earlier cars can be repaired an infinite number of times, whilst once tin worm has done its worst with the monocoque, the repair becomes unviable'.



Therefore, before we threw pointless cash at the Sienna, the chassis condition needed to be assessed, and that meant body off.

Whilst the fibre glass had the usual cracks, and the paint finish had gone from 'Rampant Red' to 'Pretty in Pink', it was generally in good order, and Tony Stevens had told me he designed all of his cars to come apart with ease. The bolts they used obviously didn't conform to this theory, as over half had to be either ground out, or, if we were lucky, broke in half after having rusted solid.

First we removed the roof (which we are not planning to replace), and gained access to the rear section securing bolts, and within an hour we got a look under the skin. Fairly impressed, we foolishly assumed the

rest would be as easy, far from it, but a couple of hours of bad language resulted in the screen and associated body work, doors and bonnet, being dumped, carefully, outside the garage. (see page 23 Ed.)



One nice part of the design is the front wing and tread plate under the doors is one complete panel supported by out-riggers from the chassis itself; unfortunately these were all 'wafer' thin and crumbled to the touch.

I removed the fibreglass floor from the rear, then followed the chassis legs through to the front. It was 'beer o'clock' by this time, so we celebrated with a tin, and revelled in the fact the chassis looked solid; a relief for sure.

See picture on Page 23, Ed.



The original chassis drawings show just how heavily modified ours was compared with how it began life. The basis was from a Reliant Kitten, and the original metal was in great shape, with just light surface corrosion, although anything attached to it was made from 1" box section tubing, and that was not so clever.



Alan persuaded some poor soul to loan us his Mig welder, and I went metal shopping to Kedek in Bognor Regis, who supplied all the tubing we would need.



With a selection of new wire brushes, I was left to remove any surface corrosion, and clean up the front end; Alan only likes the 'glory jobs', fried breakfasts and beer time now.

I also purchased a huge tin of rust stopping paint; now I am not sure whether this tinned marvel actually works, but it makes a great undercoat for the even larger quantity of Hammerite that would finally be lavished on my chassis and body framework.

The front panel / grille is lucky to still be attached to the car, as the framework holding that was completely rotten, no thoughts of a repair, we would just cut this off completely. Using the old parts as a template, we built a new front end in a morning, and with a minimum of fuss, re- attached it to good metal; I doubt the rest of the welding will go as smoothly.

Starting at our new front end, I worked back over a few days, and anything totally solid got a clean and a coat of 'rust convertor', the rest would be at risk of the angle grinder.



Variety; the Spice of Rebuilds.

Unfortunately, I am afflicted with the attention span of a 'Kardashian', and rarely complete one job at a time, much happier to move to the next part of the restoration, than finish a boring job. This time I was determined not to flit, but to finish, and once the front frame had enjoyed too much attention, the terrible condition of the engine bay warranted my time.

It had been several months since we ran the Reliant motor, and we knew the water pump was 'binfodder', so I sought some more advice from Simon Fitch, who looks after the Stevens-Cipher Group, the model that followed my Sienna. The power plant, all 850cc of it, is in fact fairly bullet proof, reliable, and easy to tune up, but it is also susceptible to corrosion from within. Our engine hadn't seen any TLC for decades so Alan fitted a new pump and thermostat, we ran her up complete with two

bottles of coolant flush. What came out was shocking, but we knew it would be when we found enough debris to require a soup spoon to remove; we have flushed it through twice more since, and it is all clearing gradually.

Over-filling any engine with oil is never good, and this one had well over a litre too much, much of which had been ejected via the rocker cover gasket, all over the engine bay and back towards the gearbox; very messy.



My apologies for this picture being a bit out of place, but I wanted to let you see the body parts, and there really was no room elsewhere! Ed.

Whilst the engine was in bits, I treated the rocker cover to fresh paint and a new gasket, then a set of ignition leads went in, with a Lucas Sports coil and braided fuel lines. Timing was set, and the 20k mile engine fired up, it ran like new, even the mechanical fuel pump, having lain dormant for years, worked perfectly.

Whilst restoring the cooling system I had noticed the poorly painted radiator was actually an original, complete with a brass top, far superior to the modern exchange item; this beauty benefitted from a day's labour and now looks perfect with special new hoses from Hyphose in Portsmouth. Unique to the Sienna, steel tubing had connected the engine, via various hoses, to the radiator, and when steel and water get together, water always wins, and so I replaced the rusty steel tubes with alloy versions.

The electric fan is also bespoke to the Sienna, and still works fine, but we opted for switch control, and binned the thermostat, whilst also cutting the heater box out of the loop. With no roof and only aeroscreens for protection, having warm air pumped into the cabin is pointless, and this also meant losing much of the pipe work that cluttered the small engine bay. With winter closing in fast, I was hopeful the worst of the welding would be finalised by Christmas, but that didn't happen; overall though things are going well.....so far, more in Part 3.

Grant Ford. No. 1023 from Aldwick (in West Sussex)

Classiccarmag.net - www.grantford.co.uk

Thanks to Simon Fitch www.stevens-cipher.com and Brian Marshall
Reliant Kitten Register- www.kitreg.org.uk

And my thanks to Grant (and his wife Sally for her hospitality during my visit in March.) I can tell you that the project is a lot further on that these pictures suggest, well done Grant, and thanks for the story.

That is the furthest south I have been for quite a few years. (And about as far south as you can get without getting wet!) Ed.

Hi Brian,

12th May 2015

Some of the people who have purchased an aluminium rocker cover find the oil filler hole too large for the standard oil filler cap, and end up fitting a Ford Fiesta one.

This was the case with my Tandy rocker cover, so I modified the oil filler hole, filing out the aluminium rocker cover filler hole, and inserting the original metal rocker cover oil filler spout. See photo's.





Keith (Gittus) No.154 from Burntwood (near Tamworth!)

Thanks Keith, that was news to me, I'll talk to the pattern man. Brian

~~~~~

**Hi Keith,**

**11<sup>th</sup> May 2015**

**Just had the wishbones come back from the engineer having had them blasted, reinforced (whilst set up in a jig), and then two pack painted with the new boots and bushes put on too.**



**I don't think these are likely to break again!**



Thanks once again for your help. All the best, Martin. (Seymour)

.....

Right, I had planned to have a bit of Tempest focus in this edition, but I got sidetracked and distracted, so, this is the compromise – one day I'll get organised! Ed.





Hi Brian, NVT 544P is needing some love to get her back on the road, might be looking for a home. Hope you had fun on your break.

All best, Joe (Mason)

*When Joe spoke to me a couple of months ago about the cream and pink Tempest, I denied knowing which car he was talking about! – shades, indeed colours, are a bit open to interpretation, I thought of this, well known example, as being purple and cream! Ed.*

.....

### **Epilogue**

When frantically trying to tidy up and get organised to get away on our unexpected holiday at Ullapool in the middle of April, just 3 weeks after I returned from my epic 1,800 mile trip south in March, I uncovered (neatly tucked away in a corner) about 80 envelopes. All had addresses on them, some hand written, many even had stamps too, they had accumulated over a number of years, held back at the time for one seemingly good reason or another I'm sure.

So I have decided to use them up rather than waste them. I tell you this so that you will not be surprised (well, if you are affected, you

will quite possibly have been surprised already, but this explains why!) So, if this magazine arrives in a less than pristine envelope, possibly with more than one address label on it, and possibly an unusual stamp. I am just showing off my green credentials, and, still, trying, with considerable recent success, to both clear my desk, and get organised. One has to have aspirations (even if one is delusional!)

While I would not want to end on such a note, I felt that I ought to mention the sad passing of young Michelle, the girl I mentioned last year who had been battling Sarcoma. She only lost her battle with this rare form of cancer last week. We were at her memorial service yesterday (26<sup>th</sup> May). At just 30 years of age she leaves a husband and 5 year old son. Michelle was an inspiration, she survived for 5 years after being told she had 6 months to live, indeed when she was moved from hospital two months ago, to hospice, the consultant told Christine (her mum) that she only had a few days, she battled on for almost 8 weeks, posting almost daily on the internet in an incredibly positive manner. My thanks, and those of the family, to those who helped support her appeal.

John (Pearce), amongst others, has been trying to drag me into the modern world, and so it is likely that you may be able, in future, to pay your subscriptions by Paypal. Never let it be said that we are not moving, however reluctantly and slowly, with the times (though I will have a chuckle to myself when the internet stops working, for weeks if not months, for one reason or another, as I fear it will one day – we are, as a nation, if not a species, far too dependent upon it these days).

I must say particular thanks to all the individuals who have helped fill this edition for us, John Box, Partick Vallat, Terry Horler, Keith Gittus, Grant Ford, Paul Wheatley, John Parker, John Whitfield and almost Fred Heath, and to offer my sincere apologies to anyone whose input has been forgotten, misfiled, or apparently ignored. While it is a fact than my desk has, for several weeks now, been tidier than is has been for years, there are still rather a lot of bits of paper (and “filed” e-mails) lurking about.

Oops, I’m out of space, lubricate things please, talk again soon.

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