



To all our readers and a very prosperous New Year.....

RELIANT KITTEN REGISTER

Mewsletter 133

November – December 2016



**Liege Owners Club 21st Birthday Meeting
1st May 2016, Arrow Mill Hotel**

The picture says it all really..... So we'll use this space to wish everybody well for the Christmas period and the coming New Year – Oh and don't forget – Ball Joints!!

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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 iege



The Reliant Kitten Register

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

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

Dinky Cars

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E & o e

Well, it is that time of year again already! How did that happen so quickly?

Hot on the heels of our 25th anniversary edition, this edition also marks, if a tad belatedly, another anniversary. It was 21 years ago that Peter Davies first introduced the Liege to the world at the Alexandra Palace Motor Show in March 1995. This was the official 'Birth of the Liege'.

As you will know if you have been with us for a while, I was very privileged to be given the use of the prototype, chassis number 1, on a few occasions by Peter, and took part in a couple of the Liege Car Club events a decade or so back (when I could still operate a clutch!).

Many happy memories and the best rhubarb and apple crumble ever in Fladbury!

Greetings from the Oval Office

What an excellent gathering we had at Llangollen. I hope I managed to say hello to everyone, if you were missed, I apologise.

Malcolm had obviously put an enormous amount of work into setting up the venue, and Brian and Moira had spent hours organising and putting together the goodie bags for us to enjoy.

The setting and weather are all important on such occasions but a lot of work has to go on behind the scenes to make it happen, and we are extremely lucky to have individuals who will take on this task.

I think we had a complete cross section of Reliant small 4 wheeled cars, many of which were pristine, and others that were in the course of improvement, but full marks to everyone for making the effort to get them there. I am sure we shall all look forward to our next gathering.

John Box

.....

Dear Brian,

Attached the two articles I spoke to you about recently, concerning the Liege 21st Birthday Celebrations and Liege history. I also include some pictures taken by Dave Cook which I have his permission to use - with attribution of course. Please use them or not as you like.

Pictures, I think, are self-explanatory. People are Mark and Ginny Endley (Chairman and secretary) and Peter himself. Car in the ford is Andrew Green's.

Hope Llangollen went well.

Best wishes, Mike (Oakins) No. 292 from Modbury in Devon

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THE LIEGE STORY by Mike Oakins.

The Liege Sports Car was first announced to the Motoring Public at the Kit Car Show at the Alexandra Palace in March 1995. That same year it won a Bronze Medal in the Lands End Trial and the up to two litre GT class in the Le Jog. Not bad for a new prototype! So, this year is the 21st birthday of the Liege and cause for a celebration.

The Liege was the 'brain child' of one Peter Lee Davies who was born in 1947, left school at 15 and went to work in a motorcycle factory in Birmingham. He has never had any formal engineering training but in the 1970's started thinking about designing his own sports car in the spirit of the post war specials. A few sketches were produced, but it was not until 1985 that the first working drawings were produced, and slowly through the next decade, the car evolved in metal and glass fibre. Alongside this development work he was indulging his passion for all things motoring by racing and rallying, often with fairly unsuitable machinery. The name Liege was used because of the rallying associations with that Belgian City (but has lost the accent). Peter's aim was to design a light, simple sports car in the spirit of the 1950's special, a 'sporting all rounder' that could be driven to work in the week and used for something a bit more exciting at the weekend.

As a basis for this he used the running gear from the small three and four wheel Reliants. The final development of their wet liner 850 cc engine arrived in the mid 70's and was coupled to their aluminium cased, four speed gearbox. This combination had been used successfully by the 750 racers. He designed an A- frame chassis with live rear axle (initially BMC) using the Reliant Robin prop shaft, swinging arm front suspension and clothed it all in a curvaceous fibreglass body tub and added cycle wings. Peter strongly maintains that his design was not based on the Dellow, to which it has been likened, nor was it primarily designed as a trials car. The development work took place in the 'Old Forge' next to his home in Bidford-on-Avon but with the start of production, this facility was outgrown, and in 1998 he moved to a unit in nearby Fladbury.

The original rear suspension was ‘parallel bottom and diagonal top trailing arms’ plus ‘coil springs and hydraulic dampers all round’. For production this was changed to swinging arms and a single ‘A’ frame. After Le Jog it was decided that the front independent swinging arms (derived from the Hillman Imp) were a little too ‘old hat’ and so the present arrangement of double wishbones with coils over dampers was developed. These changes obviously contribute to the excellent road holding.

October 1996 was the date of the amazing proving trip to Morocco. Typical of Peter, he finished the changes to the suspension and had the car MOT’d on Friday and was on the cross-channel ferry to Calais, Morocco bound, on the Monday. The little car covered 6,500 miles without missing a beat, through snow in the Pyrenees and sand in the northern Sahara carrying two people and camping gear. As well as a very thorough road test, this trip enabled Peter to recce the route for the Liege – Agadir – Liege Trial on behalf of the Guild of Motoring Endurance. This achievement was marked by a three-page article in the Motoring Telegraph in December and probably launched the marketing campaign as production started slowly in 1997.

At this time the Reliant Motor Company were still making motor cars, and there was some negotiation with the company about producing the Liege and marketing them under the Reliant name. It is interesting to conjecture, some years before Reliant had been in discussion with BRM about modifying a Reliant 850 cc engine to make it overhead cam. I believe the three prototypes are still in existence. What might have been: A Reliant Liege with an ohc BRM designed engine.

The first two production cars were SVA’d and on the road by the end of 1999, one factory built and mine home built. The factory built car took part in the Exeter Trial in 2000. Gradually more cars were completed and more entered trials. Initially there was a problem with wheels. 16 inch steel wheels were advertised but the company, who had agreed to make them, went bust! Fancy but expensive spoked wheels were an option. Peter had designed these to have brake drums moulded in the hubs a la Bugatti. The eventual solution was the cast aluminium

wheels which most of us now sport. The only major change to Peter's original specification was the back axle. Initially he advised the Reliant Robin axle, with a replacement 5:1 crown wheel and pinion for the larger wheels but this tended to 'bend' with hard use. The solution was the Bedford Rascal / Suzuki Carry axle which had the correct ratio but required some work to put Reliant hubs and brakes on.

It was envisaged at the design stage that more power would be high on the list of extras, so a lovely little supercharger was a factory option. Other ways were tried to get those few extra horses including twin SU's, twin choke Webbers, fancy exhausts etc.. Soon thoughts turned to engine transplants. A Honda Fireblade was tried, but I don't think ever perfected, a Fiat Fire engine is still in use as is a four cylinder Suzuki, but to get these in, the chassis has to be modified (puts them into Class 8 for Trialling). The final solution seems to be the 993 cc three cylinder Suzuki coupled to a Suzuki five speed box. This is now an accepted factory modification (Peter having altered his jig now fits the revised engine mounts) and so the cars remain in Class Seven. This involves quite a lot of clever engineering, as the transverse engine has to be lined up with a longitudinal gearbox and the fueling and electrics totally redesigned. I don't think there are any two the same!

Tyres have also presented problems. The Liege was designed to run on 16 inch Avon SM cross ply motor cycle tyres which with the suspension set up are superb on the road but have limitations off road. Choice is very limited in that size and so various options have been tried; imports at vast price, a taxi tyre which is wider and 15 inch rims (now an accepted option). They all have their own problems; price, wheel arch clearance, road noise, ground clearance and handling on the road.

In brief, that is the history of these little cars. We believe there are now nearly 50 built and road legal out of approximately 60 kits made over a ten-year period. A few are still under construction. They are widely disbursed throughout the UK and one each in Europe, Australia and the USA.



TWENTY FIRST BIRTHDAY PARTY.

By Mike Oakins.

We have just been to a rather unusual 21st birthday celebration. In what way unusual, you ask? It was the 21st anniversary of the first public showing of the Liege sports car at the Kit Car Show at the Alexandra Palace in April 1995. It was decided by the Liege Car Club, that this momentous occasion should be marked by getting as many Liege cars together as possible and letting them do what they do best i.e. Driving in interesting conditions, with the top off, and playing mildly competitive games for the pleasure and amusement of their owners and drivers.

The venue was a Country House Hotel in the lovely Warwickshire countryside near Stratford on Avon, which conveniently boasted a large tarmac car park. The gathering was organised by the Club Chairman and his wife. The 'entertainment' was in the hands of the designer and builder of the car, one Peter Davies. Now Peter is a very clever and multitalented chap which caused some apprehension among the participants about the nature of the 'entertainment'. He has no formal engineering qualifications, started his working life in a motorcycle factory in Birmingham, had experience as a certified welder on gas pipelines, raced and rallied Ginettas (among other things) and in the last 20 years has organised several long distance rallies for specialist sports cars as far flung as Greece and Morocco. Now in his retirement he has taken up motor cycle racing!!! Peter spent about 10 years designing and building the prototype Liege, before its announcement to the motoring world in 1995. It was 1997 before he started to produce any kits and in the following 10 years he produced about 60 (exact number subject to discussion).

Arriving after lunch on Saturday we found a large car park dotted with traffic cones to produce a complicated autotest course. We were all handed a course diagram and a competition number. The navigators were expected to go round in the car to assist with direction finding. Ann took one look, decided it was not for her and retired to the hotel lounge with a

good book and a cup of coffee. We all did two different courses against the clock. Following Ann's defection, I had to co-opt two different navigators and so I blame her for the fact that I was awarded the Wooden Spoon. Nothing to do with my driving! The driver with the accumulated fastest time of day was awarded a vivid purple tabard, which he had to wear for the week-end as a warning that as the fastest he was also the most dangerous.

Then the formal part of the event – the very informal AGM, a few presentations and then our celebratory birthday dinner.

The Sunday morning was scheduled to start at 08.00 with a 'Liege Line Up'.



Mark and Ginny Endley

By ten past nine, we had achieved a double line of cars, totaling 21 in all. The last one had raced down the Motor Way that morning from North Wales, with much mobile phone encouragement. There followed plenty of chat and many photographs before we were all handed our route cards and encouraged to get on our way for the first stage of the run.

The route was set out using ‘Tulip Diagrams’ (sample on page 12) which initially took a bit of getting used too but after a minor diversion we got into the swing. The first stage was a mere 15 miles along country roads and ended in the car park of an Outdoor Adventure Centre. What had Peter brought us here for? Someone muttered Race Course but no – Go Kart Track!!



The original intention had been three laps against the clock, but at the last minute the Centre’s Insurers had said – ‘No Way’. In the end we all did a single lap against the clock.....but in reverse. The circuit was small and tight and one hairpin caught a lot of us out and we had to have two bites, which rather messed up the times. The FTD was the same chap in a maroon Liege. What does that say about his driving? But he could not wear two purple tabards so it was awarded to second fastest.

What next? Rumour said – An Off-Road 4x4 Course. This time rumour was correct. The owner of the Centre had no experience of Liege and was worried that they would not cope with a four-wheel drive course so insisted on taking all the drivers round the course in his Land Rover. Peter had no such anxieties and was setting up some extra little tests of

his own to make the course more interesting. The off-road course was moderately taxing but caused no real problems, Peter's tests caused a few lost points for some of us. Driving between irregularly spaced, suspended tennis balls without touching them; driving near side wheels along a sleeper or driving with just one wheel on said sleeper and his piece de resistance was a hill start on the steepest, muddiest hill.



Mike Oakins in action on the 4 * 4 course

A break for lunch before being handed the 'tulip route' for our afternoon run. This 75 mile route was typical of Peter, including a number of off road sections, which were not obligatory but most of us had to have a go! One particular section was very steep and very muddy and very slippery and my road going Avon tyres (even reduced to 10 lbs)



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Total	Part	No	Direction	Information
10-23 442	1-51	9		PHONE BOX NUMBER 01356 462611
11-11	0-88	10		FORD
11-21 443	0-10	11		
13-44 445	2-23	12		UPTON SNODE BUAY
13-80 446	0-36	13		WORCESTER
14-65	0-85	14		BROUGHTON HACKET
14-96	0-31	15		
15-18	0-22	16		CAR PARK

Q:

Liege Trail 2016

were spinning all the way up but just scabbled to keep enough grip. He had also found us several fords, one of which was 2/3 of the way up the Liege radiator grill and well over the sills. At least one car was caught out by that (not us!!).

This particular ford was followed by ½ mile of rough lane which closely resembled the bed of a muddy stream. Just to keep us focused there were a few clues to look for, and questions to answer, as part of the competition.



Late in the afternoon, we all ended up back at the Hotel for Birthday Cake, a drink, and final debriefing.

What a super weekend in good company, and what a way to celebrate this milestone in the history of these fabulous little cars.

My thanks to Mike Oakins for the articles, Dave Cook for kindly allowing us to use his pictures, and of course Peter, see over the page.

Ed.



Peter Davies with a few of the Liege he created.

~~~~~

Hi Brian,

24<sup>th</sup> October 2016

Thanks for the 'Extra Special Mewsletter and the plaque.  
(Haven't tried to get the blue cover off yet!)

Looks to have been an excellent weekend. Makes me even more sorry that we could not make it. Will try harder next year.

WHAT NO LIEGES!! What a poor effort on our part!

All Best Wishes,

Mike (Oakins)

## Getting Technical

Ok, here's a quick run through my kitten disc conversion. It's definitely not top level engineering so I wouldn't advise anyone to follow suit, but there could be some useful info for anyone looking at a similar job.

First of all, I had read a blog online somewhere and the MK2 Polo discs were mentioned. I also remembered someone saying that mk1 Fiesta calipers would fit under 10 inch wheels (for a Mini conversion). I was going for 12 inch wheels anyway, but I remembered the Fiesta calipers being very compact from the days when I used to maintain one at a transport company I was working for.

Armed with this bit of hearsay, I purchased a pair of Polo discs, a pair of Fiesta discs (they're smaller so might have been a better fit in a way) and a pair of Fiesta calipers which I exchanged for a reconditioned pair at a local motor factor (with the recons, you only get the centre section with the piston so you need a full set of yokes/pins/sliders etc.).

After much measuring of the diameter, offset, centre bore and stud PCD etc., I decided to go with the Polo discs. Firstly, the offset was shallower, allowing a single thickness bracket to be used (the Fiesta ones would have needed a bracket bolted to the stub carrier and then a further bracket bolted to the back of that to bring the calipers further inboard to match the disc offset) and secondly, the stud PCD on the Polo discs is 100mm which, when you consider that the Polo studs are 12mm in diameter, fits perfectly over the 4 inch PCD (but only 3/8") studs of the Reliant hub.

The first job was to get the discs machined to fit the Reliant hubs. The centre bore had to match the centre hole in the Reliant drum. I have a small lathe but it's not currently set up owing to space restrictions (in Mum's garage) and there's no way it could handle something as large as a brake disc anyway.

I found a local machine shop to do the job, but had to have some further machining done when I realised the disc/caliper combination wouldn't fit under my 12" wheels. That meant a further trip to the machine shop to have 10mm taken off the diameter.



On the machined disc there's not much metal left betwixt stud holes and centre bore, but that's not really a problem as there's no stress on that area.

Next, a small mod had to be made to the Reliant hub. Namely filing down the 'corners' so the disc would slip over and sit on the studs and centre spigot.

This was achieved with an 'electric file' otherwise known as a belt sander.

The disc dropped over nicely. Then slipping the caliper on gave a sneak preview of the finished product.

Now I had to get on with making the brackets, for which I chose 4mm mild steel. "Why so thin?" you may ask... Well, I was planning on using 6mm but that would be too thick to get the proper alignment of caliper and disc.



I figured 4mm is thick enough to take the torque as the original drum back plates are less than half that thickness and take the same torque when the wheels are on the point of locking. Also, there was no stress related damage around the mounting holes on the original back plates and they'd been in service for 40 years.

I considered that the steel might flex with road vibration, possibly causing fatigue, so I left them as large square plates, rather than cutting off the excess material, to add to their stiffness.

So, I started by using a hole saw (which just happened to be available in exactly the right size) to drill the large holes to go over the back plate mounting boss on the hub. I had an offcut of 4mm steel from my local stockist and it was big enough to make both brackets so I drilled both large holes before cutting them off the plate.

The next job was to measure the mounting hole PCD and spacing on the caliper, in order to accurately drill the brackets. And then transfer these measurements to the bracket material by using a hammer and centre punch through the actual size drawing.

With that done, I could drill the caliper mounting holes in the first bracket. I was, of course, using high quality cutting oil. The WD40 was for a completely different job...honest!



Then cut the bracket off the workpiece using an angle grinder with one of those thin (1mm) cut-off discs (which had just hit the market when I was working on my steel barge in 2002 but everyone and his dog uses them now).



Hi Brian,

1<sup>st</sup> November 2016

It's been a while, hope this finds you all well at your end.

25 years and counting.

The RELIANT SPECIAL is still going strong, it won the public choice at a small show in 2015.

Attached are a couple of pics taken on drive it day this year.

I did a couple of motorcycle projects early in the year, sold one, kept one, still got the SS1, a project for the spring.

Regards, Mike (Cammack) No. 990 from Finchampstead





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Blue Cipher Refresh 2

So, as you all may know the Blue Cipher is back on the road, but the updates haven't kept up – however hopefully this instalment will bring things a little closer to completion.

So, back when the weather was warmer, I was examining the engine bay, eyeing up the whole "pull the engine out, drop the new one in scenario," when I noticed the brake master cylinder is looking worse for wear. It seems the years of brake fluid has created a whole load of cracks in the plastic - and it's really fragile. After looking at the whole thing after completing the task its apparent that the brake master cylinder is original - over 36 years old - so I can't really complain.

So I stuck some liquid plastic on the top of the cracked bits to stop them from fully fracturing and spilling brake fluid everywhere!

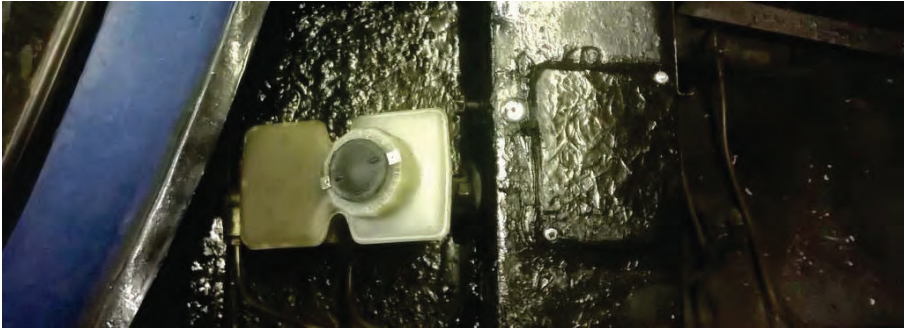


After getting the top bolt off, the bottom one turned into a nightmare due to the VERY restricted clearance underneath the cylinder - tiny part turns only. Even with little helpers (having people with small hands helps), getting the bottom bolt off took an age. Once done, I realised I needed to remove the pin that attaches the cylinder to the pedal. Only problem is - after drilling out all the rivets associated with the panel that covers this area, I discovered some wise person had stuck this down with very strong adhesive as well - just to be sure it didn't move!!! Given the prospect of completely knacker the panel - I went for the option Reliant went for on the Kitten - have a big hole and then plug it with a cover !

So with some trepidation I got out the drill and padsaw and cut a nice little hole in the pannel - fortunately perfectly positioned !



Fortunately I had a spare late Kitten/Early Fox dual circuit master cylinder in the box - so I dropped this in as a replacement - a perfect fit and everything lined up. I took the opportunity to replace the bottom securing bolt with one with a Allan Key head - this means it is much easier to do up and tighten - it works perfectly with the limited access. So, pin in, replace all the pop rivets, I removed earlier, cleaned up and painted the whole area. I then made up a little square cover out of fibreglass - painted it black and then pop riveted it in - it looks good, and should I ever need access again, it'll be a simple matter of removing the rivets and popping off the panel.

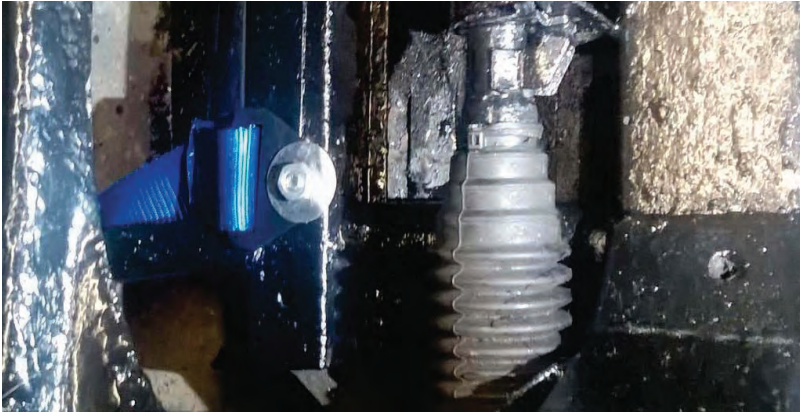


So hopefully the little updates I did whilst doing this should make changing a master cylinder a lot easier – although hopefully not for another 30 years.

With the engine bay empty, it was time to solve one of the things that has bugged me about the car for a while, the lack of tow loops on the car. Looking for the best place to put an attachment, the strongest place, is the front section of the Kitten chassis used in the car. That said its a long way from the nose cone - and thus I was a little stumped until some of the Scimitar racing folk pointed me towards some of the adjustable tow straps they use.



Fortunately in the Kitten chassis there was a predrilled hole that was almost the right size, and I opened it out 1mm to fit the bolt.



To get the loop to the front, I cable tied the strap in two places with very weak cable ties - thus if it ever has to be used, the ties will give way rather than the nose cone !!

As a plus the loop neatly tucks away behind the number plate when not in use.



So, next onto more major things - the propshaft ! - after pulling it out and comparing it with a Kitten one I have - I rapidly realised that it's not the same size as a Kitten one and is a lot shorter (see picture) - after consulting the Reliant CIPHER parts manual, the prop has the same part number as a Kitten one - but with an "S" prefix. This usually means that the part is different from advertised and is usually unique! So, after a quick inspection and service, the newly painted the prop was popped back into the car to keep it safe. That's all for now – in the next instalment, I'll detail engine install and the final steps of getting the car back on the road.



Time has of course moved on, as you know the car made it to Llangolloen, however I will continue the story of the work on the Cipher for a future edition.

Simon Fitch – No. 939 from Wellesbourne

Next up I received an email, a first I think, in that it had attached an mp4 video clip (I don't think I have ever had an mp4 anything, I know, haven't I led a sheltered life – but I bet a few folk reading this have not met an mp4 either, so I am not going to feel bad about it!) of the removing the protective over from Andrew Hargrave's plaque in about 2 seconds (though it did not clearly show how he started it, just it being peeled off!).

Enough on my lack of dexterity these days!!! Ed.

~~~~~

Hi Brian,

1<sup>st</sup> November 2016

Hope all's well with you and yours.

The latest news on VLN 666S is that, after much soul-searching, I have sold it!

I decided that I really wasn't making the best use of it so I mentioned this to the guy who has MOT'd it for the last 12 years and he said he'd like to buy it and made me a good offer. He's a classic car collector. So, its new home is at Stokenchurch, Oxfordshire.

I gave him the Register's details, so hopefully he will be in touch.

It's been a privilege to have been a member of such an elite and enthusiastic group, but I guess I won't be renewing my membership next time around.

I hope you continue to flourish, and I shall keep abreast of your exploits via the website.

It's good to see that the Atomic Kitten can still be found there, in issue 29 of the Mewsletter.

All the very best to the editorial team and your subscribers.

Bob Keene - No. 216 from Maidenhead

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Epilogue

I realised as soon as the last extra edition went in the post, the questionable wisdom of my choice of words on the external label, advising you of the difficulty of removing, indeed the presence of, the protective film on top of the brushed aluminum finish on our commemorative plaque.

I suddenly had images of less than honest mail delivery individuals intercepting the envelopes to liberate the silver content!

One day I might learn to think before acting, there would be a novel new idea!

Anyway, all is well that ends well, I know from the favorable comments that many made it safely through.

This edition should contain your renewal notice, complete with the appropriate additional label on it if you are one of our many 5 year subscribers. (and if you are in that group, my thanks once again for helping to reduce my workload).

What for the future? I mean how do we follow the past two editions? Well, to some extent that is up to you, keep those articles and pictures coming please.

As I type this we are not yet into November, the next edition is not even begun, it is less than 5 weeks till Moira heads off to warmer climes, (only 10 sleeps till she goes now!!!) and she wants the Christmas cards all finished within the next 4 weeks, (she finished them last week) oh well, no pressure there then. And I still can't print anything....., not even 4 weeks later!!!

Actually, that is not strictly true, I did re-connect the colour inkjet Epson, and, after changing a few cartridges (I had not used it in over a year) it does print, slowly, but the black is in useless quality. If the address label of the envelope this came to you in was in dark blue, you will know that I have yet to win by battle with Microsoft!

It only remains for me to wish you the goodwill of the season, and a happy prosperous and healthy 2017, and, of course, to remind you the importance of a regular lubrication regime.

Brian



This is a picture I was sent recently by Tony Wiese, thank you Tony. When I showed it to Duncan, he came up with the, I thought rather good suggestion, that it might make an ideal caption competition, so, over to you... A year's free subscription for the best caption, the Editor's decision is final. That said I may get more mileage out of this by sharing suggestions with you and seeking opinions. I await your response with baited breath.

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CHESTER CH1 4LT



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OPEN

Monday - Friday

8.00 am - 6.00 pm

Saturday

9.00 am - 1.00 pm

WEB : www.grahamwalker.co.uk E.Mail : tracey.jones@grahamwalker.easynet.co.uk

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