

RELIANT KITTEN REGISTER



Mewsletter 138

September - October 2017



Although most of the details of our now annual Llangollen gathering are being compiled for the next edition, we thought we would share this green glimpse with you.....

Going green, a taste of Llangollen this year, Malcolm Rush's trusty steed, (which was the President's choice this year) and Clive and Keith's prototype Kitten Mk II - much more to come next time!

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

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E & o e

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Aye, it's all in the timing, and not just the ignition timing, though that is a lot more critical than many realise. The Reliant engine will start and run over a remarkably wide range of ignition timing settings, well over 25 degrees in my experience, however, running is one thing, running well is quite another!

Anyway, the timing issue that actually sprang to mind was my faulty timing! Terry, (see Rebel Round Up) sent me that story in good time for it to have been included in the last edition, except that I had done it very early! A right smarty pants, aren't I!?!?

Anyway, while I could just have not used it, I actually have a bulging folder of Magazine material, much of it years old, so I decided not to add to it! My apologies to you and Terry for its inappropriate timing, I thought the sentiment warranted its, belated, inclusion, Ed.

On the subject of my shortcomings, I was asked by Dave Honeywill the other week, if I could supply, or advise of a supplier of Kitten side window rubbers, and, from a different individual, if I could help with a source of the black plastic “vent” trim that fits on the outside of a Kitten, just behind the side windows. Well, I was defeated on both counts, the former almost certainly because of my bad memory, the latter, because, like good original seats, and heater control knobs, they are about as abundant as rocking horse teeth!

Obviously, if you can help with either of those items, do not under a bushel be hiding please.

.....

Right now it is early July, Moira is going back into hospital for her third brain operation in 6 weeks, and life, as you might imagine, is a bit more of a challenge than usual. So, I will indulge myself by trying to control some aspects of life that I can influence! Namely that folder of “Mewsletter material” which has been sitting on the shelf above the monitor on my desk for years!

I am just going to start at the top, well, o.k., the bottom, and, if there is any doubt, in my mind, about publishing what is in there now, (some of it might be out of date) I will. If not, I will apologise to the individuals concerned. At least that way, if I see it through, I will empty one of the 150 or so folders that seem to have accumulated in my “office” over the past 3 decades!

Well, it sounds like a plan to me!

.....

One positive thing that happened this week, apart from an unexpected visit from Jim Spence, good to see you again Jim, was a call from Gordon Shaw, looking for a steering rack for his Kitten estate car, JOP 28P. When I looked to see if we knew this one I was surprised at

how many JOP Kittens we have on file, 5 in total, and all with 2 digit numbers!

This particular one was made known to me by Michael Bentley back in 2002, when he reported that it had been the Press car used by “Practical Motorist” in Dec.'75. Great to know it survives, and is being brought back to life after many years off the road.

Call me a wimp or a mean Scotsman if you will, but I am going to cut and run, and not treat you to an extra 4 pages in here, in spite of Tony Wiese’s article arriving today, 19/7/17. It, his excellent report on Llangollen this year, will make a good start to our autumn edition, thanks Tony.

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From the Oval Office

Or, our President speaks.

Once again, we must thank Malcolm for arranging an entertaining weekend at Llangollen. Events of this nature require a lot of background effort, and the Register marked Malcolm’s work with the presentation of a 1 : 76th replica of his estate car that had been magicked up by John Pearce. Malcolm’s Kitten also won the President’s Favourite trophy, mainly because it represents the product as purchased. It is important that a few of our cars remain to original specification even if the colours change.

Jackie and I thoroughly enjoyed ourselves, despite the tedium of driving through industrial Lancashire twice, and getting a wetting at Preston on the way home. It was good to see all of you, and to provide Roger and Yoland with a piece of Reliant history that was unknown to them and, upon reflection, very few others. *Do I sense an interesting article in the offing? Ed.*

Enjoy your Reliant motoring when the school holidays are over and the weather improves!

John

Rebel Round up

I will attempt to bring the story of LRF 671K up to date. I have not written anything about my Rebel for a long time now. Not just complacency, more that there has not really been anything to report. It just soldiers on with an occasional tweak.

It is such a useful, reliable and economical car, plus the important fun factor, that I would really like to keep it. The impending loss of storage/parking space is the only reason it may have to go. In the meantime, I will still maintain it, and enjoy it as I always have.

Again, I shall be away when the get together at Llangollen is scheduled. Jan and I have stayed at Llangollen at the Chain Bridge Hotel, we walked past the museum into the town one evening. The journey on the railway was much enjoyed, and was visible from our room over the river. It would have been quite an adventure to drive the Rebel to Llangollen, and return!

I hope it is well attended and that all goes well.

Kind regards, Terry Horler - No. 755, from Bristol.

.....

Peter Grainger tells me that he now uses Mann oil filters, he has found that they are suitable for the Reliant engine, having had a non-return valve on a Partsworld supplied one fail! They can be found on the internet for just £3.98 plus p&p.

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Ian Dunning was asking about the benefits of fitting a servo to the Kitten to improve the braking. I thought in both unnecessary and unwise, but would welcome your thoughts on the matter.

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Liege Page

Hi Brian,

17th July 2017

I thought I might contribute (bore?) with some Liege & Reliant motoring appropriate stuff from this year.

Easter saw me out on The Land's End Trial (MCC) event, bouncing for Dick Glossop in his maroon Liege, rather than driving my own (yellow) Tweetie Pie.

We had a really good run, were quick on the special tests, and climbed all the hills, but, unfortunately over-ran a restart line on one hill, and therefore ended up with a Silver Medal, nevertheless a great weekend!

Dick has put a video on YouTube, just search by his name and Lands End Trial 2017 to get a feel of one of the true Classic Trials.

30th April saw Paul Wheatley and myself at the National Kit Car Show in Stoneleigh (picture on the main arena banking below) - loads of interest as always in the Liege - went for a walkabout and when we got back to our cars some bloke had dropped his litter in them! (Peter Davis - the Liege designer - advertising his latest Guild of Motoring Endurance event!)





Other "Liegeista" (including the chairman Mark Endley) were "in the foreign" that weekend, so the AGM was re programmed to run concurrently with the Liege Spring Social & "run", centered around the Cotswolds this year, and superbly organised by David & Margaret Bush.

We all met on the evening of Friday 19th May at a nice hostelry for a good old natter & meal, then convened at David's farm on Saturday morning, to receive instructions in the form of "tulip" diagrams for direction, plus questions to answer, items to collect, off-road sections to accomplish, and places to meet for lunch and a special visit later.

Unfortunately my wife was unable to attend, so and I was navigatorless, until a volunteer, in the form of Peter Davis (designer, creator & manufacturer of the Liege) was found. We had great fun and Peter video'd our trip along a really nice green lane which can also be found on You Tube.

A fantastic day of motoring enjoyment with spectacular scenery and lots of lovely lanes !



David is just about to go for his IVA test - have a look at what he's got under his bonnet "feeding" his Reliant engine! *Oh how SUper, Ed!*



Saturday evening we were all back to David & Margaret's for the AGM, during which new chairman Dick Glossop, together with new treasurer Sally Glossop were elected, following thanks from all for their hard work over the years to outgoing Mark & Ginny Endley. This was followed by a lovely barbecue with homegrown meats, yummy salads, and delicious puds, (weren't they Dick?).

Sunday saw us reconvene for coffee & cakes and plenty of chat, followed by a leisurely drive home in the beautiful sunshine that had graced the whole weekend.

We had some fantastic weather during June, and so used Tweetie Pie a lot, just enjoying the runs around the lanes at the weekend, stopping for a coffee & cake here, or a lunch there.

The last weekend in June saw son Matt, a few friends and I, marshalling the Rally Stage at the Goodwood Festival of Speed. Not a Reliant based weekend, but definitely a motoring orientated one, and then the following Friday 7th July evening was the Falcon Motor Club Fish & Chip run.

This is a circa 50 mile run around a different route each year with pleasant scenery which ends up at a fish & chip establishment somewhere, for a sit down fish supper - (how posh, no newspaper jobbie this!), and is definitely a Liege evening - she even got a coat of polish before we ventured forth - first time in ages, it's usually just a wash!

Then on Monday 10th the Falcon MC had been asked once again to marshal some special tests on the HERO RAC 1000 Mile Trial for pre 1939 vehicles at Bicester Heritage venue.

As I am now retired (*Oh dear, no more public holidays for you then either Simon! Ed*) this was an opportunity not to be missed, both for the superb cars entered, but also for the viewing of the vehicles being worked on in the small businesses around the site (well worth a visit on one of their open days).

What does this have to do with Reliant you might ask? Well what should be outside the marshals' signing-on point at the guardhouse, but a circa 1950 Reliant Prince Regent 3 wheeler van! The picture shows Falcon MC President David Alderson doing his best William Wollard impression with it!



So that's you up to date.

Best wishes to all.

Simon Robson - No. 513 from Hitchin

Simon, thank you, it is, speaking for myself, inspiring to hear of the exploits of those who are fortunate enough to be able to enjoy the delights of a Liege, I know I've said it before, but I will be forever grateful to Peter for letting me spend so much time behind the wheel of Number one back in the days when I could still just about control a clutch! Ed.

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One of those odd corners, again! I am feeling really guilty now, my decision to include the Super Two story in this edition, that picture of it on page 23 really should have adorned a front cover, don't you think?

One day I'll get organised!

.....

Confusion and delay!

Now I sound like the Fat Controller! After what I was saying earlier about material lying in a folder, the following letter arrived here in response to a mention I had made about HRGs, but I let it sit about for months, it came to light during a recent serious attempt at clearing my desk, apologies John. It is of course all Myra Hindley's fault, the demise of HRG, but that is another story.

Dear Brian,

23-4-17

On reading ML 135 I've realised that procrastination can be a virtue.

Fortunately, I didn't reply to your Scimitar V6 engine remarks, as Roger Cook provided a far greater depth of knowledge than I could, as my 2 Scimitars were both Granada series 5 powered, the present one owned for over 30 years.

However, at the risk of being pedantic, and to conclude the Scimitar V6 engine history, in 1980 the 2.8 litre Cologne unit replaced the Essex engine, and from late 1987 the 83 Scimitars produced by Middlebridge Engineering were powered by Ford's latest 2.9 litre unit.

Further to your mention of HRG in ML 134, they were established in early 1935, with the first car completed on October of that year. In 1955 they designed a totally new car with independent suspension, disc brakes and a twin camshaft cylinderhead to fit the Singer SM engine which they already used.

At the end of 1955 Singer Motors failed, and were taken over by Rootes. As the SM engine was no longer available; only 4 of the new twin camshaft cars were built.

HRG continued for a decade after the last car was built, with sub contract work etc., and went into voluntary liquidation in 1966.

Perhaps the very small production was due to price, as an HRG cost £395 at around the time Morgan were producing their 4/4 (4 wheels 4 cylinders) with similar performance plus o.f.s. Stephenson, built in jacking system, and 2 spare wheels, for "just" £185.

John Noton - No. 929 from Birkinhead

Getting Technical

A spring tragedy....

A situation came to light recently, when a pair of back springs that we supplied, appeared to fail after a few thousand miles of use.

The tragedy was, that when I asked the manufacturer to test them, to see if they had been overloaded, and if so to re-temper them, they admitted, rather sheepishly, that their previously resident expert in such matters was no longer on the payroll. Upon further questioning it became clear that he had not retired - one of my great fears about much of the expertise that we rely on to keep our wonderful wee cars going, is that most of our key technical people are now over 70 years of age, and we seem, sadly, to be failing to pass on enough of the technical expertise to the next generation, or perhaps more importantly, the one after that!

What I have, to date, failed to establish, is which competitor poached him!

Kittens have a maximum load capacity of 320kg or 700lbs in old money, however, the fact is, that people have become somewhat heavier since the 1970's when the Kitten was designed, and while a Kitten would happily carry 4 average people, and a small amount of luggage back then, nowadays 4 average people will put you over the weight limit without any luggage at all.

Add a trailer into the equation, as some owners do, and you can be on a slippery slope very quickly indeed.

Interestingly, the maximum towing capacity of a Kitten saloon or estate, is 406kg, while the van can cope with up to 907kg behind it. Given that the van uses the same springs, you could be forgiven for wondering how that comes to be the case? I suspect it is all about gearing, the vans having a different axle ratio.

The Kitten chassis and engine, and brakes, provided they have been properly maintained, will cope just fine, within reason, in such a situation. The thing that gives out first, are the springs, in particular the back ones.

Now you can alleviate that easily enough by fitting Fox back springs, (you will need to change the front bushes!) that will gain you about 25%, (an additional leaf!), which may involve you in new, longer "U" bolts, and you are then pushing the chassis nearer its limits, that said, its limits are pretty high.

The Fox chassis benefits from stiffer outriggers as well as an extra leaf in the back springs, and increased poundage in the front ones.

The front ones are not an issue, if you have replaced the ones on your Kitten with the units that we supply, because we decided to avoid confusion, and standardise on the Fox spec. 150lb front springs, and not bother to have Kitten, 140lb, ones made. We did have some 120lb ones produced, which the very first Kittens used, but we only recommend them for things like the Tempest, which has a lighter body, or Kittens that do not often carry passengers or other heavy loads.

So, the moral would seem to be, **be aware!** If you are going to exceed the manufacturers recommended maximum weigh limit, not recommended, but unavoidable sometimes, be sure to prepare properly, or expect to be a couple of hundred quid or so out of pocket, plus labour, for a pair of new back springs!

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## *Wheely interesting stuff!*

Those who run on 12" wheels might be pleased to know that, finally, high quality branded tyres are now being made again in 145/70 x 12..... These are by Michelin and are XZX's. A whisker over £70 each so not too bad. Available only from Longstone Tyres who kindly gave me a bit of discount plus free delivery when I ordered a set on Thursday, and they arrived Friday morning - brilliant service.

So, I put the Jaffa up on stands and whipped the wheels off - then took them (and the new tyres) down to Nottingham to be refurbished and powder coated, long overdue as they've been on the car for well over 10 years, and were second hand when I got them!!

John (Pearce) No. 304 from Mansfield



I can tell you that John is also very impressed with the performance of his new Michelin ZXXs, Ed.

# Tempest Update

July 2017



The ultimate development of the Tempest by John Box, the Reliant Raptor.

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Llangollen 2017

Right now, mid July, my thinking is that I will save much of the Llangollen report and pictures till next time, we will just need to see how things go.

The weather was much better than the forecast had led us to expect, though I gather that those camping on the Friday night might take issue with that statement, but on the Saturday and Sunday, the showers were few and far between. The trip on the train was marvelous, and to have both the Raptor and the Mk II Kitten there, just wonderful.

I'll let Malcolm say a few words :-

Owing to work commitments that will take me away from home for a few weeks I have not been in a position to do my usual write up of the weekend at Llangollen. Having said that, I could not let the weekend pass without some comment.

So, through these pages I would like to thank everyone that came, it makes it all worthwhile, especially Brian and Moira for yet another year of dedication to the Register, where would we be without them.

The Horseshoe Pass and the train trip on Saturday seemed to be enjoyed by the eighteen people that participated (especially the children) and Sunday was nice and relaxed after the tight schedule of Saturday.

To win our President's 'car of the day' award was a nice surprise, (I think every car deserved to have won – John had a difficult decision to make) but to be presented with a model of my Kitten just left me speechless. It now has pride of place in my Kitten display.

I would also like to thank Tony Wiese, who kindly donated our memento plaques this year, it's nice to have something to remember the weekend by.

Until we meet again next year, happy and safe motoring.

Malcolm



Stevens Sienna – Prototype Resto 8

Originally, the floor sections were bathed in black carpet which, after 4 decades, enjoyed its own eco-system rotting away happily, and the smell wasn't too friendly either. An early decision was to remove the offending covering and paint the floor panels black, but prior to securing into place, insert aluminium chequer plate, then screw all parties to the frame. With one large cardboard box, two grown adults would spend an hour bickering about how to make a pair of 'templates' from which the alloy will be cut. One error, made by yours truly, was to buy a 6ft x 3ft sheet of 2mm thick chequer plate, which wasn't easy to either cut or install on an uneven surface; never mind, worry about that later. The first task was cutting cardboard. Once fitted, we stood back and admired our handy work, before utilising our templates to mark out the shape. We fitted aluminium cutting discs to the angle grinder, these offer a thin cut without melting the metal, and created two new floor sections. Obviously, they failed to fit first time, but, after an hour of adjustment, we had a waterproof and sturdy platform installed. Once the front floor panels were screwed down, I decided on 1.2 alloy sheet for the rear compartment; these were originally designed as seating, but would be unlikely to be legal 40 years on, originally just moulded GRP with carpet covering.

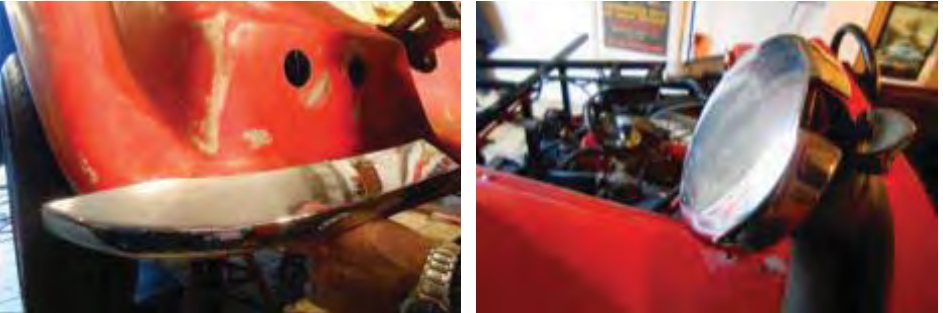
Electrical Experiment

The Sienna is really a micro-sports car, and under the bonnet the small four-cylinder Reliant engine fills the space, with the battery (lawn mower size), restricting access enough to require its relocation. The boot area is accessible from the rear panel, this was chosen, and rather than drill holes in the flooring, we came up with a novel solution. Using marine battery cables, we chose to run the wiring through the car via a cut-off switch mounted on the windscreen panel; as with all of the modifications we install, returning the car to its original spec is just a case of removal.

Another decision taken, was to remove the soft top mechanism with windows and screen panel, and replace it with leatherette trimming akin to Jaguar's XK120 roadster, plus a pair of Brooklands Aero-screens; once again returning the Sienna to its factory finish would be a straightforward replacement.

Quiz Time

All of that is for the future, but for now, replacing the extremely heavy scaffold pole bumpers with something 'in period', but lighter, was the challenge, and a British Leyland enthusiast offered a solution. A pair of tired bumpers from a 70's Allegro changed hands, and once cut to shape, these would face the blaster for de-chroming and several coats of gloss black, then lacquer.



Whilst we are playing 'name that part' our friend 'Spraying Bob' came up with a lovely flip top petrol filler cap, from where he can't remember, but it is certainly 1960's (turned out to be from a TR5A) and will look great once we have modified the pipe to fit. Where the fuel pipe exits the body, a rubber trim will be needed for a snug fit and a tidy appearance; what I really wanted was a huge 7cm grommet that could locate into the 3mm panel. The internet came up with Grommets Ltd in Henfield, one phone call and £4.00 plus postage, the perfect fitting rubber solution arrived in the post two days later.

Plates of Meat

No doubt the Sienna was designed to accommodate a pilot enjoying a slight physique, and whilst I will confess to having added a few pounds over the years, I am no Tinkerbell either. Even with size tens wrapped in size eight trainers pressing the go pedal along with the brakes was an issue we needed to resolve. The foot well is so narrow it needed widening, this allowed for the required pedal separation and this is where GRP panels offer a real bonus. By removing an area of the original inner panel we gained about six inches of 'foot room' thus adjustment of the pedal gap was straightforward but the go pedal base now caught the bodywork in operation. The solution involved a large sheet of rather thick aluminium, one days fiddling, and a pack of rivets.

The result means an emergency stop won't result in our rushing towards an accident; we hope.



Alan runs the rather costly marine battery cable through the interior, it looks rather radical, and saves drilling lots of holes.

Prep and Primer

A 1970's fibre glass body with more chips than Harry Ramsden, and a bonnet that someone has dropped a bowling ball on from an aeroplane, was Spraying Bob's conclusion. Sure enough it would take weeks to achieve even a reasonable finish, but to be honest, it is somewhat irrelevant when spiders web cracks appear at random after little use, this I know having owned a Reliant Scimitar in my youth. The original bonnet catch and piano hinge would enjoy a refurb, followed by several coats of black, but the door handles were in a poor condition and didn't lock anyway. We decided not to refit, instead clean lines could be achieved when Bob manufactured a couple of plates before a glass fibre fill, and top 'Metalix' skim provided a great finish.



Several coats of high build primer took out many of the blemishes, followed by a tube of fine filler called Finissage, highly recommended for small imperfections and easy to flat away. The next stage is colour, and the kind folk at Mountspace paint suppliers near Goodwood mixed 4 litres of a red, which we hope is extremely close to Professor Tony Stevens' original choice for the Sienna. Next time I hope to be reporting on the refit plus how shiny my classic (Alfa-ish) red paint finish has turned out.



Grant Ford for classiccarmag.net www.grantford.co.uk

Thanks to Simon Fitch- www.stevens-cipher.com

Brian Marshall Reliant Kitten Register- www.kitreg.org.uk

Peter Bird & Dave Corby

I understand that Grant has now completed the project, more on that next time, by when I will have taken Grant up his kind offer of "Lunch by the sea in the Sienna", and will be able to give you a first-hand report on it. I just hope it doesn't rain in Sussex in September! Ed.

A taste of Llangollen 2017, much more next time!



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*I find myself having more difficulty with decision making and the ability to accept compromise these days, quite frustrating really.*

*The point, in this instance, is that the following article, and, more to the point pictures, probably warranted a front cover photo, but, as you know, I am determined to focus on Kittens on the cover this year, and, as you also know, that file of "Mewsletter material" is already bulging at the seams, so, with apologies, and thanks to Roger & Gill, I will reluctantly let compromise strike again :-*

## SUPER TWO

I thought you might like to know the history, the purchase and restoration of my wife Gill's Super Two, as an alternative to the other Reliant 850 Specials we see.

I first saw this Special advertised in the 'weekly bible' Exchange & Mart 31 years ago. In the advert it was obvious that the car had been fitted with a 2 Ltr Corsiar V4 engine [pretty lethal].



To collect it, we had to tow the trailer behind my faithful Mk 1 Transit all the way round the M25 to the other site of London. On the way the big ends on the Transit started to rattle, fortunately we made it there and back.

Once back in the workshop the Stage 1 2 Ltr V4 engine in the Super Two was transferred into the Transit to keep that on the road, as, at the time, it was my daily driver.

We then decided to return the Super Two to original, so back round London again to purchase a 100E Anglia as a donor car. This is where the fun starts, the whole engine compartment of the Super Two had been cut off at the bulkhead, probably to make fitting the V4 easier.

All the mechanics were stripped out, as the lash up they had conceived to connect the E93A torque tube prop to the back of the 2000E gearbox was, to say the least, lethal. Then one day my friend Nigel came into the workshop, looked at the 100E engine and box fitted to the chassis and said, "we can do better than that, in my yard there is a crashed Rialto with only 16,000 miles on the clock, why not use that as a donor for the power unit, it has the wonderful all ally 850 engine and box to make the Super Two a better driver in modern traffic.

In the meantime Gill got on with designing the hood and trim.

I appreciate that at the time these Specials were being built in the 50s and 60s, they had to use parts that were available and down to a minimum budget, but time moves on. With the arrival of Nigel's crashed Rialto as a donor car the whole project took on a new direction. It was now decided to take the car at least into the 1980s to make it more user friendly in modern road conditions, without detracting from the original concept.

Lets start at the rear and work forward, as pretty much everything has been modified. When looking at the standard E93A standard spring and torque tube set up used by the chassis designer and manufacturer Bowden Engineering, it became apparent that there was no easy way of linking up the torque tube prop shaft with the conventional Reliant gearbox so the whole rear axle, torque tube, and associate bracketry was ripped out. The conventional rear axle from the 100E donor car was offered up and was found that coil over shock absorbers from a Jaguar E type fitted in place of the original shocks worked out OK, and gave up the same ride height [more about spring rates later]. The old 100E handbrake rods were removed as the car already had a twin cable system, this gave us the idea to use a tack rod are from a Ford Fiesta steering rack as a double jointed Panhard rod, it's in a knuckle located through the hole vacated by the brake rod at the base of the diff case, a special lock nut and tab washer were made up to locate this. The track rod end of the arm was then located on a suitable bracket on the chassis rail. This gave a perfect double jointed panhard rod to locate sideways movement of the axle, with no radial arcs to worry about. Next and



perhaps the biggest headache was to modify the axle ends to use the old E93A 5 bolt brake drums and wheels. This was not a straightforward swap, although the 2 axles are similar, the 100E type has different hubs to accommodate its more modern 4 bolt, 13 inch wheels, plus the outer half shaft roller bearings were slightly shorter. The half shafts, I seem to remember, were slightly longer, so the only way was to part off the 100E axle tubes about 50mm back from the brake plates, then part off the E93A axle tubes to the correct length to bring the bearings and brake plate to the right place on the half shaft. These tubes were trued up and mig welded in place. Forward location of the axle was achieved by twin trailing arms each side, channel boxes were made up about 8 inches deep and welded to the axle tubes in the same area as the axle mods, adding extra strength in this area [these boxes were for the rearward location of the trailing arms]. The forward location terminated just behind the door B post, this part of the job was a scaled down copy of my Scimitar SE5. The geometry for this had to be carefully calculated to allow the diff nose to rise and fall in a straight line as any radius at this point would result in too great an angle on the propshaft U.J. The propshaft flanges were luckily the same size as the Ford, so the Rialto prop only needed lengthening by about 4 inches. All this work freed up enough room in the rear body area to first mount a new stainless steel fuel tank inside the rear chassis tubes for added safety, and also to allow a boot area to be created at the rear, where the old leaf spring and bracket lived. This boot, with its proper boot lid, is big enough to take tools, the hood, and sidescreens. Also, would you believe, 5 carrier bags of supermarket shopping when on holiday!

The Rialto engine and gearbox were lowered into the car for best position, I then realised the original builders, Bowden Engineering, although making a grand job of converting the old Ford transverse leaf spring and beam axle into a full independent set up, had left the original radius arms in place, still terminating in the centre at the rear of the engine compartment, fine with original Ford product, but it leaves the engine sitting very high for a low slung Special, so a plan was hatched. The arms were cut and shut about 8 inches back from the front axle and bent out to re-locate down the sides of the chassis rails. I hoped this was OK to do, but some years later I spied at Lotus 6 at Prescott Hillclimb, and its arms were converted in the same way. Good enough for Colin Chapman I thought, good enough for me [I was quite chuffed at seeing this]. This allowed us to drop the Reliant 850 engine and box much lower down.



After the engine position was established, a small subframe was made up to support the engine and the Reliant radiator, along with its original hoses. The original Reliant gearbox mounts and subframe were also used. I was lucky that they also fell nicely into place without modifying. As many of the original Reliant parts as possible were used so as to make replacement easier in the future, especially as my local village garage is a Reliant agent.

After all the main running gear was in place, it was found that owing to the engine and box being so small, the gearlever came out well forward and under the bulkhead, so a simple remote gear change was made up to bring the gearlever into a more useful place.

The next challenge being brakes and steering, one thing Reliant are very good at is designing excellent pedal boxes. I think they may even be unique in having a progressive throttle pedal to make control of the car much easier in traffic [Reliant Scimitar]. These pedal boxes housed in a nice useable cage are a good and cheap choice for your Special. The Rialto set up was no exception with its original master cylinder allowed us to install a dual circuit braking system. All 4 wheels already had a hydraulic brake conversion, using Morris Minor wheel

cylinders, presumably done by Bowden Engineering. I made up a ¾" square box section subframe, which was "tied" into the car bulkhead and floor to support the pedal box, the upper steering column, clutch cable support, and the rear of the dashboard.

As most of you will know, the old steering columns up until about the 60s, were just a steering box mounted on the chassis, with a straight tube coming up to the steering wheel. The trouble with this in a Special is, the steering wheel often ends up in the wrong place. To overcome this, and to improve safety, we used a combination of the original steering box, and the Rialto's more modern top column with its shafts and UJs, which were used to put the wheel where we wanted it, First we bit the bullet and cut the old column off, and grafted on the top part which would normally be behind the steering wheel onto the shaft, just as it comes out of the steering box, a support bracket was fixed to this short shaft, and down to the chassis rail to stiffen this all up. The Rialto shaft was then connected to the short Rialto top column via its original splined couplings. The top of this Rialto column was tied into the bulkhead subframe mentioned earlier. This also allowed me to fit a very nice Les Leston woodrim steering wheel I had laying around. Several other small mods were carried out, like mounting the headlights on the front suspension, unlike any other Super Two I have seen.

Whilst I was into all this mechanical stuff, Gill had worked out a very nice seating arrangement, a one piece fluted backrest covering the whole of the rear bulkhead, with two thick padded seat squabs. The transmission tunnel was also padded, and covered in the same deep red material. A full carpet set was also made up in deep red, the dash was made up using all the instruments from the Rialto [the speedo was recalibrated to suit the 15 inch wheels and different axle ratio] so everything matched and worked fine. A bespoke wiring loom for the whole car was made up in 3 parts, engine compartment, rear end, and dashboard. The windscreen was raised about 3 inches, so we could fit a decent hood. I made up a very simple hood frame, just a small single tube hoop in 3 pieces [for storage], the lower ends were spigoted in down by the door B posts, and had over centre lifters fitted to tension the hood fabric. Door mounted drop in side screens were also designed to fit the hood, all very snug in rainy weather. The nicest drive in this little car is hood down with the side screens up, we have done many 100 mile plus drives like this, with little or no wind buffeting. We like our cars to be user friendly and not hard work!



If I went on much further with all the little jobs we have completed on this great little car, I would bore you more than maybe you already are. I hope this article had been of interest and given you some inspiration, I apologise to younger readers for all the imperial measurements, it's an age thing.

One last thing, if you are contemplating any radical mods as on the Super Two, please make sure they are well thought out and well engineered, and if you are not sure, ask.

As I said earlier spring rates for the coil over rear shocks were a challenge, many being tried, as the car is so light, two people sitting inside are as heavy the whole back of the car, but once we got it right, the car has a nice comfy ride, and no rattles.

As a conclusion, stay safe.

Roger & Gill Cook No. 1025 from Bury St. Edmunds

## Epilogue

There is a paragraph which I use in our early communication with new subscribers these days which reads as follows :-

*They are truly marvelous wee cars. I once did Land's End to John O'Groats in one, almost 20 years ago now! We ended up at the ROC National Rally, so I did 3,017 miles in ten days, averaging 58 mpg, if only I had not driven so fast, I could have achieved 60!*

Were there more room on the page that goes on, I might mention that the half hour of great fun I had at one point, trying not to let Thomas Touw's Cipher make better progress than I was doing, was probably the thing that cost me that 2 mpg!

The other thing I did not mention was that it was a John Box built engine I had in the car at that time, which just might have given me an edge!

Now I have something of a dilemma, nothing new there I know, but, I have, for the moment, abandoned the plan to go through that old folder of "Mewsletter material" because, happily, I have plenty to put in here just now, but a conflict right now, mid August, do I extend this edition by a page of A4, or rush it off this week? You might think the answer to that was obvious, given that this is not due for about 6 weeks or so, but the printers busiest time of the year starts next week, so getting in before then would be good, to avoid possible delays later, decisions decisions, and I used to be so good at making them (right or wrong!)

I resolved my dilemma about the Super Two not being a front cover candidate, it does not use Reliant running gear, conscience clear!

*Brian*

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