



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

# RELIANT KITTEN REGISTER



## Mewsletter 139

November - December 2017



*A very tidy unmolested Kitten recently acquired by subscriber Andy Lawford. Much has been done since this picture was taken and the wee car is now up and running, but work continues – he’s looking for some doors as the drivers’ side one is in poor condition, the usual hinge problem. The car has been off the road about 5 years or so and he hopes to have it road legal soon. Oddly, although registered in 1978, it’s actually a pre-DL model, built in 1976, so should be eligible for Historic tax. DVLA have been contacted.....*

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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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E & o e

Welcome to what will be our Christmas edition (he said in early October!) Lest I forget, a big thank you to Darren Watson for most of the pictures you will see in this edition.

So, we made it then, a whole year, in spite of temptations, of Kittens on the front cover, how about that then? I think (memory flaws accepted) that that is the first time we have ever done that.

I was very tempted to use one of the many multiple Kitten pictures you will see further on, as the cover picture on this edition, but I had already changed my mind once!

It just reflects the chaos that is my mind, too easily sidetracked, but hey, we have muddled along not too badly this past quarter of a century or so, I hope you will agree.

I decided to delay the majority of the report on our gathering at Llangollen till this edition, to brighten things up at this time of year.

At the time of writing I am spending far too much time trying to work out if I need to change my car, and if so, what to replace it with, oh boy is there a lot of choice out there (if you ignore price). I am finding it incredibly time consuming, indeed frustrating. Sadly, small Reliants are not in the running, more's the pity.

After my most recent (September this year) trip south, some of which I may bore you with one day, one of the high priority features any replacement vehicle needs to have is cruise control! I have, over the 4 years since I fitted hand controls, come to depend on them, and holding a hand throttle open for hour after hour is a pain, quite literally!

Enough digression, on with the show...

Speaking of getting on, Steve Casey has kindly given up a lot of his spare time to create an index of articles in the Mewsletters, but there has long been a discrepancy here between the hard copy versions and the on-line PDF copies which I will not dwell upon (because it shook my confidence more than a little when I finally realised that that was the case – it took me a long time to grasp what was going on), more than once I was told about this unsatisfactory situation, but I did not understand what was happening, and just swept it to the back of my mind (there are no carpets there – I don't think!) and I am not at all sure that I understand it all yet, which is more than a little concerning, but I find it best not to dwell on my shortcomings!

The point is that Steve does not have a full set of hard copies of the magazine, and so he has asked me to run a wanted advert, which you will see on the supplementary sheet. I should, indeed am certain that I do have a full set, but fear they are in a box, possibly several boxes, in the loft "somewhere safe" and the time it takes me to get round to things these days, well, if you have copies before edition 50, Steve would like to hear from you. His contact details are on the supplement.

Right, at some 177,432 KB this is by far the largest, in document size, edition we have ever had, even though it probably has the least words! So I will press on, and hopefully get it to you in time.

# From the Oval Office

Festive greetings should be due about now, if Brian keeps things in order in his usual manner, so enjoy the break, check the antifreeze in the car, and oil those Rebel trunnions! (I am confident that ball joint lubrication will be mentioned elsewhere within these pages!)

All good wishes to you and yours for 2018 when it comes.

John

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## Stop Light Switch - By John Box

During my pre MOT check I noticed that the stop lights were not working. Inspection revealed that the switch had fallen apart. It is one of those rectangular nylon ones, formed of two components clipped together.

I replaced the switch and all was well, until I reached the MOT, which it failed due to inoperative stop lights!

The new switch had also fallen apart, having lasted one and a half miles!

This switch is a very fragile item, and investigation suggested that it can self-destruct if the plunger fouls the end cover when the pedal is released.

I would suggest that new switches are dressed with Araldite around the seam where the two components are clipped together, and that the switch is adjusted so that it protrudes the minimum amount for the lights to operate. The new switch has lasted 60 miles so far; fingers crossed.

John, August 2017

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## Right, now for the long-awaited picture report of Llangollen 2017



Those who were early enough on the Saturday gathered for a coffee at the Café at the top of Horseshoe Pass, from where we made our way to the railway station car park at Corwen.

There are simply too many pictures to choose from, so I have decided to show you a small (emphasis on the word small!) selection of the train trip photos, thanks to Darren Watson, here :-







Here we are in the car-park next to the station on Saturday afternoon.



Now on and from the train, on what has to be one of the best kept preserved railways in the land.



It really is like stepping back in time, I am just not sure if it is half a century, or a century back!







About my only concern was the use of lower quadrant signals, which may well be true to the period, possibly original even, but I much prefer the safety aspect of ones that, if they fail, do so in the stop position. That said, from what I saw, their maintenance standards are well up to the job.



Some more shots from the train and in Llangollen.





Three Tandys this year, and all different colours too!







Clive and Keith's Mk II Kitten attracted a lot of attention on its first outing at an event, yes, ever!



A rare shot of Mick Rowley's Fox, his daily transport I believe, and very tidy it is too, congratulations Mick.



As you can see from the shadows above, we did enjoy some sunshine over the course of the weekend.







Sometimes one has to compromise, John (and Jackie) my apologies for the amputation, but I thought I would still use the picture of the Reliant Raptor.







If you look very closely, you will see it actually says RAPTOR in the logo!





Although the facilities at the location are poor, the setting is just great. The walk along the canal footpath to Llangollen, about a mile or so away is very relaxing, and the town has a plethora of cafes and restaurants.







I sometimes wonder if we should be doing this kind of thing, after all, it is just a Register! Malcolm, thank you, it provides us with a wonderful opportunity to catch up, and take some inspiring pictures.





The second line of “Flower of Scotland” springs to mind!

When will we see their like again?

*The answer, hopefully, is at Llangollen, in the summer of 2018!*







A pretty good picture of Malcolm's right hand! If you look closely, you may see that that is his registration number on the car!

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My thanks to Darren Watson for the pictures, our President and Dave Price for the articles, my apologies to Grant Ford for holding the final part of his Sienna Resto story over till next time, and John Pearce for organising that model Kitten for Malcolm.

All that remains for me to do is tidy this up and get it to the printers in time to get it to you before the Christmas rush! Well, one has to have aspirations!

I hope that those pictures will remind those in attendance of a great weekend, and inspire those currently carrying out restorations to press on, and hopefully join us at Llangollen next year (he said, hoping this will get to you in 2017!)

*Brian*



## *Liege Page*

I am a bit light on Liege input this time, but I must tell you, Paul Wheatley very kindly took me for a spin round the lanes in his, in September (2017).

Paul has finally been seduced by the lure of the 5 speed gearbox that comes with a Suzuki engine, the extra power offered by said Suzuki engine might have been another attraction, though, Paul being Paul, still more power was needed, so he pushed himself to the forefront of development, and added a supercharger. Wow, I must not tell you how fast it goes, suffice to say that it can very quickly well exceed the legal limit, in third!

What a rush, I have not grinned so much for years, thank you Paul.



Those neat wee side screens make a remarkable improvement to passenger comfort. As you will see over the page, there is not a lot of spare space in there, but boy is it worth the shoehorning!



Paul Wheatley's Liege "Little Lucy" 2017



One of my many shortcomings is my failure to attend to things on my to-do list in a timely manner. This causes me much frustration, and as the years go by, the situation seems to deteriorate, much to my sorrow.

There are several items that get transferred from one week to the next for months, sometimes years, without ever being addressed.

One such item is an in-depth story on our long-term advertiser, Graham Walker of Chester.

Now I know that for some of you, that is your first port of call for any parts requirement that you have, (they stock new sumps and fuel tanks, amongst many other things!) but I only recently discovered that they made an excellent job of rebuilding an engine for Gordon Shaw (Steve Preston at Dinky Cars I know also does engine reconditioning). This fact was pointed out to me in a communication from a very satisfied customer of Graham Walker's recently, Gordon Shaw, who had them rebuild his Kitten's engine this year. This spurred me on to mention them, but, on checking, I discovered that engine rebuilds is not in fact a service that they offer, but on that occasion they decided to help Gordon out. Gordon was very impressed, as he was with the work Alan Shaw, (not a relative) did on his steering rack.

The engine rebuild included new liners, pistons and rings as well as new bearings gaskets and cylinder head re-con.

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Another shortcoming is my poor efforts as regards continuity of publication of the articles on the Sienna restoration.

I was privileged enough to be able to take Grant Ford up on his offer of lunch by the sea in Sussex in September.

I had however imagined that I would turn up, and we would drive off in the Sienna to go to the seaside. Little did I realise that the beach is at the bottom of Grant's back garden!

There is a lot of history there, but I digress.

Out of space now, so I will finish the Sienna story next time.

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A snippet of things to come....



Here I am in Grand Ford's drive, in September 2017  
in the Sienna, only 100 yards from the  
the sunny Sussex sea front!

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## I DID IT MY WAY, UPDATE

Those with good memories will recall that I have been rebuilding an Austin 7 Ruby which was passed on to me by my car trials partner, Graham Baddeley, who died in 2009. Losing Graham made me quit car trials, and the Tempest was stripped down and the body removed from the chassis for a total rebuild. The Austin 7 delayed this rebuild while the A7 went through the same process. Last year the Ruby was almost completed, just the upholstery, (seating and door panels), to be carried out by an expert, as I would not make a good enough job.



I had written to the DVLA for a reg number, they told me to write to a local Licensing Authority, which I thought were all gone. So, I wrote to the Gloucester office with a photo copy of the old brown log book. Guess what, no answer, so now I do not know if they are closed or not. So, I wrote to the Oxford office and again no reply. Looking at the web it clearly states that all Local Tax offices were closed, and I found the forms that I need to complete to regain the old registration. I have now filled them in, and need our local Austin 7 Club to confirm the car is genuine. I have checked the old number on the DVLA site, which confirms that the reg is not in use. So, fingers crossed. I have now put the Ruby in the Tempest garage, and brought the Tempest chassis back home.

The suspension for the Tempest was soft, to provide grip on soft ground, grass and mud etc, which is not much good for normal road use. I stripped the rear suspension down, rebuilt the rear springs to make them firmer. The front suspension was stripped next, and rebuilt with the anti-roll bar refitted, (removed for trials), and now the front suspension is also firmer.

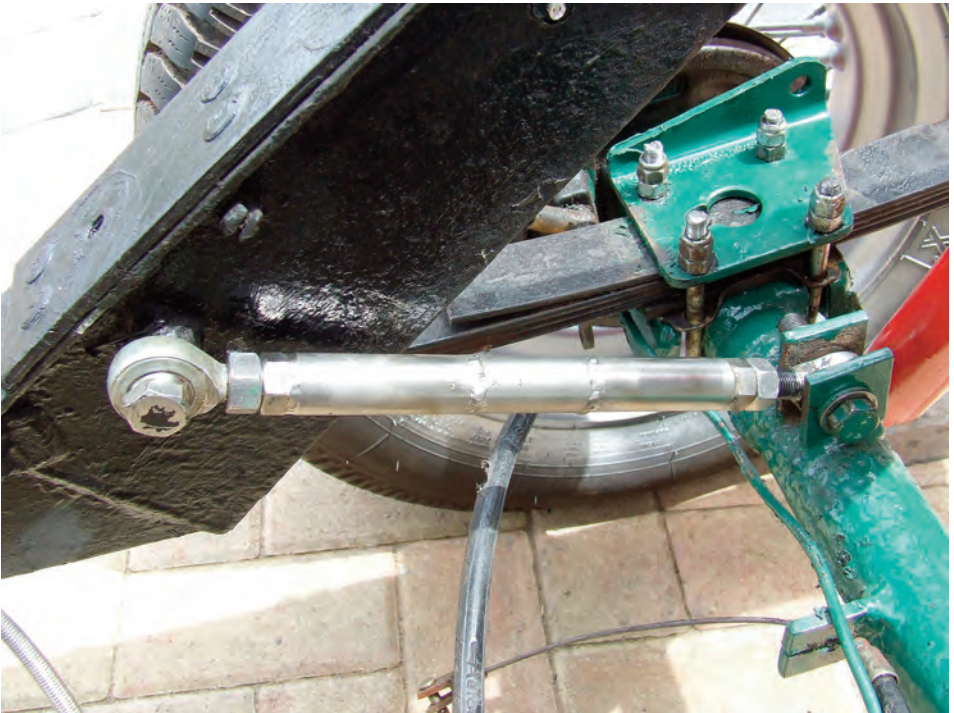


The next item in my sights was the propshaft, it needs a new



one, as the front universal joint will be different to the original one. I then suddenly remembered that John Box had built a new car similar to the Tempest, and lengthened the wheelbase by 3 inches. I had already lengthened my Tempest wheelbase when I built it, by half an inch by moving the rear axle along the rear springs.

So, I telephoned John and asked how he had lengthened his wheelbase, as I wanted to increase my Tempest wheelbase. John told me he had moved the spring mountings along the chassis by three inches and told me what to watch out for.



Increasing the wheelbase will improve the ride, and help with the propshaft length. So off with the rear suspension again, chassis re-drilled three and a half inches further back and new thick wall tubing welded into the chassis. At the same time I had to lengthen the rear anti tramp bars. After re-painting the chassis, the springs were bolted onto their new mountings. Measuring the distance between the front stub axles and the centre of the rear wheels gave a distance of 88 inches or 7ft 4inches, an increase of 4 inches over the standard chassis.



The next item to be sorted was the front brakes, which were drum brakes, and I decided to change to Disc brakes. So, I needed to sort out parts to fit the Tempest, which I did through Joe's Tempest Cars near Worcester. The kit Joe provided was brilliant, and was a dream to fit, thanks Joe. When done, the chassis went back on four wheels.





The next job to sort out was new pistons so I can get the engine block rebored, hopefully by the end of October 2017. Then I can then rebuild the engine.

I want to get the engine in the chassis with the exhaust fitted before I refit the body, which has been cleaned and tidied up. Trials do tend to spoil body work, and so this needed to be carried out. At the same time I tidied up the electrical wiring. I rewired the Tempest 10 years ago, but did it in a hurry as I wanted to finish it in time for the next trials season, and so was not very tidy.

I think this is a good point to end this chapter of my cars and I will bring you up to date when the car is back on the road, hopefully by early spring 2018. I want to go to the annual bash at Llangollen with the Tempest, so it will need to be finished for that.

I will see you all there, hopefully with my rebuilt long wheelbase Tempest.

Dave Price, No. 327 from Moreton in Marsh.



# Getting Technical

## Stopping power!

I was asked recently what we do when a repair kit does not do the job, and a second hand master cylinder leaked, well, I had to ask (because I could not remember) which MGB one some of us have used, or the best place to buy them is :-

One alternative Kitten brake master cylinder is the early MGB single circuit one from about mid 1960's to 1974, best bought from "MGB Hive" on line, they are about £40 plus delivery. If you are not on-line, 01945 700500 will get them, and the part number is GMC 150.

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Just to prove I was not making it all up, a bigger version of the picture on the bottom of page 14!



# Tempest Update

Hi Brian,

November 2017

Hope all is well with you and yours have your thermals on and porridge in. Busy on Tempest this end with J748 HTP heading back down South from Aberdeen this week.

The new site [www.tempestcars.net](http://www.tempestcars.net) is filling up with lots of information, including two cars we didn't know about.

Lots of cars for sale including a few unfinished projects looking for good homes.

All best, Joe



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## *Llangollen 2018*

We are about to book the 2018 gathering, intending using the same venue as before at Llangollen, this is your chance to have some input about the date, we are thinking of mid to late July, but early August might be on, and possibly a trip on the canal this time. Please let Malcolm know your thoughts / preferences before Christmas, thank you.

Malcolm can be contacted on [rkrshowpostbox@gmail.com](mailto:rkrshowpostbox@gmail.com)

Or you might catch him on 01948840896.



## Epilogue

Once again we come to the end of another year, both us and our cars are facing another winter, so it is time to check the antifreeze, tyres and brakes, the battery connections and condition, and generally take care!

I could not find my battery charger the other day, I do remember having to borrow a friend's one last winter, one day I'll get organised! I have to say I was shocked both at the price, and apparently complicated, well, o.k., lets be kind and say sophisticated, nature of battery chargers these days!

It is also fast approaching subscription renewal time. This will be another easy year for me on that front, with about a quarter of our readers having taken up our 5 year option. That is a big help in reducing my workload at this time of year, so a big thank you very much to those concerned.

Everyone should find a renewal notice enclosed, and, hopefully, this time I will remember to mark all the 5 year ones correctly (I missed a couple last year!) If everyone would complete the car details section and return the form, that would be appreciated, as it is our annual opportunity to keep the vehicle records up to date.

I know that John and Susan are pressing ahead on the Paypal front, and so not only will we be able to sign folk up on-line in future, but on-line renewals may also be possible. I would say watch this space, but the more likely reality could possibly be found on the supplementary sheet!?!

It only remains for me to wish you all good wishes of the season, and to, as ever, remind you about ball joint lubrication!

*Brian*

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