



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

# RELIANT KITTEN REGISTER



## **Mewsletter 145** **November - December 2018**



*Our Christmas cover picture this year is a Fox belonging to Willie McKenna from Aviemore. He is the 4th most northerly RKR subscriber in the U.K. His Fox, which he found in May of this year (2018) after a long search, is well on the way to being put into first rate order. Like many of our readers, Willie has an interest in rescuing vehicles. He completely restored an old Jowett Bradford van a few years ago – yes Dick (Goodall), the one that you had in your garden for a long 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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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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# Mews 145

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E & o e

Christmas will be just around the corner (I just hope it is not history when you are reading this!) Whenever you get it, Welcome to the last edition of 2018.

So, here we are, my daily task list is back to a single A4 sheet (on the screen, not killing trees), and the Christmas cards are almost all written, though my attempt at, finally, transferring the address label file for them to a template is on-going, and more time consuming than I had imagined it would have been, I am getting there.

My article on old units, racks in particular, in here last time, has proved very fruitful, and I am heartened by several responses, an offer, and the success of the new transport case, more on that later.

As ever I must put the record straight and thank a couple of individuals who did provide me with input that I did not use last time, so, while our President's comments are perfectly true and valid, they don't tell the whole story, but enough of my failings!

One thing I have learnt over the years is the difficulty of predicting the future. It is now 18/11/18, and I am almost exactly half way through this edition at the very time I had hoped to have it ready to go to the printers (he said, remembering John Pearce's promise!). So, time is very short. That said, there is only one picture in it so far.

This is where life gets in the way. Mum's Victorian oak hallstand is going under the hammer today. I have never been to an antiques auction, and McTears is only 4 miles from here, but we are going to Law, daughter's place, this afternoon. The hallstand is lot 245, and the auction does not start till 10:30, so I expect we would need to leave before it came up, (we plan to have lunch before we head off at 13:00hrs.) and I could spend the next couple of hours typing this instead – decisions decisions!

Then there is the Presidential situation to resolve. John only agreed to do a 3 year stint, and that was 3 years ago, (where does time go?). When Phil and I called in for a coffee in passing the White House last Wednesday, John proposed Phil as his successor, which I was very happy with, but Phil declined, pointing out that, unlike John, he no longer owned a Reliant (not an essential qualification for the job) but that he also spent more time, particularly in the summer, in France these days than he does in the U.K., and did not feel it was appropriate. Clearly I have some persuading to do.

Meantime, if I interpreted the conversation correctly, it seems that the current incumbent might be prepared to give us another while in which to find a successor?

I used to dislike vague and un-defined things, but in the circumstances am very happy to take what I can get, thank you John.

Three more years does not quite have the ring of four, but just one would certainly take the pressure off. Seriously though, any reduction in my work-load is appreciated, thank you John.

Distractions and colds have conspired to slow things down in the latter half of November, not to mention a couple of enjoyable dinners, and a great Jowett Scottish section AGM. Not a good month on the weight control front, but not a disaster by any means, and then there is the “new” car, but it is not a Reliant, so the less said in here about that the better!

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# From the Oval Office

Dear Sir!

October 2018

Did you notice that your recent Mewsletter had a major content of your Editor’s (Brian’s) hard work? One reason for this is a lack of input from you, the Register members.

A Club magazine should be, amongst other things, a discussion document, a forum for questions and answers. Electronic information is fine in this modern world, but pen and ink is much more versatile and less secretive. So write about anything. It only needs the slightest Reliant theme, let’s elicit some interesting views and opinions and help Brian to fill his pages in the New Year.

My good wishes for Christmas and the New Year.

John (Box)

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*And I find myself with the proverbial odd corner, which is in fact great, because it lets me share the information, just arrived (8/12/18) from Malcolm, that our weekend at the Llangollen Motor Museum is confirmed as that of the 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> of July. Let that be the first entry in your 2019 diary! Ed.*

Hi Brian, Hope you are all keeping well.

14/10/18

I've just read your latest Kitten magazine, thanks for your sterling efforts as always.

A few things that came to mind; if I might be so bold.

You mentioned that you find it difficult to fit the gaiters and fill reconditioned steering racks with oil before packing them to send out. Could I suggest that you leave the recipient to fit them and fill with oil i.e. just supply the gaiters and perhaps tie-wraps in the package or alternatively direct the owner to source them from a Ford Dealer, or online (they are Ford Escort Mk1, aren't they - certainly that's what I fitted to my Liege). Less time and effort for yourself, and no chance of the oil leaking out in the post. I'm sure no-one would mind, seeing as they must have already shown enough mechanical ability to remove and refit a steering rack.

Regarding the Liege that was going to be built by the father of James Clapham. As the manager of the Liege Car Club website, I have access to the Liege Car Club's membership list. There is no-one of that surname on the list. As one of the original club members, which was formed 16 years or so ago, I can't recall anyone of that name in the past coming to light. It is however possible it's one of the few "still missing" cars not on our list. The last chassis made was number sixty and as far as we know, all the cars produced exist somewhere. Certainly if one had been written off or scrapped we would probably have heard about it. P.S. It's Liege, not Leige (similar thing to the problem the "Robin Reliant" has! ;-)

Finally, your article on batteries was quite a coincidence. I gave my Honda CB750 one of its rare outings on Wednesday (rare as in having covered 14,000 miles in just under 28 years). Having started it without any problem at all I rode it twelve miles to my favourite Shell garage to fill up with their super unleaded, which it prefers. Having put almost four gallons in the tank I found the battery had died - not enough power to engage the starter motor. I got a boost start from the chaps at the service station, who run a motorway breakdown service from there and realised I'd better go straight home (it's a big heavy bike and not easy to bump start). The Royal Enfield has a kick-start and so it got a ride out instead.

I went online last night to order a replacement battery. As you noted, it's no longer legal to supply sulphuric acid by post. Tragic as some recent cases of acid assault have been, it's a rather pointless response by the authorities because if someone really wants to get acid, it's obviously available by other means.

Thankfully, "gel filled" batteries can still be supplied in the post and ready to go because, by their nature, they have to be pre-filled at the factory.

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

*Many thanks for that Paul, you, and everyone else, will read more of developments, options and thoughts on rack matters elsewhere in this edition.*

*Oops, make that below, and in the next edition – Ed.*

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Hi Brian,

17/10/18

Hope you and Moira are keeping well and have survived the 3 week grandchild minding stint you mentioned in the Mewsletter. It's another great read, though I feel rather guilty now as I have a rack that I didn't provide an exchange one, for, however should anyone need one and the Register doesn't have one in stock, then you know where I am! I'm happy to help out collecting/delivering racks to Alan Shaw.

I'd offer to help with the packing and posting, but collection and delivery might be awkward with working during the week, someone sent something much smaller via Hermes recently, but they ended up sending it back to the vendor, despite me leaving a message saying they could leave it in the recycling bin. Very frustrating!

When I started my apprenticeship I soon found out the difference between a rule and a ruler, a rule has graduations from the end whilst a ruler has a small plain section between the end, and the datum point. A very strict (and very good) training instructor made sure we were all aware of the difference, and woe betide anyone who forgot!



I took the Kitten for a little run out to a gathering at Middleton Hall, a lovely old hall near Tamworth a couple of weeks ago. I'm not a fan of the A42/M42 so I took the A38 to Alrewas then went down the A513 to Tamworth and Fazeley and really enjoyed the drive. The gathering was good too with a nice eclectic mix of cars, there were two other Reliants there but both were Scimitars (a GTE and an SS1). Someone approached me and asked if the van was for sale so I said it wasn't, then he said he'd make me an offer 'I can't refuse' but the answer was still a firm "No". I've no idea what he was wanting to offer but when something's not for sale then it's not for sale, end of story! However, he asked if I had any other Reliants so I told him about the Girder Fork Van; he's coming to have a look on Saturday so we'll see what he says.

All the best, Tony (Wiese) No. 967 from Wakefield

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Hi Brian, 24/10/18

Catching up on reading the Mewsletter I thought you might like to make the age of the tyres on the Riley into a quiz.

The tyres are made by John Bull, so does anyone know when that company ceased trading?

Regarding the brake cylinders leaking, I think it could be due to the quality of the casting which is probably very poor. There are some companies that machine and re-sleeve them with thin stainless steel tube, it would be interesting to see if this improves the life of the cylinder.

Regards Phil (Hallam) No. 164 from Saltcoats

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*I agree, so a year's free subscription to the first person to correctly identify the year that Phil bought his Riley 9 a new set of tyres (on the assumption that he bought them during Mr. Bull's last year in business)? Ed.*



## Annual Kitten Reg get-to-gether

Dear Malcolm,

November 2018

Thanks for the chat earlier about the annual get together. As we both agreed, the best place for the annual event is the Museum at Llangollen. However, if the membership want a change of scenery, I am happy to arrange one at my end of the country.

We have a camp site near to the National Motor Museum at Gaydon, which is near the M40, so those from the north only have to continue down the M6 to the M5, and onto the M42 to the M40. Those from the south have the M4, M5 onto the M42 and M40. B&B's are also easy to find.

I have written to you this way, (via the Mewsletter) so that readers can let us know what they want.

Going back to this year's event, I thought it was great, the only problem was the rain on Sunday getting us to stand under umbrellas.

Next year I will bring my gazebo, if two other members can bring one as well, we will be able to stand and talk in luxury. They only take a few minutes to put up.

I think you should carry on with next year's arrangements, and if there is demand for one further south, I can do one the following year.

Hopefully this open letter will get a reaction, and some discussion going.

Keep up the good work Malcom.

Regards, Dave Price, No. 327 from Moreton-in-Marsh.

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***So, with thanks to Dave, its over to you, or, as they used to say – “Answers on a postcard please” or direct to Malcolm who has the event email address - rkrshowpostbox@gmail.com - Ed.***

# A very Taxing Matter...

By Phil Hallam

I am usually abroad when I need to 'tax' my two vintage cars. This is not a problem as I usually do it online (while I am sitting in the sun). This year I did the same, but form V112 has been introduced which I need to fill in and take to the post office - a bit difficult when the nearest post office is 900 kilometres away.

This morning, having returned to the UK, I went to the post office, filled out the two V112 forms, and presented my VC5's, explaining what had happened. The gentleman thought for a minute, and then said he could do it by taxing the cars, even though this had already been done. He did so, and then filed the forms.

I understand that I will have to present these forms next year, which means I will again have to visit a post office, (hoping I will be in the UK at the appropriate time!).

One would have thought that since they have at least one signed V112 for the car, I could in future just tick a box to confirm no changes if I were to tax them online.

I noted that the form does not require one to put in a date.

So much for the DVLA trying to put everything online.

I wonder if others have this problem? Regards Phil

Hi Brian,

October 2018

Hope you are all well, I obviously missed this box when I taxed online, I don't seem to remember it. Perhaps you could make it clear to others when they fill out the online taxation bit, to make sure they tick it if appropriate. See you soon Phil

*The following is an, I hope, self-explanatory story of communications relating to the DVLA's ability to check and or do some things, or not! Relating to re-taxing MOT exempt vehicles :- Thanks to Phil Hallam.*

From: Phil Hallam

To: [secretary@fbhvc.co.uk](mailto:secretary@fbhvc.co.uk)

19 October 2018

Subject: Form V112 mot exemption form.

Hi Emma,

I am usually abroad when I need to 'tax' my two vintage cars. This is not a problem as I usually do it online (when I am sitting in the sun). This year I did the same, but form V112 has recently been introduced, which I need to fill in and taken to the post office - a bit difficult when the nearest post office is 900 kilometres away.

This morning, having returned to these shores, I went to the post office, filled out the two V112 forms and presented my VC5's explaining what had happened. The gentleman thought about this, and then said he could do it by taxing the car, even though this had been done. He then did so, and filed the forms.

I understand that I will have to present these forms next year which means I will, again, have to visit a post office (hoping I will be in the UK). One would have thought that since they have at least one signed V112 for the car, I could just tick a box to confirm no changes if I were to tax them online. I noted that the form does not require one to put in a date.

So much for the DVLA trying to put everything online.

I wonder if others have this problem. Regards Phil

From: Emma Balaam [secretary@fbhvc.co.uk](mailto:secretary@fbhvc.co.uk)

19 October 2018

To: Phil Hallam Subject: RE: Form V112 mot exemption form

Good Afternoon Phil,

You can still tax your vehicles online as it will display a check box which you would tick to confirm no MOT is due.

This may be the better option for you next year, providing nothing changes between now and then.

Kindest Regards, Emma Balaam.

Secretary, Federation of British Historic Vehicle Clubs Ltd.

From: Phil Hallam.

19 October 2018

To: [secretary@fbhvc.co.uk](mailto:secretary@fbhvc.co.uk)

Subject: Form V112 mot exemption form

Hi Phil,

Thank you for your email to our Secretary, Emma, which has been forwarded to me.

I apologise for the delayed reply but I was at the Classic Motor Show at the NEC for three days followed by a few days holiday.

The situation you report regarding the MoT status with your two cars appears to be normal, and is not a problem for you. It seems that for all vehicles which are exempt from MoT, including those less than three years old, the Vehicle Enquiry Service (VES) shows 'No result returned'.

This does not mean that your cars are in any way incorrectly taxed, merely that the system does not record the exempt status.

FBHVC consider this to be fundamentally wrong, and will continue to raise the matter with DVLA, but in the meantime it is not an issue for vehicle owners and users.

For your information it is not necessary to write to DVSA to check as VES is available online at - <https://vehicleenquiry.service.gov.uk/>

Regards, Ian Edmunds - DVLA Liaison / FBHVC

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DVLA

Telephone: 0300 790 6801 for drivers queries.

0300 790 6802 for vehicle queries.

However, under new legislation that came into effect on 20 May 2018, certain vehicles constructed or first registered more than 40 years ago are now exempt from MOT testing, unless they have been substantially changed.

As long as the DVLA have a date of manufacture/first use on the vehicle record which shows the vehicle is over 40 years old, the on-line tax renewal system, and other enforcement systems, should automatically pick up that the vehicle is MOT exempt.

If, for some reason, the system is still not allowing a vehicle to be taxed, there is also a V112 (self-declaration from MOT) application form that can be completed and taken to a Post Office.

The V112 can be found here and was updated to show the above exemption on 20 May 2018.

I hope this information has assisted you with your enquiry, but if you have any further questions please do not hesitate to contact us again.

Over 90% of customers surveyed are satisfied with the service we have provided. Let us know what you think by clicking here.

Kind Regards, Christina M Joseph Customer Service Centre

Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency Ellipse, Padley Road, Swansea, SA1 8AN Phone: 0300 123 9000

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*My thanks to Phil for sharing that with us, it is reassuring to know that the FBHVC are well informed, and aware of shortcomings at the DVLA. Ed.*

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Hi Brian, 29/10/18

Thought you might like to see this. *(picture over the page, Ed.)*

A Kitten on eBay at the moment, that has been left outside for rather too long!

All best, Martin (Seymour) No. 551 from Reading

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*Thanks Martin. A timely reminder that the sourcing of new, sensibly priced, wishbones is high on the priority list, Ed.*



# THINGS OUTSTANDING!

Or, Brian's Diary, early in November!

I did think **Outstanding Things** might have made a better, if potentially misleading heading, no matter. As if you didn't know it already, this year has been one of, if not the, most - ahh, that elusive adjective time again! Certainly the most demanding of my life that I can remember, in recent decades at any rate, this at the very time in life, mine anyway, when I am slowing down (I know, you didn't think it was possible that I could be any slower!).

I am actually trying to get the other publication I edit to the printers at the moment, it was going to have been the Autumn edition, but I am thinking that Christmas might be closer to the mark – he said in the middle of November!

Anyway, I am trying to be varied in my approach, do a little of some of a number of tasks, rather than get bogged down with one, and thought I might run off our renewal notices for 2019, only to realise that most of your ones from this year are sitting in a neat pile on my desk, yet to be fully processed!

I always update the current year's spreadsheet, which I refer to when mailing the mags, to record who has renewed each year, but updating the vehicle records is a separate task, one I had not yet got round to this year. Not something I am proud of, but a fact.

So, instead of spending half an hour running off our renewal notices, I am spending what will be the first of several half hours, updating the database. A task I ought to have completed months ago!

One thing I tried, well, I hope I tried to do, was use and or respond to any specific questions asked on said renewal notices, and my memory is, not for the first time, causing me much frustration. So, at the risk of duplicating things, and or repeating myself, John Parker, our man in Bristol, was asking me about Rebel handbrake assembly availability – part number 2059, and I suspect that I did nothing about that, sorry John.



That particular situation is actually very very frustrating, if that is the part I think it is, (I really must not get distracted right now to check on that) the crank the back of the cable attaches to, which in turn operates the 2 pull rods, I have a few brand new ones – but I have no idea where, I suspect in the loft, they are! Not a lot of help, but I expect I was meaning to look, however I have not been able to get up there for the past year, and I guess it is getting to look like I never will again!

That realisation / admission, clearly raises questions I would rather not think about, Ostrich like behavior will, I know, not help resolve anything, but does let me function meantime.

I also ought to address the Rebel handbrake cable situation, I only have one left, it is in effect the pattern, but the last time I checked (some years ago now) the price had more than doubled, to almost £50! so I meant to look for an alternative supplier, but never did.... Good intentions littering the road to the bad fieryplace springs to mind....

Enough of my shortcomings, till the next comment on one of your renewal notices at any rate!

Now, that took me over half an hour just to type that up – 08:10 till 08:46 09/11/18 - I NEED A SECRETARY!!!

Saturday the 10<sup>th</sup> of November now, a coffee morning to attend, (you may remember our young friend Michelle who lost her battle with cancer aged just 30 a couple of years back, well her mum, Christine, our neighbour, now runs an annual fund raising coffee morning in Michelle's memory for the hospice, and Moira helps with the baking). Then it's off to Law, daughter's place, to grandchild mind, and before I know it ,just enough time to watch the qualifying for the Brazilian Grand Prix before bed, and tomorrow I have a cinema organ concert, one of our young rising stars, young David Gray, from Glasgow, back in Scotland again. And so it goes on.

To digress completely, one of our most recent subscribers had been reading some of the back issues that we send to every new individual who joins our ranks, and it turns out that he owns an HRG, one with a particularly interesting history, as its construction was interrupted by WW II, and so it got stored in the factory loft in bits, and was retrieved in 1945, and then finished off as the 'first post-war HRG'

and was photographed by Autocar in early '46.the first one completed after the war!

Now I am tempted to ask Dick if he was there then, though I think he was a few years (a decade even?) too young, but given that this publication, in spite of all my deviations, is a Reliant related one, I will leave it to chance to see if Dick actually reads every word I write, and only tell you more if he responds!

That said, Dick and Nigel are not the only HRG owners amongst us, right Howard?

Meanwhile back to processing your renewal notices, and I realise that while I had a note that Rebel XUR 123K was sold, I think back in 2004, and that Kitten estate FVY 719W has now replaced it in the Nash garage in Norfolk (another one that is new to the Register) I realise that I ought to have either paid more attention at the time, or even now contact Bob, to see if he knows where that Rebel is now?, and indeed enquire how the rebuild of the Kitten is progressing? Yes I know – one day I'll get organised - but at least I am at last making progress this month!

It is now 01:35 on 11/11/18, I have just finished processing a couple of dozen renewal notices, I am determined to do at least 10 a day till they are all processed, but I am away all day this coming Wednesday, (from 06:00 till late!) and at daughter's 2 days this coming week, so it won't be easy!

Out of those 2 dozen there are no less than 9 folk that I would / should communicate with to clear a few things up, but, based on both past and recent performance, that does not look terribly likely to happen – motivation energy and enthusiasm, where are you?

In spite of pressing on till the wee small hours last night, well, this morning, I find myself back at the desk at 06:55. Bill Starkey's was the first one in the next batch, and I realise that I never did reply to the lovely, full A4, letter he sent in with his renewal on the 29<sup>th</sup> of December. Bill, I have just read it again, and find myself wondering if "young" David did get round to that Dukes of Hazzard paint job on the Kitten?, and if the threat of Dixey air horns came to pass, or was indeed a wind up? A belated thank you for taking the time to update me in such detail, and

the, reciprocated, good wishes. We won't hold your love of Jags against you!

Frank Heil's was next up (I had sorted them into numerical order), and, not for the first time, was voicing his regrets at having sold the Cipher. Frank, thank you for your good wishes, as you say, one never knows what the future holds, life is truly full of surprises.

That form has only been sitting on my desk since the third of January, see, I am catching up! Mind you, I can't find my hole punch, so none of them are filed yet!

It is 07:15 now and I feel a coffee calling. I know it is probably once in about every 7 years, with the leap ones rocking the boat, but when last did Remembrance Sunday actually fall on the 11<sup>th</sup>? On the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary as well, they planned that well!

As a matter of time-wasting thought, do you call that one of life's little coincidences? or is simply a mathematical fact that we never really think about? Probably nor surprising, given that very few of us live to see the century!

Ahh, that's better, and interesting. For the past year or so we have quite often had milk turn a day, or even two, before its use by / best before date, and when pouring my blue top into the coffee there, I checked the date, it was quite clearly marked 08/11, three days ago, and yet the milk was fine!

Mick Rowley's was the next one up, Mick, I know my memory is far from perfect, but your Fox is on file as being red, I thought it was black, can you help sort my confusion please?

Mick has achieved something I never did, he has a (quite early) Rebel, a Kitten and a Fox! I'm not entirely clear in my dotage if the makes him a lucky man, or an addict! Whatever, I am envious!

Robert Seymour from Devon's was next, Robert, I keep meaning to talk to you about your Liege. I know we spoke a couple of times, but I suspect that was close on a decade ago, not long after you joined us, one day I'll catch up.

Charles Braid is another chap I failed to acknowledge, thank you for the kind and encouraging words Charles, I hope you have found the rubbers you were seeking for the Kitten, and that it returns to service soon (if it has not already done so!).

It is now 08:48 on 11/11, and while this is quite therapeutic, and fills a page or three in here, it also slows down the database update process, compromise strikes again, but a happy one this time.

I have now finished my target number of renewal notices processed for the weekend, however, I am going to press on, as we are away at daughter's for much of tomorrow, and I, as I suspect I have already mentioned, am away all day Wednesday, so feel that I must take full advantage of this spurt of enthusiasm.

Oops, sometimes you should quit while you are ahead, then again, the sooner the better I finish this update operation. Jim Clarke, my most sincere apologies. You did tell me that I had not only spelt your street name incorrectly, but had also got your postcode wrong, something I should have spotted and rectified back in January when your renewal arrived. I know I was still recovering back then (I still feel I have a way to go yet, if truth be told), but such a failure is really not excusable. I hope that your Liege has passed its IVA now. Brian.

Vince and Tina Cooper's was next up, they have been with us since 1996, and sadly (their word, not mine!) are currently kittenless. A situation they would love to rectify should a good one become available locally. They are in Arundel (that is roughly mid-way between Portsmouth and Brighton).

John Parker from Coventry was another of our long-term folk, with us since 1994, who took the time to enclose a letter which I meant to acknowledge, Indeed ideally reply to, yet another unfinished thing. John, thank you for taking the time to write, and congratulations on your victories on the energy supply front and with the RAC and your telephone service provider, it pays to shop about and haggle, just a bit sad that we have to.

Keith Smith from the Doncaster area has no less than 4 Kittens, 2 of which are on the road, another is running but SORN'd, and the 4<sup>th</sup> one is undergoing a rebuild. Keep up the good work Keith, and thanks

for your note.

Right, it is midday now, I need to eat before heading off to enjoy David Gray tinkling the ivories and pulling out the stops on “our” Wurlitzer, I should be back, hungry again, about 7:00pm, and possibly be back here about 20:00hrs.

Well, I didn’t get back to my keyboard on Sunday, and we were away yesterday. It is now quarter to ten on Tuesday evening, and I am due to pick up Phil Hallam in a little over 8 hours time, but I am going to do at least one more before I shut the computer down for 36 hours.

It was Roger, another of our Liege owning readers, keep up the good work Roger.

Next up was Andrew Norman, Andrew, I know you sold the Kitten van, but I don’t think I know who has it now, can you advise please?

Simon Robson, yet another of our Liege guys, also enclosed a note, well, he used the form, thank you for the kind words Simon, my apologies for not acknowledging them directly, much appreciated. Brian

Oh, and no, I’m afraid that I don’t, know where to get ***vinyl Robin seat covers***, can anyone help?

Next, and the last one tonight, it is ten now, is Glyn Walsh, who lives just 40 miles up the road from here, he tells me he is now retired, and so hopes to get on with restoring his Kitten. Well Glyn, I hope you do, but this being retired lark is hard work, and you don’t even get public holidays anymore!

I took Wednesday off, collected Phil at the back of 06:40 (ten minutes late!) and we covered 667 miles in the following 17 hours. Yes, that adventure could fill a page or so, perhaps another time. One thing it did achieve was it let me introduce Phil to Alan Shaw, and we saw Johns Blagburn and Box, and Jackie of course, it was good to see you too, my only regret being the briefness of our visits. Thanks for the coffee and biscuits.

Thursday now, and I am just about recovered from yesterday’s driving, it has been many years since I drove that far in a day.

The next dozen or so forms had nothing to report, till I got to Dave Aikin's. Dave is one of that small band of individuals with us who have owned their Kittens from new. In Dave's case he was telling me that his has now passed the quarter of a million mile mark (*I think that sounds so much better than the 250,000 mile mark!*), still on its original engine. Not a unique achievement, nor a record, but up there in the top 2%. Long may it keep going Dave, and well done.

Those things always have me wishing I had the time and energy to write and ask questions, like how many times has the head gasket been changed?, or the water pump, clutch, and so on, but I never seem to be that organised!

Brian Shore tells me his Kitten is running, it was undergoing a rebuild just last year, and is now supercharged, which also raises questions I ought to ask.... Well done Brian.

Barry Houghton tells me that his all electric Fox had been running well, but is currently (January 2018) off the road due to a battery terminal problem, and quite a few other jobs he wants to attend to. He said it would be back on the road soon.

Right, I decided to actually do something, I just rang Barry to get you an update on the electric Fox. A timely call as it happens, he told me that the fault was in fact with the electric motor, and that the replacement parts had arrived yesterday! (14/11/18). He hopes to have the Fox back on the road by Christmas (mind you, he didn't say which Christmas!) Good luck Barry, please let us know how you get on. Brian

I was going to say that I have now finished that task, till I saw another one on its own. This is where I all but despair of my memory. It is Denis Lockwood's, he was good enough to return his renewal notice to let me know that he will not be renewing. He has stopped driving, and believes that his, un-named, mate would be buying everything Kitten and motoring related from him. I expect I left that form on its own to remind me to check if that actually happened, and to try and get the car's new custodian's details, but I just can't remember if I ever did! I expect not, as I would have written something on the notice at the time. Another loose end, but not one I am going to do anything about before I run off your 2019 renewal notice! Along with everyone else's!

Right, you have suffered enough for now!

I thought this, translated, text of a poster found in a French Church interesting.

*“When you enter this church it may be possible that you hear “the call of God”.*

*However, it is unlikely that He will call you on your mobile.*

*Thank you for turning off your phones.*

*If you want to talk to God, enter, choose a quiet place, and talk to Him.*

*If you want to see Him, send Him a text whilst driving."*

.....

Just an odd corner, and an opportunity to apologise for the absence of a story to go with the cover picture.

I seem to remember that in the early days I was always one edition out in that regard, I really thought (hoped?) that I had got better organised over the years, it would seem not!

Anyway, Willie, perhaps you could bring us up to date for next time – I mean, it's a bit cold for working on the car just now, you'd be much more comfortable in front of the fire dropping me a line?



## **Fox – front bumper modifications.**

By Tony Guest

Removing the front bumper from a Fox is not easy, even when you know how to do it. Last year I saw a Fox for sale on e-bay which had the front bumper broken into three parts!

To the initiated, the work goes something like this;

1. Remove the bonnet,
2. Remove the small panel next to the radiator,
3. *If you have big hands* remove the radiator;
4. Feel behind the bulkhead near to the headlights to find the two retaining nuts;
5. Working blind, use a spanner to remove the nuts (there may not be enough room to use a ratchet for the nut on the left hand side).
6. With the bolts on the ends removed, the bumper can now be taken off. Don't jump up and down on it in pent-up rage unless you are lucky enough to have a replacement!

I omitted stages 1 & 3 and worked laid over the engine. Result- one ruined shirt and bruises on my stomach which took weeks to heal. When the van needed the headlights adjusting for MOT I had to go to the garage to show them how to do it (as the mechanic had big hands, I did it myself).

As there was an "advisory" concerning the headlights the bumper wasn't replaced so that I could deal it at my leisure, as I didn't want to go through the procedure again.

M8 Rivnuts, fitted to strips of aluminium, were used to create captive nuts which were placed behind the holes for the retaining bolts, and held in place by small nuts and bolts.

The captive bolts on the bumper were carefully ground off, and 10mm holes were drilled through the fibre glass.

Stainless steel bolts were then used to fit the bumper back in place. Neoprene washers were used to help prevent damage to the bumper.

Now, if the bumper needs to come off again, it can be done simply and easily from the outside.



In the meantime, I wanted to deal with the MOT advisory for a “cloudy” headlight lens. The lens was removed (only took two craft knife blades) and polished, and the light was re-assembled using outdoor sealant. However, I had decided to try an upgrade. By modern standards the original Fox headlights are not very bright, so when I saw some LED headlights which claimed to fit a Fox, I bought a pair. They didn’t fit! There is a flange around the edges which prevents the original holding brackets from fitting over the lights.

Steel strips were made into two roughly rectangular shapes and three L shaped pieces (with a hole drilled in each) these were welded to each, to marry up to the original fixing holes. To get nice 90° angles I cut up a redundant fluorescent light fitting. Despite my lack of metal working skills, the new brackets do fit, and hold the LED lights nicely.

There have been comments about the legality of LED headlights. In advance of this year’s MOT, I pre-warned the garage, and told them to fit the original lights if there was a problem. The MOT tester found nothing wrong with them, and even showed me the lighting section of the MOT manual. LEDs are specifically mentioned as acceptable light sources.

He was quite impressed with the lighting pattern which is much clearer than with a conventional filament bulb.

Tony Guest, No. 1012 from Derbyshire.

## Butch the Rooster

Sarah was in the fertilised egg business. She had several hundred young pullets, and ten roosters to fertilize the eggs.

She kept records, and any rooster not performing went into the soup pot, and was replaced.

This took a lot of time, so she bought some tiny bells and attached them to her roosters. Each bell had a different tone, so she could tell from a distance which rooster was performing. Now, she could sit on the porch and fill out an efficiency report, by just listening to the bells.

Sarah's favourite rooster, old Butch, was a very fine specimen but, this morning, she noticed old Butch's bell hadn't rung at all! When she went to investigate, she saw the other roosters were busy chasing pullets, bells-a-ringing, but the pullets hearing the roosters coming, would run for cover.

To Sarah's amazement, old Butch had his bell in his beak, so it couldn't ring. He'd sneak up on a pullet, do his job, and walk on to the next one.

Sarah was so proud of old Butch, she entered him in a Show, and he became an overnight sensation among the judges.

The result was the judges not only awarded old Butch the "No Bell Peace Prize" they also awarded him the "Pulletsurprise" as well.

Clearly old Butch was a politician in the making. Who else but a politician could figure out how to win two of the most coveted awards on our planet by being the best at sneaking up on an unsuspecting populace, and screwing them when they weren't paying attention?

Vote carefully in the next election. You can't always hear the bells.

Martin tells me that he just had a successful run up to Stoke on Trent and back to pick up some rebuilt Moto Guzzi wheels.

He stayed with Mike Walker, the author of many books on Moto Guzzis, and tells me that his house is full of bikes. They also went out for a quick spin in his old, unrestored tourer, he tells me it was an amazing experience!

Do you know the year and make / model? Ed.



~~~~~

## *Parts*

Hi Brian

30<sup>th</sup> October 2018

I did eventually find the company that can stainless sleeve hydraulic cylinders. They are Past Parts in Suffolk tel. 01284 750729 or [www.pastparts.co.uk](http://www.pastparts.co.uk)

Regards Phil.

**Some words of advice given by John Pearce to a potential subscriber to the Register, who had asked some technical questions about his Fox before joining us.**

Just trying to lighten the loads on Brian's "to do" list, as this would probably come to me to deal with anyway....

The wiper mechanism on a Fox is actually not that difficult to source, pretty much all of it being available new, as every part of it was "off the shelf".

It's a very simple piece of kit, albeit with a lot of parts, and although the parts can be got new, they will likely be expensive, as they are generally only held by specialist Lucas agents these days. Easier to source a used set up.

The basic unit is the same across all small Reliants, the mechanical section being shared with early "cute", pre-1981 Mk1 Robins and also Kittens. The motor is the same as used on later Rialtos and Mk2 & 3 Robins, (being 2-speed), except for the crown wheel in the integral motor gearbox, which is very different. Easy to swap over though, just a bit fiddly. The actual motor assembly is held on to the bulkhead by a rubber insulated ring clamp.

The basic setup is shared with numerous small cars of the '70's and 80's, notably Minis and Metros. If all else fails, get back to me as I might have enough to put something together – I know I have at least one Fox motor/gearbox somewhere, plus numerous wheel boxes and tubes amongst my spares cache.

The assembly consists of the motor/gearbox assembly, with a rack connected to a fulcrum on the crown wheel of the gearbox. This is fed into a tube over to the centre wheel box, then through another tube to the offside one, with another (overrun) tube on the other side of that. The wheel boxes are differently geared, the arc on the centre one being greater than that of the offside one. The arcs and parking position are set by the position of the fulcrum on the crown wheel, along with the gears in the wheel boxes. Fox & Kitten wheel boxes are the same as Minis. The later 3-wheelers park on the opposite side, hence on a Fox or Kitten, a Rialto motor would only park in the vertical position!! (no prizes for guessing how I learned this, having converted my Kitten to 2-speed over 20 years ago).

Feel free to contact me, or Duncan Bradford, the Fox specialist in the Register.

Regarding the SU carb, Reliant only fitted them to the 850's because they were much cheaper than the Zeniths they used on the 750 and earlier versions of the engine..... If you set a Kitten or Fox SU up so it runs correctly, it is unlikely it will ever pass the emissions on an MOT test. They need to be at 4.5 – 5.5% CO or it'll run far too weak. The current MOT pass is 3.5%.

Just wind the main jet up half a turn for the test and it'll fly through – and wind it down again afterwards or you'll have difficulty even pulling away! The SU HS2 has no tick over porting in it, the idling being shared with the normal running through the needle and jet.

*Just a wee editorial interruption in defence of the SU, properly maintained, which I grant you very few of them have been, they do just fine, Alan Shaw's Kitten sails through the MOT, but he has owned it from new, and regularly lubricates the spindle (I think he just anoints it while checking the oil level, using the dipstick, but I might be wrong – Alan?)*

*Burlen Fuel Ststems can supply anything from a new needle to a complete new carb. That said, a Weber makes them run even better! Ed.*

Before retirement I regularly covered up to 50,000 miles a year in my Kitten, hence I fitted a single-choke Weber many years ago, the difference in the way it ran was epic..... OK, no faster but rock steady idling, no flat spotting pulling away and better fuel economy too..... By the way, it's now 22,000 miles into its sixth lap of the odometer!!!

The Register is just that, a Register, and is non-profit making, the subscription being set just to cover the cost and postage of the bi-monthly "Mewsletter"..... We do hold many difficult to source spares, both new and reconditioned, the latter being on an exchange basis.

Typically steering racks, upper and lower swivel joints (new and reconditioned), poly bush kits, front and rear "Gaz" shocks, front and rear springs, plus a number of good, checked, used wishbones and similar.

Enough for now, John (Pearce) No. 304 from Mansefield

## *Epilogue*

I'm pretty sure you are aware of how I love cheque books, though I do fear that my handwriting is getting so shaky these days that it is only a matter of time before one bank or another refuses to accept my signature!

The point is that I honestly don't know if I despair, or admire, the lengths some people will go to, to enable them to "tick a box".

One bank I deal with can now honestly claim, (even though it is in effect a lie), that they no longer issue cheque books to current account holders - I know this because my new one clearly says on the cover - wait for it - "Your current account paying out book" yes really, I kid you not! The cheques in it have consecutive numbers from my last cheque book, and it even says "cheque number" above the cheque number, 'twould be funny were it not so - oh that elusive adjective raises its head again!!

Right, it is now the 6<sup>th</sup> of December, I have promised to move a Jowett Javelin about 60 feet, trouble it is uphill, and the brakes are seized, and it's cold, and wet out there, and this should have been away to print last month, so, my apologies, but I need to cut and run - if only!

Do not neglect your grease gun, in spite of the weather!

I must get your renewal notice printed ready to enclose, please fill it in as fully as you can, I am always frustrated by how many people do not complete the right hand side of the form. I can't keep the vehicle records up-to-date if I don't have the information.

Season's greetings to you and yours, talk again next year, well by that I mean 2019!

*Brian*



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