

RELIANT KITTEN REGISTER



Mewsletter 148 *May - June 2019*



Edited and distributed by Brian W Marshall, 16 Glendee Gardens, Renfrew, PA4 0AL

☎ 0141 886 6117

E-mail: info@kitreg.org.uk



The Register caters for all the under 1 litre Reliant 4-wheeled vehicles plus all of their derivatives: Kittens, Foxes, Rebels, Tempests, Salamanders, Ciphers, PK Jimps, Asquiths, Vantiques and all other specials including the Liege.....



The Reliant Kitten Register

Hon. President John Box

Our cover car this edition is this excellent Fox spotted at the ROC rally up at Ripon racecourse. The owner, Jack is not a Register subscriber. The registration number I understand was bought from DVLA and is highly appropriate!!

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.

It should be noted that opinions and ideas, information and advice printed in this publication are as recommended by our readers and others, and, while believed to be accurate and correct, such information is given in good faith, and it does not necessarily have the approval of the Reliant Kitten Register, and cannot be guaranteed by either the Editor, or the Reliant Kitten Register. Owners must satisfy themselves as to the suitability of any suggestions made within these pages, as no responsibility can be accepted.

Web page: <http://www.kitreg.org.uk>

For technical advice, help with locating parts or other queries, contact Brian or John.

Brian Marshall, 16 Glendee Gardens, Renfrew. PA4 0AL

☎0141 886 6117 E-Mail: b.w.marshall@ntlworld.com

John Pearce, 7 Harworth Close, Mansfield, Notts. NG19 6QP

☎ 01623 400687. E-mail: john@atodini.co.uk

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E & o e

Welcome to summer! Phew, what a rush to get the last edition to you, late I know (and not for the first time either), I also know I need to do better. It is now early May, and I have just finished packing Mews 147, which, with no less than 3 additional sheets, was a bit of a chore over the bank holiday weekend. The phone rang yesterday just as I had managed out into the garden to take advantage of the weather, I needed a break from folding the supplementary sheets, and the garden has been somewhat neglected. It was Peter Swan reminding me that I had not found a new home for his Kitten – that made me realise the garden was not the only thing I have been neglecting! - and Peter's Kitten was not even on either of the supplementary adverts sheets – aaarrggghh!!!

I am beginning to seriously doubt if I ever will get organised!

I have had a note on my daily task list for months, now removed because I can't remember why! It read :- "Contact Len Gardner", any ideas what that might have been about Len?

I seem to have caused some controversy with the article last time on inlet manifolds, well, one in particular. I freely admit that I was looking for a quick and easy way to fill a page, it was a good quality picture, and while it was only part of a series of emails from Steve, thanks Steve, I thought at the time it made enough sense on its own.

I have a view or two on both situations, (the inlet manifold mod, and the article itself) and I did not have time or space to go into detail last time, however, a previous owner of the car got in touch after reading the article, and said he had obtained the inlet manifold from Ebay, pre-modded before fitting it, and that he had not done the work on it himself, as he felt the article implied.

The plot thickens however, see page 18 for more.

I have just spent / wasted most of a lovely sunny day, Monday June the 10th, instead of making a start to painting the garden fence, or finishing this Mews, writing reminders to 30 odd folk. Not as bad as it sounds, we still sign more than that up in a year.

In truth I am still way behind with things, when I looked for the addressed envelopes the last mag would have gone out to them in, had they renewed their subs in a timely manner, I discovered not one, but 2 sets of envelopes! So, I have been meaning to do that job since early in March, if not before – not nearly good enough methinks.

Should you be one of the recipients of that reminder, and if you responded positively to the note I sent, please take this as my apology for me being so tardy.

To everyone else who did renew in a timely manner, my thanks for making things easier, it really is appreciated.

Some kind-hearted well-meaning soul suggested I should get help, how often have you heard me say – "I need a secretary!"?

(I'm not entirely certain what kind of help they meant!) but I like to believe that it was help with the paperwork, rather than anything else!

I'm going to stop apologising, but I will just say that I have discovered so many things that I have let slip this year that I am, oh dear, it is that elusive adjective again (or my lack of vocabulary?) somewhere between ashamed / guilty / despondent disappointed, no, I am not going to admit to the other D word!, well, not yet anyway.

The point is, that during a serious blitz on the papers on my desk, and emails that have been lying in my “in-box” for months, I found a few things that I have used to fill a page or three in this edition – not at all confident enough in my memory to remember if I may have shared them with you last time, or before. So, with my apologies for any duplication, onwards and upwards.

~~~~~

Some shots of Malcolm’s car being prepped for some chassis corrosion prevention maintenance.



Malcolm Rush, No. 352 from Whitchurch.

# *From the Oval office*

*I should point out that the following words of wisdom from our President came in response to me sending him copies of the pictures you will see on page 20.*

*As I implied there, the situation has indeed moved on, as has the Vantique. Its new custodian is none other than “our Keith”, so it is in very good hands indeed. I can tell you that he spent half a day sorting out some very basic faults it had, and it is now running very sweetly, and the indicators work properly for the first time in goodness knows how long!*

Dear Brian,

May 2019

Thank you for the Vantique pictures.

This is van No. 2, and I was somewhat shocked to realise that it is now thirty years old.

It was built in 1989 and sold to Image Publicity in Blackpool in 1990. They kept it for some years, then, somehow, it passed into Reliant's hands.

After their move to Burntwood it was left outside and neglected till 2008, when it was refurbished by John Melody.

I built a replacement engine for it at that time, and it was also fitted with new headlamps and other fittings.

The body was cleaned up, as per your cover picture at the time (see page 21 Ed.) I enclose a picture of it taken in 1990.

It is proof that Vantiques were built to last.

Regards, John

.....

Hi Brian,

9<sup>th</sup> May 2019

Thanks for my “membership” packs – 3 of them! *(I used to stuff the back numbers that new folk get on signing up into a Jiffy bag, but I have discovered that it actually easier for me to just use multiple envelopes instead, Ed.)*

I’ve enjoyed very much reading the mags, all 8 of them.

They read like diaries of your activities *(oh to be able to see us as others see us! I don’t know whether to feel flattered or embarrassed! Ed)*. I find them fascinating, as I also keep a diary – my mother did so, and so did my grandmother. So, it’s in the blood as they say.

*I’ll just jump in again, Mark is **not** one of those who joined up through the link on the web site (thank you for that John (Pearce)). That has been possible for about 18 months now, and almost half of our new subscribers this year have joined that way, but, interestingly enough – he did something I had not realised was possible. Right, no more interruptions.*

2 things in your letter to me – 1<sup>st</sup> – you were wondering how I came by the form I used to join up - I didn’t have an application form for the RKR, so someone suggested that I log onto your website and print one off – which is what I did, and then sent them to you.

I am not a lover of the internet, so mine was not an on-line application.

Second, I have 2 Reliant Kittens, not one as you suggest. Both are road legal, and I use the best one as my everyday transport. I have owned both of them since 1999 – 20 years now! I should have joined years ago.

Have enclosed my booking form and cheque for the Llangollen get together, unfortunately I can only get there on the Sunday. It will be good to meet up with other Reliant 4 wheel owners.

Do you have a list of spares held by the Register? If so, could you please bring it on the 14<sup>th</sup> of July.

Recently I had a problem with my engine overheating – it has boiled 3 times – I stopped immediately on each occasion, and let the engine cool down. The head gasket is still o.k., and the engine still runs a treat. Have you any idea what the problem is, and a solution?

I have already drained the cooling system several times, and used Holts radiator cleaner, which made no difference. Suggestions would be most welcome, thanks.

Looking forward to meeting up at Llangollen.

Best wishes.

Mark Waller No. 1100, from Nottingham.

.....

Hello Brian,

14<sup>th</sup> February 2019

Thanks for the welcome email, sorry to say I haven't yet met John Pearce, must have muddled me up with someone else, though I do intend to join the ROC when I get around to it.

Saw the Fox for sale and it appealed to me straight away, after a quick check over I drove it back to Scarborough from Chorley in Lancashire, it didn't miss a beat over the 3.5 hour journey and it only used half a tank of fuel. It was also nice to see the smiles on people's faces when we passed by.

I will send some pictures when I get chance. I've seen a brochure for a Fox van/pick up and it shows a window and bulkhead behind the passenger seats, I imagine these are as rare as hen's teeth, but one would make trips out a bit quieter.

We are really looking forward to getting out and about with "Foxy" and meeting other owners.

Regards, Chris Heaton. No. 1097 from Scarborough.



Hi Brian,

26<sup>th</sup> February 2019

I thought you might like to mention that I managed to get a MK1 Robin van rear window rubber from Reliant Partsworld at Cannock 01543 431959, in perfect supple and fresh condition. I understand that they have a number in stock. I can confirm that they fit the rear door glass of a Kitten Van perfectly.

On a separate note, very sadly indeed, I can foresee the loss of garage storage space late this Summer, and I will have to part company with some of my Classics, and the Kitten Van has to be offered for Sale as I am not prepared to let it sit outside. I really would much prefer it to go to an enthusiast in the Club who will continue to cherish it. The van runs well and has recently had professionally refurbished and recovered seats, professionally painted and restored rear door, wheels and bonnet, making the vehicle look very presentable indeed for a 42 year old registered Historic vehicle. It is a very regretful sale and I will only be open to sensible offers.

Thank you for your continued efforts and making the Mewsletter such a good read.

Best wishes, Jon (Goodson) No. 1069 from Stone.

If anyone would like more details I can be contacted by E mail: or telephone, *see the supplement for those details, Ed.*

*Thanks for that Jon, it is good to know where such good quality items are to be found. I am sorry to hear you need to sell the van.*

~~~~~

Hello Brian,

7/2/2019

I'm sorting various things on my 'off the road' Kitten.

Need some help.

I've located and bought [so far just 3!] of the original optional 10" Gemini/Goodyear alloy wheels. There are no hubcaps on them - so I plan to make new ones on my lathe out of alloy bar.

Question 1. What diameter where the "R" stickers on the original caps? The eBay seller has two diameters available - 40mm or 47mm.

2nd question. Am slightly surprised by just how many errors there are in the Haynes "Book of lies". Has anyone ever listed them in a previous Mewsletter?

ATB Nigel (Brown) No. 1093 from Shropshire

.....

Dear Brian,

12th May 2019

I am pleased that Duncan feels safe in his new car, there is a problem with all younger drivers who think they are invincible, with all the safety features such as airbags etc.

Duncan and I learnt to drive in cars that had indifferent brakes etc, (*me too, Ed!*) so one learnt to drive defensively, anticipating problems, being considerate to other road users, and in my case, a driving instructor who was obsessed with the use of the rear view mirror so much so that even now, I am constantly glancing at the cars behind. So it's not a fact that our old cars are unsafe but rather that most drivers under the age of 50 have never experienced cars that the driver actual has to drive in a safe manner.

Years ago, working in construction, we did things that are now considered dangerous, but the thing was that we knew how dangerous some of the 'short cuts' we were taking were. Now health and safety has got really extensive because people do not understand the dangers.

Maybe we should get all drivers to experience driving cars from the 60's and 70's.

Phil (Hallam)

Indeed, drum brakes, crossply tyres, rear wheel drive, they would learn fast, or give up!

Many thanks for the latest Mewsletter (147), it's a great read as always. The issue of MOT exemption has created a lot of discussion and it's one that'll go on for a while. I'd agree that a regular inspection at either one or two year intervals is a good thing because even the keenest enthusiast can't see everything under their car unless they have access to a lift. However, that inspection would need to be done by someone who's familiar with older cars and recognises the differences between them and newer models, and there, I believe, lies the potential problem.

The chap who MOT'd my Kitten for the past few years is mature enough to have worked on cars similar to ours when he was learning his trade, and whilst he is strict, he is also fair. When I took the van for its test in May 2018 I was greeted with "So, this is the final test then?". I said I'd probably keep taking it just to make sure it's O.K., but both he and his assistant were of the opinion that it may not be wise, as there will be further changes to the MOT test, and they wouldn't be kind to older cars, even if they were in tip top condition. They explained how a tester could wrongly fail a car which means you can't then drive it until it's 'fixed', you can appeal of course, but no doubt that'd be a slow process. My feeling is there should be a number of MOT stations that are dedicated to testing older cars, kit cars etc. that weren't built to the latest standards but require someone with a greater understanding to test them, but that wouldn't be cheap to setup of course.

A former work colleague, in his late 40's, and also a car enthusiast, made me realise how things have changed over the years. When I explained something to him regarding making an adjustment on one of the test rigs, I said it was similar to adjusting the front wheel bearing on an old car. He looked rather confused, and it then became clear he'd never owned an RWD car!

Unfortunately I have a slightly tainted view of some MOT testers, as when I took my 6 year old Land Rover in for its test last year, I was told the front to rear brake pipe was corroded, and whilst it wasn't excessive they recommended having it replaced. They also quoted a staggering £600 to replace it (yes, for just one pipe!) which I obviously questioned, only to be told it was a difficult one to replace and hence the

price. I took the car home and had a look under it to see how difficult the job would be, and even without the facilities they have at the garage it looked pretty straightforward. I also found the 'corrosion' was actually dirt and it wiped off with some rags and a spray of WD40, the pipe has a green plastic coating and it was like new under the dirt, but unfortunately the MOT history now wrongly shows the car as having a corroded brake pipe.

The point you made about MOT exemption not being a 'get out of jail free' card was very well put, I couldn't agree more. But, by the same score, the MOT certificate isn't a warranty or guarantee for the next 12 months either, and cars still need to be maintained and kept roadworthy, despite the number you see driving around with obvious faults on them.

Thank you for also highlighting how classic car insurers usually require proof of the mileage covered in a year, in that respect mine is taken care of via the agreed value assessment, as one of the photos I'm asked to provide annually, is that of the odometer.

Finally, I was a little confused by President John's comment about the emissions levels having changed. I looked at the revised version of the MOT tester's manual, and for our cars they seem to be as before, ie:

Cars registered 1 August 1975 to 31 July 1986:

CO \leq 4.5% and Hydrocarbons \leq 1200ppm

Cars registered 1 August 1986 to 31 July 1992:

CO \leq 3.5% and Hydrocarbons \leq 1200ppm

Kit cars and amateur built cars first used prior to 1 August 1998 will be treated as having been built prior to August 1975 for the purposes of the emission test.

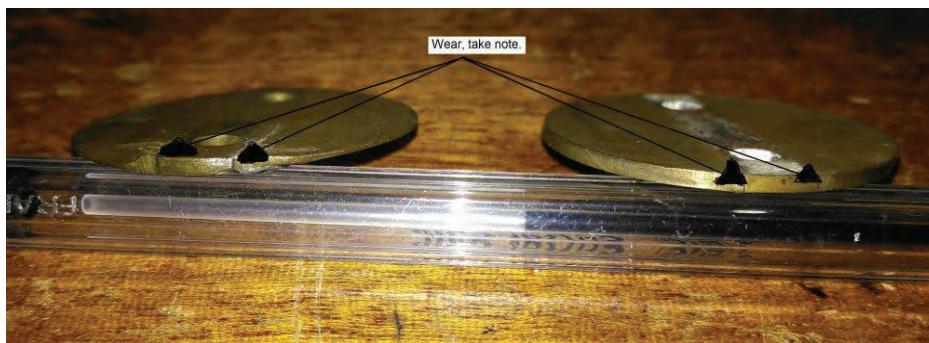
Best wishes to Moira and yourself,

Tony (Wiese) No. 967 from Wakefield.

I think it is that reduction from 4.5 to 3.5, which affects the Foxes, and hence the Raptor, that was causing the problem, Ed.

Some technical musings. — by Alan Osborn

In Mewsletter 147 page15, B.M. said that I said, but I didn't. With regard to the SU carb. and the issue of a 'wrong' 'high' tick-over being due to carb. spindle wear, it is not carb. 'spindle' wear as Brian says, but it is carb. butterfly wear, also it cannot be sorted by oiling, *(o.k., o.k., I meant it, and I was talking spindle wear (I think!), that could potentially be prevented by oiling, not sorted, Ed.)* in fact the issue is inside the carb. and can only be sorted by a new butterfly, or at least a change to a butterfly with significantly less wear. See picture.



I have found and cured this issue several times now. Interestingly the present carb. set up-body and some parts have done very many miles, butterflies and shafts and needles often changed. But we are now starting to get rust on some carb. screws as there is extremely little fiddling needed.

On the same subject of increased false tick-over, revs that drop when the clutch is depressed, Brian says he always thought this was crankshaft end float wear - I have had dealings with maybe 7 or more engine rebuilds (some while ago) and we have never found the white metal end bearings with any wear. Worn out and failed and renewed main bearings and big end bearings on a regular basis, and even having new end bearings to hand, they have never been changed.

Now we come to the 'dreaded' inlet manifold modification (see picture pg16 Mews 147 is this? 'I think' a Brian picture (with apology) but can we be sure that this is the grinding away as mentioned by Steve (from Andover)? *Yes we can, Ed.*

I did have one of these modified in-let manifolds and I can assure you that on a standard setup SU carb and 1¼ ex pipe there was no improvement/change from the standard manifold, I did a back to back test on the road.

There are small gains to be had from the inlet manifold, as the standard trim manifold does give a degree (about 10%) unbalance with the mixture, 1 and 4 run weaker than 2 and 3, due to inlet manifold length differences.

This can be put right with a 'trick'. For this trick, and others to tidy the inlet manifold and bring a sparkle to the SU carb, you will have to get in touch, email preferred, see inside cover.

Alan Osborn No. 295 from Thetford.

~~~~~

Hi Brian,

20<sup>th</sup> May 2019

I hope you and Moira are well.

Can it really be twelve months since I sent you the first index? Six more Mewsletters have fallen on my doormat and been consumed with eager interest. Keep up the good work!

I'm attaching a copy of the revised index that brings it up to date with the inclusion of Mewsletters to issue 147.

At some time I shall have to see if I can subdivide some of the headings that are getting rather full!

Best wishes.

Steve (Casey) No. 772 from Nuneaton.

*Many thanks for that Steve, greatly appreciated. Ed.*

PS - I tried to contact Jonathan Walker, who was selling a part restored Kitten, by e-mail, but received no reply. Is there any other way to get in touch?

# Llangollen 2019

As you will read further on, our attempts to find a fair and equitable solution to the venue's new policy of charging us as fixed fee for the use of the field, with free entry to the museum thrown in, rather than, as they have done in the past, allowed us free access to the field, (other than for camping, for which there was always a charge), and hoped to make their money through increased footfall in the museum, has fallen rather flat, and, in spite of a generous donation, left us about £100 short.

Also, I had thought to produce a programme this year, to include, amongst other things, a list of those vehicles attending – very difficult when so few of those, who we are expecting to be there, have returned the entry / booking form that we sent out with the last edition.

Anyway, enough of this, I am out of space here, see page 17 for a brief outline of the plans for the weekend.

Wishing those who are coming, a safe journey. Ed.

~~~~~

There is a bit of a story behind the following article by John Pearce. Dave had asked him a question, see below, and, while the answer was negative, it provided the catalyst for John to pen the following words, which I thought were worthy of sharing, thank you John and Dave. I'll let the story begin with Dave's question :-

Hi John,

2nd May 2019

Did you fit a hydraulic clutch to your Kitten? If so, can you tell me what parts you used please. Also, was it a MGB water header tank you fitted?

Hope this finds you well, best wishes. Dave Price No. 327.

Getting Technical – by John Pearce

No Dave, the clutch on the Kitten is standard Reliant, albeit the later (post 1990) roller thrust “Fiesta” type, rather than the carbon thrust one it originally had. In fact, all the running gear is as original, though the engine and gearbox are from a written-off 1996 Robin.

The header tank is from a Scimitar SE5, along with its original base hose that I’ve connected into the original Kitten bottom hose, using a standard 1” plumbers T-piece. I only needed to re-profile the mounting bracket, and shorten the base hose by about an inch, and it’s fitted securely to the n/s inner wing with a couple of 6mm “Rivnuts”.



The actual (brass) tank unit was a standard fitment on a number of 50's / 60's British cars (but not the MGB as far as I know), either configured as a simple overflow tank (no base hose outlet), or as a proper header tank (which mine is).

I believe that Holden's still keep them new, though mine was sourced from Queensbury Road Scimitars. I do recall that it wasn't cheap though, even back in the early 1990's when I fitted it, but it did

have the desired effect of making air locks all but impossible, plus it increased the coolant capacity by just over a litre.

I've been running Evans waterless coolant in it for well over a decade now.... Amazingly it's needed no replacement hoses and those fitted (renewed when I changed to Evans in 2005) are still soft and pliable. It's done about 200k miles since!!

When Hans Kirama stripped the engine for overhaul in 2013, the cooling system was like new – even the cylinder liners were still bright steel – no corrosion or scale of any kind anywhere!!!

The Lockheed (single line) master cylinder fitted to the Kittens IS an early (pre-1977) MGB item though, as is the (actually a remote though it doesn't look like it) servo, fitted that you can see in the attached under bonnet picture. With a full kunifer piped braking system and Goodrich flexible hoses, plus a front disc conversion to the brakes, which, (although superb), had no feel or feedback whatsoever, and the addition of the servo has addressed this well, feeling much the same as our “modern” Peugeot now!!

John (Pearce) No. 304 from Mansfield

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Llangollen 2019

Malcolm has, once again, found a lovely spot for us to gather after a road run on the Saturday morning, where we can have a light lunch, and show the cars of to the public.

There is even a narrow gauge steam railway running alongside the lake, within easy walking distance, and a cafe, of course. It is about a 5 minute walk from Bala or about 15 minutes to the lake if anybody wants to see the town.

The attendance plaques were ordered at the beginning of the month, as previously intimated, and all we need for a perfect weekend is good weather, fingers crossed.

Inlet Manifolds

Following on with the inlet manifold saga, my belief was, that back in the day, Dick Harvey, who was the expert on tuning the Reliant 750 engines, adopted a subtle hole drilled between the walls of each pair of inlet airways to allow the fuel / air mixture to equalize between cylinders 1 & 2, and 3 & 4.

Years later, I was going to say many years, but it may not have been that many, I just can't remember, and while I should just ask, that is complicated, and, as ever, I am struggling to find time.

Whatever, the long accepted and well proven wisdom amongst those in the tuning and racing world (as in 750 Motor Club), is that the original design causes problems with even fuel air distribution, and hence combustion, across all 4 cylinders. A feature which Hans (of Rebels Racing fame) had noticed, due to the different colours of the pipes on the 4 branch exhaust manifold that he uses on his oval track racing cars. They use a Reliant 850 engine, bench tested to put out 50bhp I think it is, and sealed to prevent further tuning, as that would infringe the rules of that class of event.

Such tuned engines often, if not always, involve careful balancing of everything from con rods through pistons, to the very light flywheels that such engines tend to have, not good in combination with the fast high lift camshafts that they also employ, if you are pottering round the local supermarket car park, due to the very poor low down torque, and hence the need to rev the engine well beyond 4,000 RPM to avoid stalling, not relaxing for local commuting, which is not what such engines were intended for, being designed for racing round an oval track flat out! I gather that Hans will build you a road-going version of his Reliant 850 engine for about £1,500.

Anyway, back to the matter of inlet manifolds :- I had muddled the waters when mentioning the need to balance the flow of inlet mixture to Phil Hallam, about the time he was building the "Hallam Kitten" – who has those moulds now?

Phil kindly offered to machine some inlet manifolds for me, so I looked out a few. I think we only used one or two, so the rest will be in my lock-up, somewhere!

Then the following arrived from Keith :-

Hi Brian,

10th May '19

The inlet manifold in the picture on Page 15 of Mews 146 was one that I did the Rebel Racing mod on, and is the same as fitted to the camper and previous Fox pickups, plus others for Clive, and I know that the flat spot mentioned is not down to the manifold!

Keith (Gittus) No. 154 from Burntwood.

.....

Back in December last year, this arrived :-

Hi!

28th December 2018

Have you any info. on converting a Kitten into a Tempest under the DVLA 'Kit Conversion' formula? Thinking this might avoid the IVA?

Promise to join your splendid club if I do it!

Jim Pailing. – *yet to join us.*

I only responded today, 26th May, when, whilst making a serious effort at clearing my in-box, I found it – unanswered!

I am waiting to see if he has made progress, or if his question is still relevant. Ed.

.....

The following may well be ancient history by the time you read this, but Reliant are selling their very tidy Vantique, my thanks to Nigel for the recent pictures on page 21. We featured it on the cover of edition No. 82, when it was being refurbished by John Melody.

Here it is after it left the factory at Burton-in-Kendal, new, in 1989



Then, overleaf, as it was after its first restoration and respray, in 2009. At which time our President built an engine for it (originally they had standard Reliant engines in them, with the exception of the last one, which John built the engine for himself, It was great, I know!). Ed.

Vantique No. 2 after it's 2009 renovation.



Since then it has not done many miles, but has had a respray, and was put through an MOT for the first time in a while a few months back.

As it is now (2019)



It has been very fortunate to now find itself in the custody of one of the most capable Reliant enthusiasts in the land, Keith Gittus.

Keith was quick to identify the reasons for it not running well, (someone had forgotten to enrich the mixture after, presumably, turning it down to get it through the emissions part of the MOT test) and to replace the missing pipe between the top of the oil filler and the carb.

He also realised, and rectified, the unusual feature it had, that was, when you indicated left, the right hand flashers came on, and vice versa!

One can't help but wonder how many MOT's it passed with that feature.

I have no doubt at all that the van will be better used now than in the past couple of decades.

Good luck Keith. Ed.

~~~~~

John Unwin RSSOC Secretary gave me your name as I had just disposed of my GTE, and so I thought I had better be in touch with you about a Reliant Kitten Pick-up Truck I acquired some years ago.

Brought originally to swipe the engine for an Austin 7, but I think it's come into its own.

Not sure what to do with it as it has sat outside on a hard standing since it arrived, and has weathered, the buck has been covered with a tarpaulin. Anyway please get in touch, as it would be nice to know more about Kittens. Regards, David Charles.





*The children were lined up in the cafeteria for lunch.*

*At the head of the table was a large pile of apples.*

*The nun in charge made a note,  
and put it on the apple tray : It said :-*

*“Take only ONE. God is watching.”*

*Moving further along the lunch line, at the other end  
of the table, was a large pile of chocolate chip cookies.*

*A child had written a note :- It said :-*

*“Take all you want, God is watching the apples!”*

*~~~~~*

One of our recent recruits, Paul Rose from Dorset, tells me that he saw a Kitten at the restoration show at the NEC in Birmingham earlier this year.

It struck him as interesting, due to both its minimalist character, and the fact that it had a GRP body (he has owned several GRP cars over the years I understand).

Apparently he has been looking for a Kitten for quite a while, without having much luck, and has asked me to put a wanted ad in with the magazine. Happy to oblige Paul.

He tells me that he is up for a project, although he has absolutely no objection whatever to a running example. Hopefully we can resolve his dilemma in the not too distant future.

Over to you dear reader. (See the supplement for contact details). Ed.

## Federation of British Historic Vehicle Clubs announce results of 2019 Cost of Ownership Survey

- Number of historic vehicles on DVLA database has increased to 1,241,863.
- 9.8m people in the UK are interested in historic vehicles.
- Average distance covered by an historic vehicle is 2,214 miles per annum.
- 21m people see historic vehicles as an important element of the UKs heritage.
- 11.3m people think historic vehicles should be exempt from restrictions of low and ultra-low emissions imposed on other vehicles.
- 5.1m people are interested in owning an historic vehicle.
- 60% of owners say owning an historic vehicle is one of the most important things in their life.
- An owner spends an average of £1,489 per historic vehicle per annum.

The results of the 2019 National Cost of Ownership Survey have been announced by the Federation of British Historic Vehicle Clubs. The summary results were revealed at a press conference within the Houses of Parliament on 14 May with the full research document now available to download on the FBHVC website at: <https://www.fbhvc.co.uk/research>

Historically, the Federation has undertaken major research projects every 5 years, the most recent being the 2016 National Historic Vehicle Survey. Back then, the data revealed that the historic vehicle industry employed 34,900 people and generated £5.5 billion towards the UK economy. However, to gain more up-to-date insights into the attitudes and interest in transport heritage and the ever-evolving pressures on enthusiasts using yesterday's vehicles on tomorrow's roads, the Federation has produced its first ever 'mid-term' survey.

The aims of the 2019 National Cost of Ownership Survey  
This mid-term, national survey was split into two areas:



The first, carried out by Kantar Research, examined the behaviours and attitudes of the UK's adult population towards historic vehicles.

The second, focused on obtaining detailed information on the costs of ownership for historic vehicle enthusiasts from respondents within the Federation's member clubs.

Furthermore, in response to the difficulties that some of the Federation's member clubs have cited regarding the recruitment of younger members, the survey also sought to identify differences in attitudes and behaviours between different generations.

### Positive attitudes

The attitudes towards historic vehicles were shown to be positive on the whole, with 21 million people in the UK seeing historic vehicles as an important element of the UK's heritage. Encouragingly, that represents nearly a third of the UK population.

Furthermore, 9.1 million people said that they had a specific interest in historic transport and 4.6 million people went a step further and responded with an interest in actually owning an historic vehicle at some point in the future.

Even more encouraging, is that the results reveal that the level of interest in owning an historic vehicle at some point in the future, is strongest amongst younger adults, indicating positive news for the future. However, the figure of 5.1 million agreeing that they would like to own an historic vehicle but cannot afford it, indicates that purchase and running costs are still perceived as a barrier to entry for new owners.

Of some concern was that the results of the attitudinal questions suggest that younger people do not identify as closely with the issues and challenges around historic vehicles that are understood by older generations, revealing that there is still work to be done in respect of educating younger generations on the threats to the sector.

One such threat is the ability for historic vehicles to enter our city centres in the future. In that regard, the British public showed support for historic transport retaining access to our city centres, with 11.3 million people in the UK of the opinion that historic vehicles should be exempt from the

restrictions of low and ultra-low emissions that are to be imposed on other vehicles.

More vehicles, travelling further.

Growth in previous years in the historic vehicle industry (as shown in the 2016 study), has resulted in an increase of 201,913 historic vehicles registered with the DVLA over the 2016 figures to 1,241,863.

The figures show that the mileage covered by these historic vehicles has also increased since 2016, with the average distance now 2,214 miles per year. That represents quite a significant increase on the 1,124 miles per year shown by the 2016 research, so the possibility of a more enthusiast based sample group this time around, coupled with the record-breaking temperatures of last summer, have no doubt had a hand in that result.

Use of historic vehicles has kept spending healthy, with the average owner spending an average of £1,489 per vehicle each year indicative of a buoyant sector that is investing in the use and enjoyment of historic vehicles.

The motivations behind such spending appear, from the results, to stem from the desire of enthusiasts to enjoy the lifestyle that surrounds historic vehicles. This is further backed up by the statistic that 3 million people attend historic vehicle events each year and a rather heart-warming insight reveals that 60% of owners say that owning an historic vehicle is one of the most important things in their life.

David Whale, Chairman of the FBHVC said,

“Whilst I can confirm that public enthusiasm for and interest in, the historic vehicle sector continues to be very strong, there are changes that will affect all historic vehicle enthusiasts. This mid-term research is incredibly useful to monitor progress at such a time of rapid change. The Federation celebrated its 30th anniversary in 2018 and it is clear that if we are to celebrate a further 30 years, as enthusiasts with a common interest, we must all focus on communicating and engaging with younger people to ensure they develop an interest in historic vehicles.”

David Whale added,

“I must thank the Federation’s partners for their assistance in ensuring the Federation had suitable resources to conduct this research. Without the support of Cambridge and Counties Bank, Duckhams Oil, Vintage Tyres, Peter James Insurance and King Dick Tools, this survey would not have been possible.”

The FBHVC confirms that the next major survey will be published in 2021 and it welcomes participation from everyone with an interest in the historic vehicle movement, in order to collate crucial information that will assist in the defence of the historic vehicle movement’s freedom to continue to educate and bring enjoyment to millions via the UKs roads.

For enquiries, please contact :- Emma Balaam, 01708 223111, [secretary@fbhvc.co.uk](mailto:secretary@fbhvc.co.uk)

FBHVC Editor’s notes :- The Federation of British Historic Vehicle Clubs exists to maintain the freedom of its members to use historic vehicles on the UK’s roads, hence its campaign message: ‘Yesterday’s Vehicles on Tomorrow’s Roads’. The FBHVC has over 540 member clubs representing over 250,000 individual owners.

Website: [www.fbhvc.co.uk](http://www.fbhvc.co.uk)

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# Llangollen 2019

I would be being less than honest if I was to tell you that our attempts at forward planning, in view of the new fixed charge being imposed by the site owner, and the desire to firm up numbers for the attendance plaques and intended event program, have been anything other than disappointing and frustrating.

Enough with the negativity. I have been reliably informed that twice as many vehicles will be coming along as we have had forms returned for, so while the planned program will be, at best incomplete, the attendance is looking good – don’t forget your tenner, those who have not paid in advance.

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## Mainstream publicity - at last!

To be fair, we have long enjoyed good press from the magazine Classic Van and Pick-up.

John Pearce however, deserves full credit for his recent article in **Classic Car Weekly**.

I have always found it difficult to achieve any kind of editorial control with the media, and I know that, in spite of John being able to correct several errors in their initial draft, they still made mistakes, in spite of John's best efforts to make them aware of the facts.

The most glaring being the **Mini 12 inch alloy wheels** he has on his Kitten. The same ones used to great effect on Many Foxes these days too. Not from the Tempest, as the article claimed.

The other, and I hesitate to use the word error here, as it may have suited John very well, especially from the insurance point of view, and I did think it entirely appropriate and helpful that an insurance man was involved with the article, and was clearly impressed with the improvements John has made to the car.

The statement that a standard Kitten puts out 40 BHP, and John's has 44, rather ignores two very important facts, firstly, that very few of Reliant's 850 engines actually produced the aspirational 40 BHP, the mid to low 30's being closer to the truth in most cases, and of course that was measured at the flywheel, John's, as the article did make clear, is measured at the back wheels on a rolling road, where I do not doubt that the corresponding figure for most Kittens would be about half that at best!

No matter, it was a good flag waving exercise for Kittens, anything that raises awareness amongst the motoring public in general, has to help secure the future for our wonderful wee cars, well done John.

~~~~~

Epilogue

Yet another edition draws to a close, and, hopefully, my efforts at trying to catch up will have borne fruit, if this gets to you in June, I am, if not winning, gaining ground at least!

Things sometimes change more quickly than I am comfortable with, and I struggle to adapt, or even come close to keeping up. I am thinking here of my inability to send a “private message” on facebook. I have been meaning to get in touch with Simon Hodges for the better part of a year now. Anyway, one does one’s best, even if at times that falls short of the mark!

We plan to head off for Wales on the 11th of July, stopping over at Wigan that night, and heading for Oswestry via Burntwood on the Friday.

Anyone planning to drop in to see us unexpectedly at Llangollen should be aware that we (indeed everyone) will only be there on the Sunday! We will be on the run to Yr Hwb at Bala on Saturday from 10:00 till potentially early evening.

Oops, it is the middle of June now, I still have a few pages to fill. Just wasted about 3 hours trying to get the text in here so far into a smaller template, 1 less A4 sheet, failed miserably – you would think I knew how to control this computer by now, wouldn’t you!?

One day... Right, that’s it till next time, keep well, drive safely, and please don’t forget to oil those SU dashpots and..... GTBJ’s and yer ardy spicers (assuming that the ones on your car have grease nipples!).

What do you mean you don’t know? If not, why not? If fact, just get out there and look! I would like answers on a postcard please, with a letter or email will do.

Brian

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