

RELIANT KITTEN REGISTER



Mewsletter 153

March - June 2020



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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

This issue's cover car is Douglas Barrie's superb 1977 Kitten Saloon. Superbly restored after laying dormant for many years, it's a real credit to him.

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>

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**SALES, SPARES, REPAIRS,
ENGINE RECONDITIONING**

Mews 153

I N D E X

Page 3	Index.
Page 4	Editorial.
Page 5	From the Oval Office.
Page 6	Rebel round up – it's been a while!
Pages 7 & 8	A Kitten update – by Terry Scott.
Pages 9 - 11	Foxes Den – by David Henderson.
Page 12	Another Kitten tale, by Charles Braid.
Page 13	Bits from Phil & John – no context! Sorry!!
Pages 14 - 16	A very belated Christmas update by Joe.
Pages 17 & 18	FBHVC - E10 fuels consultation.
Page 19	An apology and some explanation.
Page 20	Our 2020 gathering – or not! By Malcolm.
Pages 21 & 22	Getting Technical – by yours truly.
Page 23	Tae a virus, by Willie Sinclair.
Pages 24 - 26	More wit from across the pond.
Pages 27 & 28	Words from Chile & Switzerland. Frankie & Patrick.
Page 29	Epilogue.

E & o e

A warm welcome to you, at least I hope it is warm, dry would be good too! Spring must surely be just around the corner? (I did see some brave, or foolish, Crocuses yesterday!)

March already, (well, it was when I began this!) and I find myself taking a break from folding things, checking lists, and packing magazines and other things, selectively, into envelopes.

April now, and I finally managed to get a grip on the emails in my in-box last month / week. My “system”, in an effort not to lose track, has been to leave them in the in-box, until they have been dealt with.

The downside of that is that some of them, hopefully the less urgent ones, can lie in there for months. Right now, after the blitz of the past week or so, I almost had it into single figures, having pulled it down from the 120 to 130 mark to the teens last week.

The oldest ones in there now are from the second half of January, and the 6 oldest are all from “our people” looking for parts or information.

Jake, Nick, and Martyn, my apologies for the slow response. I really think it is time that we found a new way of looking after the spares, the current situation is not working as smoothly as it should – my fault entirely. I do get a lot of help, but it has become clear to me over the past months, that I am the weak link, not only am I responsible for delays, but I am finding it distressing that I am so distracted by other things, that that side of things is becoming a chore rather than a pleasure.

So, it would appear there may be a vacancy for a “Spares Coordinator” who would not only run things, but hold the stock that I have here.

Andy, Grant, and Mick are also waiting for answers, or at least a response, however, I have an AGM to organise, a magazine (*as well as this one*) to get created, printed and distributed this month, and we seem to be in a phase of weekly hospital appointments at the moment.

Arleen, Colin, the boys, cat and dog, did re-locate from Law to Bishopton at the beginning of the March, and, as I mentioned last time, it was interesting, and time consuming, not to say frustrating, due to my physical limitations. Arleen’s car having a fuel pump failure the day before the move only added to the excitement! Oh, and my “new” Honda has just spent 5 days in dock getting warranty work carried out by Arnold Clark – a local dealer thankfully, not the one in Newcastle that I bought it from. It is 5 years old, one previous owner, who consistently covered 600 miles a year in it, yes, six hundred!

That’s it for now, keep safe, speak soon. *Brian*

From the Oval Office

Hello Brian,

11-3-20

I can tell you a little about the modified heater kits, as recently fitted by Keith (Gittus) to his Fox based Tandy Camper.

They are made by K. L. Automotive of Ripley Derbyshire DE9 8JW. Their Part No. is 6193, and Reliant Pt. No. is 31547.

The Smiths heater stock ran out, and could not be replaced. K. L. were persuaded to make up suitable O E kits for the Fox, but, as usual, there were disputes over tooling costs etc, and by the time the kits arrived, Fox production had ceased.

As far as I know, no Foxes were built with the K. L. heater. Enter the Vantique!

Apart from the first one, I think all Vantiques and also, probably, some Asquiths, have K. L. heaters.

I suspect that Reliant took delivery of kits they did not want, to satisfy arrangements with K. L.

The K. L. unit has a more powerful output, and a two speed fan, but, if my memory serves me right, it came with a single speed switch!

John.

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## *More musings from the Oval Office...*

I suspect, like many others, I have been using my imprisonment to look through old papers and do some pruning. Twenty-five years ago we were doing a lot of engine testing at Reliant. The main problem was the engines we were selling to Angus Fire (a good customer), were not as powerful as they should have been. They were, in theory, supposed to produce a minimum 39 HP. Since the switch from Birmal to Barton cylinder heads, and deteriorating exhaust manifold castings, an average engine was only producing 36 HP. Angus were planning to use an improved pump, which, when engaged, virtually stalled the engine. We enlisted the help of a man who specialised in wringing power out of Ford BDA engines.

He was not over impressed with our humble offering, until an engine on test stopped running, which he presumed had seized. It had not. It had exceeded the 7,000rpm safety cut out on the dynamometer.

The Barton head was poorly cast with misaligned ports, so we tested engines with the early Birmal head. The casting patterns for the exhaust manifolds were renewed.

History revealed that at some time the flywheel weight had been reduced. This is probably why the 850 engines don't idle very sweetly and stall when you let the clutch in! We added two pounds to the flywheel. We played with camshafts, compression ratios and carb needles.

Eventually we got our extra horsepower back anything up to 42. The engine was pretty stretched at this point so we looked at overall improvements for future production with a keen eye on expenditure.

In all probability the best configuration would be a bore out to 900 cc a high torque camshaft (Yellow Top). Beefed up main bearing caps, and a cast alloy sump that attached to the lower portion of the bell housing, in effect forming a tube from timing chest to the gearbox tail shaft, thus stiffening up the engine and gearbox assembly. These mods would have made the Robin 3 more quiet and flexible.

It was all too late, and never happened, three wheelers were becoming unacceptable in the 21st century.

Regards to all. John & Jackie.

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Rebel Round Up

All you Rebel chaps have been quiet recently, which either means they are running just fine, or you are just too busy working on them to have the time to share the details of your progress with us, which category do you fit into?

That said, one Scottish resident Rebel owner, who has one of my old estate cars, was telling me recently, that he hates rebuilding doors, and that is his next job. Sadly, he is not a Register subscriber, but does maintain his subscription to the Thistle branch of the Reliant Owners Club.

My local, Renfrew resident, and ex-Rebel owning friend Thomas, is always, like many do these days, trawling the internet, and he found this, Rebel related, wee video. I get the distinct impression that the author / producer, was reading straight from the text on our application form, or web site at one point, though only one of the, generally excellent, Rebels he features, was ever mine.

<https://youtu.be/HIWKFxpWsqq> is the one to check out, if you have the facilities to do so.

~~~~~

## A word on a Kitten, *for once!*

I realise that, while I try to keep a page or three for every model except the Kitten within each edition of these pages, and that can result in very little Kitten specific stories or articles in the occasional one.

So, both to address that this time, and help me fill a page or so, here are the contents of a couple of emails that I received recently from **Terry Scott**, one time Rebel Registrar and Editor of “The Rebellion” up till just over 3 decades ago! These were in response to a subscription reminder I had sent to him.

Hi Brian,

3<sup>rd</sup> June 2020

I hope you are keeping as well as you can under these horrid times.

Well, I was so pleased to have got a Reliant Kitten after all these years, but the condition of the car was not as I had been led to believe when I purchased it. Mainly due to the chassis corrosion around the front suspension area, and the interior. Then another project came along which I had been looking for years, a 4-wheeler Berkeley car, nothing like the Kitten, so the end result was one project had to go, and that was the Kitten.

The good news is it was back on the road legally, it's now registered as a historic vehicle. I drove it a few miles round our block a couple of times, and the new owner, Simon Dean, from Stoke on Trent is very pleased with the car.

Basically, I did what I set out to do, and got the car back on the road after a 19 year lay up, so it isn't all bad news.

It's been great dealing with you all these years, though I think, at 72, I won't be buying another Reliant.

Keep safe old mate.

Terry Scott

That communication left me in a little doubt, so I responded to clear things up, and ask if he could check with Simon Dean, to ask if it was O.K. for me to be put directly in touch with him.

This was his response :-

Hi Brian,

7<sup>th</sup> June 2020

Nice reply, thanks very much. I am having to watch the pennies to a degree, so won't be renewing the subscription thank you.

The new owner had the body off the Kitten, totally stripped the body and chassis, within 3 days of getting delivery, boy is that quick!

He is getting the welding done, then going to galvanise it, and is planning to rub all the green off the car, and repaint it in its original white.

I didn't know it, but it turns out he is a mechanic, all the effort I put into it to make it drivable, and he does that!

As I said before, the new owner is Simon, and I gave him all the Kitten publications with the car, so he should contact you.

Keep safe. Terry Scott – No. 1108 from West Sussex

It is a wise man who knows when to stop, I wish I shared such wisdom as Terry clearly has.

Ed.

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# Foxes Den

An update from David Henderson.

Dear Brian,

26 November 2019

Been a while since I've really worked on the Fox. The steel frame hoop was rotted out from the bottom, and I've been thinking about how to repair it properly.



I ended up cutting an access slot in the "B" pillar fibreglass, and cutting the rusty remnants of the box section away. Then I made up a new piece, with an additional inner sleeve for strength.





The various stages of producing sturdy replacements.



All welded in & bolted up now.

Sorting out the door furniture too – the check strap mountings fell apart on removal, so new ones of those had to be fabricated.

Everything else was rubbed down & given two coats of chassis black to hopefully preserve it.

Door hinge replacement looked like it was going to be a proper pain, until I discovered the access apertures in the inner “A” pillar. Clever chaps at Reliant back in the day!

**Well done David, (hi Donna), and thank you for sharing the news. It is truly heartwarming when one of “our wee cars”, whose future might have been at risk, finds itself in the hands of such capable custodians. See over the page for the last picture in this update. Ed.**



Not to detract from John, it's previous custodian, whose distractions of a major house renovation, building a 6 car garage, and those Austin sevens etc., I could go on, but am delighted he appreciated both the realities of his situation, and that he managed to find such wonderful custodians as David & Donna.

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The following arrived yesterday (25/2/20). I was puzzled when reading the letter, because, contrary to the first paragraph, I had seen, as soon as I opened the envelope, the distinctively coloured renewal notice – welcome to my world Charles. Read on...

Dear Brian,

Feb. 22nd 2020

Please find enclosed my renewal subscription plus a little for the spares fund. Sorry but the renewal form you sent has vanished completely (*Aye Charles, they can do that, I'm thinking that I'll be needing to find a new paper supplier!*)

It is with heavy heart that I have decided to sell my Kitten Estate BBY 969T. It's not really been on the road since it passing its MOT a couple of years back, due to my leg problems.

I have to be careful now, and so both DIY, and car maintenance are taboo. I will be 84 in May (age, not waist) and my enthusiasm has diminished, due mainly to the loss of my mobility.

The last job I started on the Kitten was to replace a faulty thermostat – it is still awaiting finishing, the final job to do was to rub down the hand painted bodywork (*done with white emulsion I was told!*) and replace the worn rubber window seals, after it had had a respray, to bring it back to the standards I had hoped to achieve.

I have had a lot of pleasure, in first of all finding the Kitten and working on it, and its restoration. Getting it roadworthy and then taking it out for a drive after it passed its MOT (with only a defective seatbelt needing attention. But, with comfort and safety in mind, my newish Kia Venga is the winner.

It has cost so far around £2,500, plus many hours of, enjoyable back breaking toil. It would be nice to keep it in the Register “family”, or I can sell it on e-bay.

I will try to get it back to running order again, as soon as the weather gets warmer, and I get hospital approval to get back on the move – I live in hope.

Well, that about covers all, except to ask, may I continue membership, not owning a qualifying vehicle?

Would you believe it – I have just found the renewal form, after looking for it for the past 3 weeks – “Ah well”!

All the best for now. Charles (Braid) No. 1016 from Manchester.

Charles, of course you can stay with us, and most welcome too. About 10% of our readers do not currently own a “qualifying” vehicle. Ed.

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Hi Brian,

14/3/20

Later on this year Tom Karen, famed for the Reliant Scimitar GTE and Bond Bug, publishes his memoirs, which will be extensive, as he is aged 94.

Look out for **The Toymaker: A Life of Art, Wonder and Invention** by Tom Karen published by 535/Blink.

Regards Phil (Hallam).

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Hi Brian,

14/3/20

Peter rang me and is now going to buy an alloy radiator elsewhere. Partsworld invariably send the wrong one!! They stock the Mini ones, ergo the mountings are different as is the bottom hose outlet, requiring a different bottom hose. Then the fan belt needs changing or it will eat through the new hose.

I suggested he gets one from James (*see the back cover*) as it'll be right for his Kitten, a direct fit. He also supplies the correct poundage rad cap, and new fixing bolts, plus, he is cheaper than Partsworld too!!

I've had an alloy rad on mine since 2006 – they really do make a huge difference, keeping the engine far more temperature stable, particularly at main road speeds. Got mine from the (sadly no longer trading, I'm told) Brook Road Garage in Surrey.

John (Pearce).

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Hi Brian,

29th January 2020

Forgot to mention this, basically it's 50% acetone and 50% atf fluid. The theory is interesting in that the acetone converts the ferrous oxide to ferric carbide which becomes, so I am told, very brittle - the atf fluid is there as a carrier and lubricant. Obviously the rust then becomes rather brittle on impact.

Regards Phil.

.....

Here is something that I found whilst clearing that In-box I mentioned – sorry, especially Joe, who was trying to do his bit to help me fill a page or so, in time for last Christmas!

Hi Folks, hope your well and wrapped up warm.

Just doing end of year books (3 weeks surrounded by odd bits of paper) and noticed that in the last 12 months we have had 12 Reliant 4 wheelers in, plenty of Kitten estates, 2 saloons, 1 Kitten van, 2 Rebels, 2 Tempests, a Vantique, and a lonely Jimp (“In a pear tree..”)

Had a look back over the past 10 years, and it seems to be about the same amount in and out each year. Prices haven’t gone up as much as the Robins, and nothing like the Bong Bugs or Trotter vans.

But customers are happy (ish) to pay the same price for a project, as they would have paid for a running car few years ago, so a rise in values in a roundabout way, and lots of cars being put back on the road.

Have a waiting list for the cheaper end of market £1,500, but a reluctance to pay more money for a better or restored car - £3,000 seems a sticking point.

Looking at everything else we sell, with no trust or interest in the banks or stock market, lack of good stock, more people with more money looking for anything interesting or retro, Tax / MOT exemption, and getting rid of the old £20 notes this April, I would think they are overdue a jump up in value.

Sounds painful I know, but a stronger value to the cars brings in interest, and stops the trike/banger/special/charity run/ gang getting their hands on them.

Gotta be good for the cars in the long run.

Have a Happy Christmas, and all best.

Joe Mason.

I did think of removing the first 4 or 5 words of the line above Joe’s name, and the last 4 from the line at the top of the page, we no longer need to wrap up well to keep warm! – but it is entirely my fault it is 4 or 5 months late – one day....

A few of the pictures that accompanied Joe’s article follow over the page, Ed:-



A Kitten and a Jimp at Joe's last year – *I will catch up -*





2 more Kittens that Joe had on the premises last year - **I really will.**



E10 fuels consultation. FBHVC position statement.

On Wednesday 4th March 2020, Her Majesty's Government published a consultation on proposals to introduce E10 petrol as the standard for fuel across the UK. The lead proposal would introduce a minimum ethanol content of 5.5% for standard 'premium' fuels in 2021, whilst - and this is important for historic vehicles - maintaining the current E5 blend in the 'protection' grade.

The consultation seeks views on the proposed mechanism, definitions and derogations. It also includes a call for evidence on potential changes required to existing policy mechanisms (including targets under the Renewable Transport Fuel Obligation) following an introduction of E10. The consultation will run for six weeks, closing on 19th April and the FBHVC have received a formal invitation to participate in the consultation and have confirmed our intention to do so.

The reasons given for considering the introduction of a standard of fuel containing up to 10 per cent bioethanol, centre around attempts to make significant savings on carbon emissions as the government makes attempts to meet its climate change targets.

Typically, fuel companies currently blend petrol with up to 5% bioethanol and diesel with 7% biodiesel. The government have a target to ensure that 9.75% of all transport fuels must come from renewable sources by the end of this year under their "Renewable Transport Fuel Obligation". The government believe that a move to standardising E10 fuel will be equivalent to taking 350,000 cars off the road each year. The Department of Transport estimates that this may cut CO2 emissions for transport by 750,000 tonnes per year.

E10 is of concern to historic vehicle owners because it may cause some flexible fuel hoses, seals, gaskets, plastics and certain metals critical to the fuel system to corrode or degrade. This may cause damage to fuel pumps, carburettors, seals on injectors, pressure regulators and fuel tanks that are not resistant to ethanol. The bioethanol may also dislodge particles on older fuel systems causing blockages.

There are other challenges facing the roll-out of E10 fuel aside from compatibility. As published in Federation News, Issue 1 2020, we

understand that the only UK refinery for the additive has closed and the environmental costs of shipping additives from other parts of the world negates any environmental benefit.

The Federation note that the government, in previous consultations on the matter, have recognised that historic and cherished vehicles are not advised to use fuel with these proposed levels of bioethanol. The Federation has also advised in previous consultations of the requirement to run an alternative 'protection grade' alongside E10 for historic vehicles and we will seek to reinforce that standpoint in this latest consultation. The Federation will also seek reassurance that historic vehicle owners will not be financially penalised at the pump when purchasing protection grade fuel and that its availability will not be time limited.

In September 2019, compulsory fuel labelling was introduced to ensure that consumers were informed of the contents of the fuel they were using on the forecourts, their environmental impact and a fuel's suitability for a particular vehicle. It required a new set of fuel labels which were harmonised across Europe. E10 petrol is used elsewhere on the continent, and is particularly prevalent in France and Germany, where it is also offered alongside E5 grades.

The same day as the consultation was announced, FBHVC Chairman David Whale attended a meeting at the House of Commons with the All Party Parliamentary Historic Vehicles Group, chaired by Sir Greg Knight, to reinforce the concerns of the Federation's members directly with MPs.

The following question was posed to the Secretary of State for Transport by Sir Greg Knight, Conservative MP for East Yorkshire: "To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment he has made of the potential effect of the use of E10 fuel on older vehicles?"

Which received the following response from Rachel Maclean, Parliamentary Under-Secretary (Department for Transport): "Increasing the share of bioethanol in petrol by blending up to 10 per cent, known as E10, could provide significant carbon savings, helping us meet our climate change commitments. One of the main barriers to introducing E10 has been vehicle compatibility. Currently, around 95% of petrol cars used in the UK can use E10, but around 700,000 are not warranted by their manufacturers to use E10. This number is expected to decrease as

vehicles come to the end of their life. However, some classic and cherished vehicles that are not advised to use E10 will remain in use. The prolonged use of E10 fuel in those older and classic vehicles not under manufacturer warranty can cause corrosion of some rubbers and alloys used in the engine and fuel systems. For those vehicles, the Department remains committed to ensuring that E5 is retained as a protection grade, if E10 is introduced.”

The FBHVC will be consulting with all interested parties and our member organisations prior to making our submission to the E10 consultation by the deadline.

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Ahh, an odd corner, and a good opportunity to confess. I am pretty certain that our get together, advertised on the next page, that Malcolm had kindly arranged, then re-arranged for us, is off.

It certainly won't be happening at the end of July.

I have just agreed with Malcolm (mid-June) that we are going to forget it for this year, and, hopefully, aim for 2021, which will mark 30 years since I started all this nonsense!

As I alluded to in the Index, page 13 (must have been a Friday methinks) has 3 notes from Phil and John, 2 of which have no context. I was just trying to remind myself, but, when the time came, I had dropped the ball, and with this being a month (or two?) late, I just did not have what it takes to find a quick fix – One day....

I am very happy to be able to relate the news that one of our longest serving (if that is an appropriate word?) readers from Essex, is home and recovering, after being in hospital for a couple of weeks with COVID-19. Thanks for the call Bob, all the best for as speedy a recovery as possible.

Brian

Our 2020 Gathering

Hi Brian,

7th March '20

I thought it would be an idea to run a reminder in the 'Mews' for our 2020 Get-together as I need to know numbers for various bookings.

It will be on 25th/26th July at Hadley Park, Wrexham Road, Whitchurch, Shropshire, SY13 3PF. This is on the left hand side heading away from Whitchurch on the A525, not far from the roundabout on A41

On site accommodation of a camping pod or shepherd's hut should be booked direct with Hadley Park. 01948 780170.

Camping can be booked through me and I will send them a list of members camping. Payment can be made on the weekend to Hadley Park. (£10 per night).

I will need to know numbers for the meal on Saturday, by the end of June, so that we can see if we have enough for this to go ahead. I will also need to know which meal members require as Hadley Park will be making the meals to order, so they will need to know in advance. I think that staying open late just for us is good of them.

The intended run to Whittington Castle will not now go ahead as they already have a previous booking. I have arranged an alternative run to Sleaf Airfield which has a nice cafe for lunch, I will need to know approximate numbers for this by 18th July so I can inform them of how many of us to expect. I am not sure if we turn up with a hundred members wanting a 'full English' that they would be able to cope. This is also the home of the Wartime Aircraft Recovery Group which has a museum on site, so that should be quite interesting.

To re-cap for numbers. :- Staying for meal, and choice of meal on 25th July by end of June.

Run and lunch by 18th July, although this isn't too critical as I am sure they could squeeze in one or two more.

It would be good to know camping numbers by the 18th July too.

Regards, Malcolm. That was the plan - sadly now cancelled.

Getting Technical

Hi all, sorry to start the new year off this way, but Kitten and Fox owners should be aware that all the lower ball joints I held, have now been sold!

Brian still has a couple of reconditioned ones, and I believe James Holland still has a small amount, but that's the current situation. I suppose this is a plea to all who are holding used ball joints to pass them back to the Register for reconditioning and to be in stock to keep the cars on the road.

Just a foot note - Kitten and Foxes I have owned going back to the early 80s have only on two occasions needed to have these joints changed. If we have a regime where the ball joints are regularly greased, then they do last for a very long time. Keith.

.....

Front dampers

We have been supplying these for over a decade and a half now, and there have been changes (and glitches) over the years.

I am always frustrated when a manufacturer changes the spec. of an item without telling us (I'm not just talking about dampers in this context). It is frustrating, not to say downright inconsiderate, well, that's what I feel.

Given that it has happened with 4 different suppliers for 4 different items over the past decade or so, I can only assume that it has become standard practice.

I am still not at all happy, but realise that I am voicing my frustrations to the wrong audience!

With the dampers, there have been a small number of changes made to them, one at our request, to alter the valve size to better reflect the light weight of our cars. The adjustment to damping rate valve has about 48 "clicks" of adjustment, ranging from virtually no damping at all, to virtually solid! With our cars being so light, we only ever used the first 20% of that adjustment, indeed many owners used just about a tenth of

the capability. So, to allow for a wider range of useable settings, we, after consultation, agreed with them to use a more suitable size of valve, thus allowing us a wider range of useable options.

That said, there has been minimal feedback. That change was introduced about 10 years ago.

The other mods we have noticed, introduced with no consultation, include the doing away with the ride height adjustment locking grub screw, replaced by a second locking ring. In practice that makes it very difficult for us to fit the springs to the dampers by hand, and means that you really need 2 "C" spanners to lock them effectively

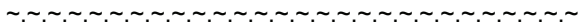
The earlier design suited us much better, because we could just drop the spring on, and then wind the support ring up a few turns by hand, just to stop the spring from rattling during transit. Now it is very difficult to put the spring on by hand, as the double ring arrangement takes up more than the "free space" that was available when they used a single ring. So the springs need to be, slightly, compressed to get them onto the dampers, a real pain for Duncan, and Phil. *Don't think that spending more than half the year in France will get you out of being our Scottish distributor for these Phil!*

Seriously, your ability to step in to help is greatly appreciated. As is the assistance of David & Donna with the Scottish holding and distribution of the back ones.

I never did ask why they changed that aspect of the design, I just assumed that they possibly found problems (they offer a reconditioning service on their products) that they possibly found damage on the threads where the grub screw locked the original single ring in place, in spite of the nylon pad they used to separate the metal grub screw from the thread on the damper body.

Anyway, we are, as they say, where we are, I think they use the term "ongoing product development" to cover such modifications / improvements, though in that case, it was certainly not an improvement from our point of view!

Progress, the only 4-letter word I know that has 8 letters in it, probably appropriate, as it is, in my experience, often twice as bad!



Tae a virus.

March 2020

by Willie Sinclair, with apologies to R. Burns Esq.

Twa months ago, we didna ken, yer name, or ocht about ye.
But lots of things hae changed sin then, I really must salute ye.

Yer spreading rate is quite intense, yer feeding like a gannet.
Disruption caused is so immense, ye've shaken oor wee planet.

Corona used tae be a beer, they garnished it wae limes.
But noo it's filled us awe wae fear. These days, are scary times.

Nae shakin hawns, or peckin lips, it's whit they awe advise us.
But scrub them weel, richt tae the tips, that's how we'll awe survive.

Just stay inside the hoose, ye bide. Nae sneakin oot for strolls.
Just check the lavvy every hoor, an stock-take, your, loo rolls.

Our holidays have been pit aff. Noo that's the Jet2 patter
Pit oan yer thermals, have a laugh, 'n paddle 'doon the watter '

Canary isles, no for a while, nae need for suntan cream,
And awe because o' this wee bug, we ken tae be..19

The boredom surely will set in, but have a read, or doodle.
Or plan yer menu for the month, wi 95 pot noodles.

When these run oot, just look aboot, a change, it would be nice
We've beans and pasta by the ton, and twenty stane o' rice.

So dinna think yell wipe us oot. Aye true, a few have died
Bubonic, bird flu, and Tb, they came, they left, they tried.

Ye micht be gallus noo ma freen, jumping fae cup tae cup.
But when we get oor vaccine made, yer number will be up!

Or there is the view from across the pond, from a girl who has passed three score and ten, and is still going strong, read on....

THE COVID IS RAGING,
MY LIFE IS A MESS.
I LIVE IN PYJAMAS,
AND DON'T HAVE TO DRESS.

I'M IN ISOLATION,
JUST STAYING AT HOME.
AND WOULD GIVE MY LAST DOLLAR,
TO BE FREE TO ROAM.

I'M SERIOUSLY AT RISK,
(OR THAT'S WHAT THEY SAY)
TELLING ME TO STAY IN,
AND NOT GO OUT EACH DAY.

IN MY HEAD I'M SO YOUNG,
THOUGH MY LICENCE REVEALS.
I'M A 70-PLUS SENIOR,
(BUT THAT'S NOT HOW IT FEELS!)

WHEN I RUN OUT OF FOOD,
AND DELIVERIES ARE LATE.
I HAVE TO BUY GROCERIES,
BETWEEN 7 AND 8.

SO, EARLY IN THE MORNING
I HEAD OUT TO RESTOCK,
AND DISCOVER A LINE UP,
THAT WINDS 'ROUND THE BLOCK!

SOCIAL DISTANCING SENIORS,
ALL 6 FEET APART.
MAKE ME WONDER JUST WHEN

I BECAME AN OLD FART?

MY MEALS ARE REPETITIVE,
(A LOT LIKE MY GAS!).
AND I'M TIRED OF DISCUSSING
WHY TRUMP IS AN ASS.

MY LATEST NEW OUTFIT,
IS GLOVES AND A MASK,
AND I'M STARTING TO WONDER
IF I'M UP TO THIS TASK?

I WASH ALL MY GROCERIES,
ALL FRUIT, MEAT AND VEG.....
WILL THIS ADDITIONAL PRECAUTION
TIP ME OVER THE EDGE?

MY BEAUTIFUL BROWN HAIR
NOW HAS WIDE ROOTS OF GREY.
NO HAIRDRESSERS AROUND
TO HELP WASH THEM AWAY.

I'VE BEEN TALKING TO MYSELF,
NOW I'M ANSWERING BACK.
IS IT MONDAY OR FRIDAY?
I'VE REALLY LOST TRACK!

I'VE STOPPED DOING HOUSEWORK,
IT'S WEEKS SINCE I'VE DUSTED.
AND I KNOW WITHOUT VISITORS,
I'LL NEVER GET BUSTED.

I FACETIME MY FRIENDS,
OR WE GROUP CHAT ON ZOOM.
AND TRY TO PRETEND,
WE'RE ALL IN THE SAME ROOM.

THANK GOD LIQUOR STORES
ARE CONSIDERED 'ESSENTIAL'.
WITHOUT DAILY DRINKS
THIS WOULD DRIVE US ALL MENTAL.

EVERY ONCE IN A WHILE
IT'S GOOD TO REFLECT,
ON WHAT THIS ALL MEANS,
AND WHAT CAN WE EXPECT?

IT'S A TIME TO BE GRATEFUL
FOR ALL THAT WE'VE GOT,
LIKE A WARM HOUSE, AND FOOD,
THAT OTHERS HAVE NOT.

THE BOTTOM LINE HERE,
BY THE TIME THIS ALL ENDS,
IS THAT WE'LL GET THROUGH IT,
WITH OUR FAMILY AND FRIENDS.

SO EVEN IF YOUR PARTNER'S
A BIT OF A GRUMP,
YOU CAN BE REALLY GRATEFUL
YOU'RE NOT MARRIED TO TRUMP!

~~~~~

Right, that is quite enough of these distractions, I am pleased to be able to share with you the fact that, in spite of some late / non-renewals this year, our numbers are up on last year. I know this because I decided to act promptly for once, to the Federation's annual subscription fee notice, and our contribution this year, is over £100 for the first time! And that is not just down to the annual increase in the level of their fees.

Speaking of fees, in case I have not mentioned it elsewhere, the decision is made, ours are going up from the end of this year to £22.



fact better than new, after the nut and bolt restoration) it's now back on the road.

Last week, another friend showed me an add on a Swiss sales site, two Kittens for sale not far from where I live, I know these cars and the owner, a retired baker and brother of an ex colleague who had bought the first one new, and the other later for parts.

My best friend, a retired aeroplane mechanic and MG only owner, said to me he would like to have a Kitten for everyday use and practicality, he has a very large garden, and his nearest vehicle to an estate car is his MG B, so, having a few days leave, and the TVR starter motor (MG B engine) to swap for a smaller unit, (in the TVR, the MG inertia starter don't fit, the rebound spring comes into contact with the chassis, so I found my spare Kitten one had the same pinion and fixing holes) at another friend's British car workshop at La Brévine (coldest part of Switzerland,  $-40^{\circ}$  in winter), situated not far from the Kittens, we took the Midget this morning and visited the two places, my friend bought the two cars (very cheap), and, on the return, we stopped about midway to see the workshop of a retired neon sign maker I met by chance as he saw my Triumph/Watsonian combination while driving past my house two weeks ago, and stopped to have a look and chat, and said to me he also had a few bikes and sidecars.

What a surprise entering the workshop, almost two dozens of Swiss military and police bikes, the oldest a 1941 1000cc Condor combination, a huge vehicle with a JAP side valve engine, the youngest an actual army BMW 600cc, and in between, all the others, Universal 680(JAP), Condor1947 580cc (BMW side valve copy) the same but 750cc with sidecar, Universal 680cc another BMW copy but OHV and no common part, looks like a BMW R51/2, a few sixties Condor 250cc BMW R25 copies, and seventies Condor 350cc with Ducati OHC engine (I used one for ten years as go to work vehicle, nice engine, beautiful Marzocchi fork but heavy frame) the last Swiss made army bike, the Condor factory was situated 15 miles from where I live, and began producing bicycles and motorbikes at the end of 19<sup>th</sup> century, was the Ducati importing company for a very long time, and made the WW2 Swiss airforce Messerschmitt 109 landing gear, which also was used for a very long time on the Pilatus PC7 single propeller engined training plane (smaller brother of famous Pilatus Porter, able to take off in less than 400 meters and landing on the mountains).

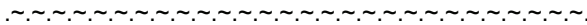
So, as you see, we had a very well spent day, my friend's 1963 Midget is a perfect little thing for the beautiful B roads we took, and I now have a new task of helping him restore the Kitten, taking the best parts of both (before that, he needs to end the restoration of his 1932 J2)

For me, these few days where some sort of retirement training, (39 months to go...)

I'll send you the chassis numbers of the two cars as soon as we bring them back, hopefully before the end of the week.



Best regards, Patrick



## Epilogue

Well, after weeks, if not months of procrastination, here I am on the last bit, with more things to tell you about, and not a lot of room! And not forgetting – G.T.B.J, and oil yer trunnions and SU carb dashpots.

*Brian*

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