

RELIANT KITTEN REGISTER



Mewsletter 155

September - October 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

From Holland. This issue s picture is Ric Borgmann s superb H Kitten estate. Taken on holiday in East Holland, beside it is a vintage steam locomotive which, alas, I had to crop. If Brian remembers, the full picture will be included in the next issue! Ric still uses his car regularly, though these days it only racks up around 2,500km per year.

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.

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SALES, SPARES, REPAIRS,

Mews 155

I N D E X

Page 3	Index.
Page 4	Editorial.
Pages 4 & 5	From the Oval Office.
Page 6	Readers letters – Tony Wiese.
Page 7	Fuel tanks – by Alan O.
Pages 8 & 9	Jimp update – by George Timbey.
Pages 10 – 17	A Kitten rebuild story – by Kyle Cartmell.
Page 18	Foxes Den – by Chris Heaton.
Pages 19 & 20	Down on the farm – <i>made me smile!</i>
Pages 20 & 22	FBHVC Charity news
Pages 23 – 27	Reliant Rear Acles – by Keith Gittus.
Page 28	Digital Index update – by Steve Casey.
Page 29	Epilogue.

E & o e

A warm welcome to you, much needed in these cooler temperatures methinks.

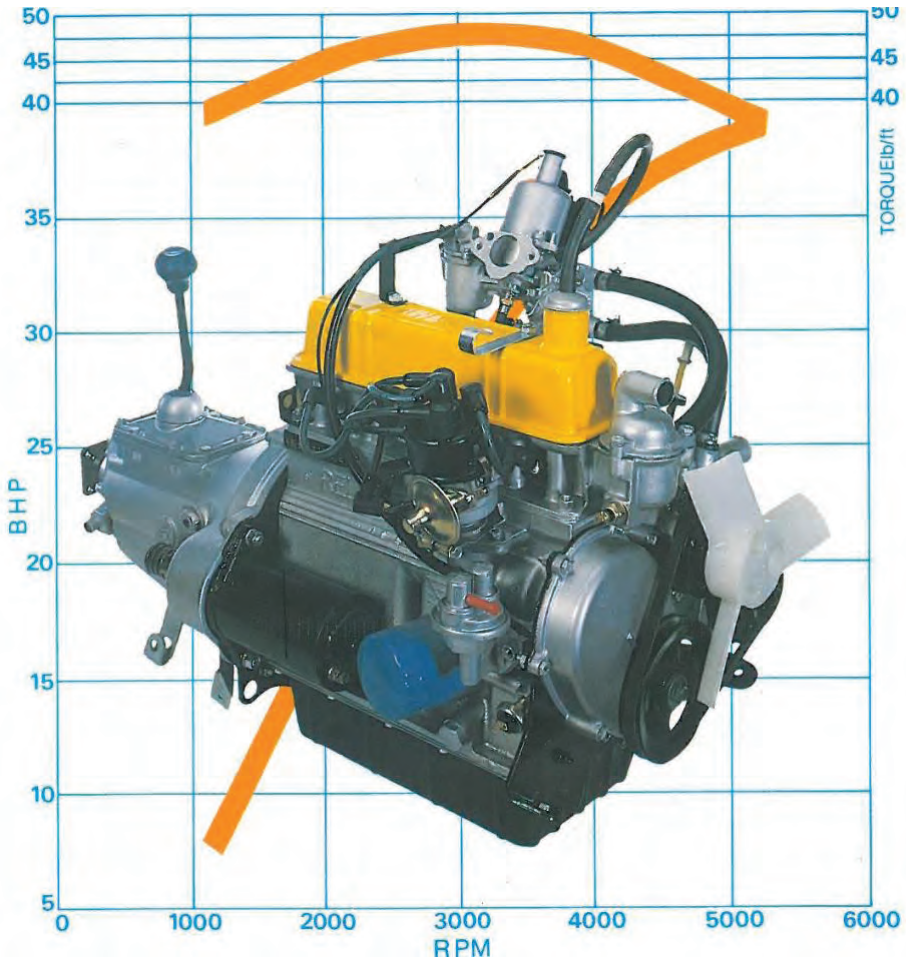
As the shorter days approach (at the rate I'm going, the clocks will have gone back by the time I get this to you!)

Only 2½ more pages to fill now – 16th October! Will I get this to you this month? Wait and See!

Hello Brian,

August 8th 2020

This month's contribution from the Oval Office is a bit sparse. The enclosed picture will cater for all 850 powered Reliants, whatever the model.



Tech tip.

If you drive your car hard, continuously, you used to fit it with Champion RC9YCC plugs (or equivalent) if your engine in good condition, an AAE needle will add 2-3 BHP.

That's it for now. Regards to all. John.

Readers Correspondence

Hi Brian,

13th September '20

Thank you for the latest Mewsletter (154) - it was a great read as always, and nice to see Andrew Norman's article about the old style vans that are built on a Reliant Fox (or Kitten) chassis. Andrew very kindly allowed me to see his original brochure for the Radnor (there can't be many of those around) and it was interesting to see the Raglan open car. This is essentially the Radnor Van without the roof section, which attaches at the waistline and, as there are only drawings in the brochure, it'd be interesting to know if any were built.

I've created a little database of the "Heritage Vans" and so far have 17 Asquiths, 9 Vantiques, and 6 Radnors on it. I understand 13 ** Vantiques were made, Radnors are unknown, but 6 could well be the total number, and I've clearly got a lot more work to do with the Asquiths as they were a popular van. There was talk of reintroducing the Asquith Shetland before the company sadly folded, I seem to recall the mechanical bits would have been VW Polo, but I've no idea where the chassis would be sourced - maybe they were planning a monocoque?

I was interested to read about your experiences with your early cars, how times have changed! One of my first cars was an upright Ford Pop, it needed restoring but I never got around to it, and ended up buying a Mini-based Scamp kit car instead. The Pop was about 20 years old at the time, but it looked so ancient, it's strange to think the Kitten is now more than twice its age yet still looks reasonably modern (apart from the size - we don't have proper small cars anymore!).

We're from Warrington in Lancashire originally (before it became part of Cheshire) and when we first moved to Yorkshire, my parents had a Ford 300E van. We used to visit family "back home" on occasions, but I'm sure you can imagine what it was like travelling over The Pennines in an 1172cc sidevalve van with a 3 speed box - it always did it though, albeit at a leisurely pace.

It was unfortunate we couldn't have a Register Gathering this year, I've missed it, but hopefully we can all meet up again in 2021.

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

Petrol tanks - some words of information

(often things are not quite what they seem.)

Have you ever had to change or pull out the petrol tank? This is how it goes, or at least should go.

First we had a casual petrol smell beside the car, especially after filling up. Eventually traced it to the sender/pickup pipe assembly being not as tight as it should be, i.e. one of the little lugs that holds the sender down was broken off. No easy repair, so as we had a new tank in stock, we must change the tank. Initially an easy task, three bolts, one either side and one up the back - can be awkward. I was forgetting the filler pipe!

Anyway, tank came out relatively easily enough, lying on your back with rust dropping in your eyes is always fun! When the tank came out I thought funny! I had supposedly run the car dry before we started; in fact the float bowl was empty.

So why has this tank got a gallon of fuel in it? While the tanks lie together on the ground, we realize that tank 1 (original came with the vehicle) was deeper, i.e. it carried another gallon, very useful, Got me guessing a bit, I did think Robins and of course all Kitties were the same. So why have I got a 1 galleon bigger tank? Fox?

Pause for more thought, if the tank is deeper, the Pick up pipe needs to be longer - but it isn't, all my spare and broken senders/pickups are the same depth. So the tank is the odd one out, and that means that the car has been carrying an extra galleon of fuel which it can't access! Blooming silly.

Getting the tank back in was again straight forward, till we come to the blooming filler pipe; what a fiddle they are. One of the secrets here is to clean or replace the Jubilee clips on the filler pipe and the breather pipe. Also do not rely on a screwdriver to do the Jubilees, but either a ¼ drive socket, or better still a dedicated Jubilee flexible driver, and no burred edges to your clips.

Still, when it was done, one has to take a breather and a cup of T.

Alan O. No. 295 from Thetford.

Jimp update

October 2020

George Timbey, a long term Jimp owner from Stoke-on-Trent, joined us in October, welcome George. He kindly enclosed a couple of pictures of his very tidy Jimp. That brought home to me that we have not featured Jimps within these pages for a while.

George, who has owned his 1983 registered Jimp, for over a decade, tells me that while it is not his daily transport, he does use it often.

Jimps, for the moment, being front and center in my mind, made me do a quick check of the database. We have just 17 entries under model type Jimp, however, on closer inspection I see that one of them is down as 0555, I assume it is in fact 055J, and that we have 2 entries under 053J. I shall investigate further, before washing my dirty linen in public!

Of those 17, only a few of their owners are currently paid up subscribers, which leads me to believe that, perhaps, we are not doing as well as we ought to be in keeping in touch with those individuals.

One, perhaps in hindsight, misleading paragraph of our welcome letter, that you would have had a copy of when you first joined our number, reads as follows – “There are web based groups – (forums) I simply do not have time to get involved! I do know that in the main – the odd inexperienced but well-meaning distractions excepted, those on such groups can be both knowledgeable and helpful if you have the facilities.”

It should perhaps be clearer in as much as that while John has kindly included links to various Clubs and relevant groups from our web site, I, as with forums, generally do not make time to communicate with or look at these links. The point in this case of course being, that there is a link there to “Home of the Jimp” – I ought to stop this and take a look, but I am running far enough behind without yet further distractions – lunch is ready, and I am hungry, so - later....

O.K., much later! A shopping trip, emails about parts, a couple of phone calls, and the realisation that I don't understand the logic behind

the model order report (that I ran off for the Jimps) I spent time copying the list into two other lists, one in chassis number order, the other by Register number. Only then did I actually read the heading at the top of the report I had printed off – it reads – :

Kitten Register in Model and Postcode Order *16-Oct-20*

There follows 8 columns of Information, but nothing on the date the records were last updated, or if the owner is still “one of us”!

Don't ask me why, I can't remember, and, as regular readers may remember, the late Brian Millar, who created the database for us, is no longer here to ask.

And some wonder why I still cling to the, if not belief, hope, that I will get organised one day!

Enough with the digression. I will analyse that report more fully another time. Meantime, my thanks to George for being the catalyst that brought us here. Enjoy the Picture of his Jimp below, and if you have one (or more) of these rare vehicles, please be so good as to take and send in a recent picture of it / them.



A Kitten rebuild story – Part 1.

By Kyle Cartmell.

So, It all started back in October last year (2019), when I purchased my Kitten from Andy Yule in Aberdeen. Here's a photo from when I went to pick it up.



Sadly Andy passed away on the 17th of July this year, Ed.

The car needed a fair amount of work, both to the body and the chassis. Luckily the car came with a replacement chassis, which was a massive help. It still required some welding, but nothing nearly as much as the original.

This became the first job, removal of the body from the old chassis, it was reasonably simple, as a lot of the bolts had been removed before I bought the car. (Andy had been making preparations to get ready for the removal of the body before his health sadly failed.) Then the old chassis went back into the shed to be stripped completely.



Indoors now, and the work begins.



Here's the old chassis with the body and front suspension partly removed. Next, the new chassis, all painted up in primer ready for top coat.



~~~~~

Ahh, an odd corner – I'll just share a wee story that made me smile – something we should all try to do more often, though I grant you it can be difficult these days! Ed.

*John Travolta was reported to have suspected Covid-19, but all was well, it turned out to be Saturday Night Fever. He is, we are assured, Staying Alive, and it was just a case of him having chills that were multiplying.*

~~~~~ My apologies for the interruption Kyle. ~~~~~


With the beginning of a new year (2020), the rear axle was complete, chassis finished, leaf springs cleaned, lubricated, and wrapped.

Sorry to interrupt Kyle (there were a few spare lines on this page) I was just wondering what you used to lubricate the springs, and also what material you used to wrap them in? I know (well, I think I am correct in saying that we have covered this in the past - which could give me an ideal opportunity to mention Steve's recently updated Index, but this page is full now!) Thanks.



Here (on the next page) we see the engine in the new chassis, (now painted black) with the rear axle all bolted on.

It was now time to turn my attention to the front end of the car, and mainly the front suspension.



The front end practically assembled, with only a few bits missing.

Then it was time to roll the finished chassis outside for a look, and then to turn my attention to the bodywork.

This was something that I wasn't too sure about, as I've never really done much bodywork, especially not fibreglass. The body on the car needed a good number of repairs, mainly to the roof, this had been badly cracked above the front doors, along with some other bits of damage. I thought about this for a while, and decided the best thing for me to do was to find another body shell.

Luckily, I managed to get a body shell from the Linfield's down at Fort William, here are a few pictures from the start of the body work.

I've juggled the pictures about to get them on the one page, just read the numbers or use your imagination – Ed.



One



Five



Two



Three



Four!



Now time to lift the body off and lower it down onto the new chassis.



The next job was the extremely slow task of rubbing the body down by hand for paint, a job that seemed to never end, with it taking 11 hours just to get the roof panel done, and days for the rest of the body.

With the beginning of Lockdown, all progress on the car slowed dramatically, as I started on a light restoration of my MGB GT, getting it back to a useable condition. But with it completed, I finished rubbing down the Kitten's body, and turned my attention to the doors of the car, which required a lot of work.



With the doors finished, it was time to load the car into the trailer to go off for paint. This is as far as I've got at the moment, It's going to be sprayed Ford Olympic Blue but, there's still a wee bit of work that I need to do before the colour is put on, as there's a fair number of imperfections in the bodywork.

So stay tuned for some more updates, as the finish is in sight.

Many thanks for sharing that with us Kyle. I really must make more of an effort to put people in touch. We now have 5 Kitten folk within a 40 mile radius of Inverness, and John with his Liege is only over at Inver.

Now, I was very tempted indeed to use both of the pictures that Chris kindly sent yesterday, but, for once, I chose not to act in haste, the other one really should be given more prominence.

Thanks Chris, great that you are flying the flag, and that you won a section that you might not have expected – an excellent surprise

Hello Brian,

4th October 2020

At last a decent photograph of my Fox.

We entered the car show at Castle Howard today, we were the only Reliant there, and somehow won the commercial section!

Hope you are keeping well,

Regards, Chris (Heaton). No. 1097 from Scarborough.



Not a lot of blue in that sky, but just look at the shadows in the foreground – clearly a truly memorable day. Well done Chris. Ed.

And now for something completely different!

I really wish I could come up with tales like this, true or not!

A Farmer is overseeing his animals in a remote part of the County when suddenly a brand-new BMW advances out of a dust cloud towards him. The driver, a young man in a designer suit, Gucci shoes, Ray Ban sunglasses and YSL tie, leans out the window and asks the farmer, 'If I tell you exactly how many cows and calves you have in your herd, will you give me a calf?'

The Farmer looks at the man, obviously a yuppie, then looks at his peacefully grazing herd and calmly answers, 'Reet, why not?' The yuppie parks his car, whips out his Dell notebook computer, connects it to his Cingular RAZR V3 cell phone, and surfs to a NASA page on the Internet, where he calls up a GPS satellite navigation system to get an exact fix on his location which he then feeds to another NASA satellite that scans the area in an ultra-high-resolution photo. The young man then opens the digital photo in Adobe Photoshop and exports it to an image processing facility in Hamburg, Germany.

Within seconds, he receives an email on his Palm Pilot that the image has been processed and the data stored. He then accesses a MS-SQL database through an ODBC connected Excel Spreadsheet with email on his Blackberry, and, after a few minutes, receives a response. Finally, he prints out a full-color, 150-page report on his hi-tech, miniaturized HP LaserJet printer and finally turns to the farmer and says, 'You have exactly 1,586 cows and calves.'

'Wow That's right. Well, I guess you can take one of my calves,' says the Farmer.

He watches the young man select one of the animals and looks on amused as the young man stuffs it into the boot of his car.

Then the farmer says to the young man, 'Ey Up!, if I can tell you exactly what your business is, will you give me back my calf?'

The young man thinks about it for a second and then says, 'Okay, why not?'

'You work for the British Government', says the farmer.

'Wow! That's correct,' says the yuppie, 'but how did you guess that?'

Therefore, it is with great pleasure that the FBHVC has announced it will run the 2021 Drive it Day, scheduled for April 25th in support of the NSPCC's Childline® service.

During the current pandemic, vulnerable young people have been less visible to professionals and their safety nets have fallen away. Home isn't always a safe place for a child. Children have also been exposed to more potential risks at home as parents and carers have come under increasing pressures from the current challenging times.

The NSPCC's Childline® service – 0800 11 11 – has remained a vital lifeline for those children who feel they have no one else to turn to, holding 19,000 counselling sessions a month since lockdown began.

The number of posts on Childline's message boards from children and young people reaching out to each other for support since the lockdown began has doubled, with the Childline® website receiving three times as many visits per week than before the pandemic, particularly to the advice pages and the Calm Zone, with tools and activities to help children let go of stress.

Childline® has also seen a worrying change in the nature of concerns and the age of children they have supported, with over half of all conversations related to mental and emotional health (including suicidal thoughts and feelings and self-harm), and more children under 11 contacting the service.

Childline® will continue to remain a vital resource for children as they adjust to returning to school and the effects of the pandemic continue to be felt by children and families. But they need our help to fund these vital resources.

Peter Wanless, NSPCC Chief Executive said, "I wanted to thank everyone at the Federation of British Historic Vehicle Clubs for your commitment to work in support of Childline®. Childline® is an extraordinary service that is here for children with nowhere else to turn. Your time and your fundraising efforts are going to make an incredible difference in helping us train and support volunteers to be there for the very many children who deserve better during these incredibly challenging times.

Really looking forward to building an important partnership with you that is going to make a great difference. Thank you."

Individuals can donate simply by purchasing a Drive it Day rally

plate for their vehicle, which will be available to purchase shortly online.

Clubs can help by organising an event or rally to raise money and by donating the proceeds to our JustGiving fundraising page, the link for which can be found via www.driveitday.co.uk.

David Whale, FBHVC Chairman said, “The COVID-19 pandemic is the greatest challenge that the world has faced in a generation. So, the FBHVC asks all historic vehicle owners and enthusiasts to join in with us on Drive it Day, Sunday 25 April 2021, to not only continue our work to raise awareness of the freedoms needed by the historic vehicle movement, but also to contribute something special and help ensure Childline® is still there for those children who need help. Our passion can make a huge difference to his hugely deserving charity.”

There are all sorts of ways you can get involved and more information can be found via www.driveitday.co.uk where you can also submit your event to our directory to help enthusiasts find what’s happening nearest to them as well as view the options to donate, raise money and purchase rally plates.

Of course, the FBHVC accepts that many clubs already raise money for charity through their Drive it Day activities and so suggest this as an optional addition to any existing fundraising relationships that clubs may have.

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For media enquiries, please contact: Wayne Scott at Classic Heritage PR, 07759 260899. wayne@classicheritagepr.co.uk

There are over 500 subscriber organisations representing a total membership of over 250,000 in addition to individual and trade supporters. All our directors operate in a voluntary capacity supported by our secretary.

Website: www.fbhvc.co.uk

Reliant Rear Axle.

Much has been said over the years about these pretty hardy units, however, moving parts do wear. Keith, who has rebuilt more of these axles than most folk, kindly took the time to share some details, with pictures, of the one he overhauled most recently this year.

I should like to point out that such an overhaul should only be attempted if you have the tools and competence to safely undertake the task. The energy that can be stored up in these things can, if you do not use the correct tools and care, result in a half-shaft leaving its long standing location rather like a bullet from a gun, a BIG bullet. The damage such a projectile can cause can not only be expensive to repair, but life threatening if someone is in line with its trajectory at the moment of its release.

SPLITTING THE AXLE.

The question normally is “What happens when I remove the nuts around the diff case, and I split the axle?”



In truth it's a non-event, the normal worry is – “Are there going to be loads of parts that will fall out and I won't be able to put it back together and set it up again.” Do not worry!



Inside is a crown wheel and pinion. Those two sub-assemblies are inside, pre-set up at the factory. The Crown wheel (above) is trapped in place by the axle cases, and the pinion is bolted into the axle case.

~~~~~

*My apologies everyone, Keith in particular, this edition has, for some reason, caused me more challenges than usual when it comes to making articles fill pages neatly.*

*I did cheat with a lot of the pictures in Kyle s Kitten renovation story, simply by making them much smaller, and lumping several together on a single page, sorry Kyle.*

*In short, a lot more compromises than I am comfortable with. Hopefully next time I will be better organised! Ed.*

~~~~~



CHANGING THE DIFFERENTIAL BEARINGS.

As previously mentioned, the diff/pinion relationship was already set up at the factory, so, all that is needed, is to change the bearings, new for old, leaving them positioned exactly as the factory set them.

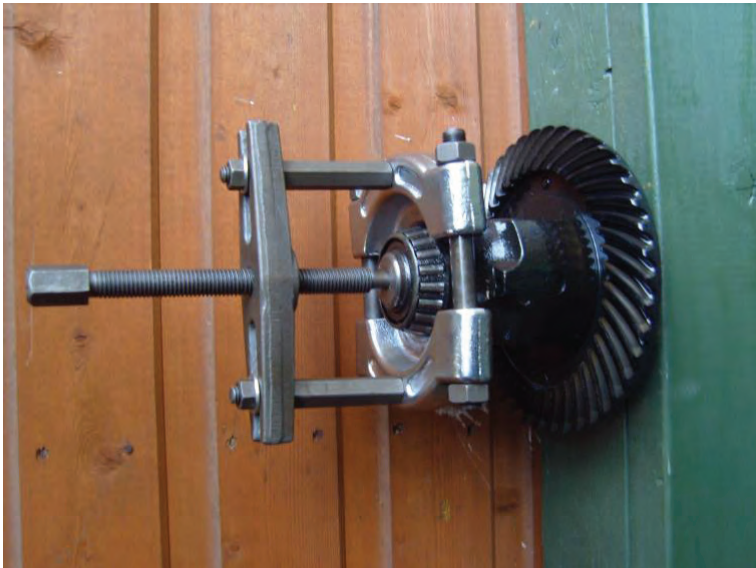
Crown wheel.

Between the bearing and the crown wheel casting are shim washers, you need to remove each bearing very carefully, so as not to damage the shims. Only do one bearing at a time, to prevent mixing up the spacers. On one side, the bearing is removed easily using the correct bearing puller, but on the opposite side it is more difficult, as the outer ring of the bearing needs to be removed, leaving the inner ring of the bearing on the casting. With the appropriate health and safety gloves mask and visor in place, I use an angle grinder, with a very thin stainless cutting wheel, to cut into the bearing inner ring on two opposite sides until the cut is almost through. Then, using a cold chisel and hammer, split each piece off, which should also crack the rest of the remaining bearing, making it easy to remove, once cool, without damaging the shims.

Pinion.

Holding half the axle in a vice by the pinion flange, remove the nut/washer. The pinion can be tapped out using a suitable drift, to save damaging the thread. The pinion will come out with a shim/spacer behind the pinion gear, the rear half of the taper bearing, and a crush tube. The front taper bearing, and lip seal, will remain in the axle case.

The rear bearing is removed by using a leg type puller (see below), and you then fit a new bearing. The front bearing will be replaced during reassembly, as will the seal. The problem comes with the non-availability of a new crush tube, which, if your assembling the pinion assembly into the axle it came out of, then you can re-use the original crush tube. It's at this point where the argument usually starts, in fact the tube will be longer than the distance between the two fixed bearings when removed, because, to permanently distort metal, you need to go past the "yield point" of the metal. In this case the fixed bearings set a length, and you cannot go past them to make the tube the same length as the distance between the bearings.



However if you are changing the complete diff/pinion for another ratio from a different axle, then you could get problems with the pinion locking up, due to axle machining not being the same as the axle the pinion came out of!

Taper roller bearings need to be fitted with all play taken out, but **not** under pressure. The way to fit a pinion assembly that locks up, is to fit the pinion nut with Loctite on the thread, pull the assembly up quite tight, back the nut off, then wind the nut back up to touch or with tiny pressure. Check the pinion turns correctly, and let the Loctite set.



~~~~~

Dear Brian and Moira,

27/08/20

I seem to remember on the BBC years ago, when I still lived in the UK, they once showed an old Codger who was often accompanied to his local Pub by his large dog and he carried a special bowl into which he poured about 1/3rd of his pints for the dog to share, which I suspect the dog had got used to drinking and quite enjoyed. There are these special Kobe bulls in Japan, I gather that part of their diet is a certain variety of beer, that makes the meat rather tasty, or so I am told, as the meat is horrendously expensive; about 200-300 quid a pound, so strictly for the very rich in Japan. Still I trust a lot of our Mewsletter Club Members with Lockdown, have more time on their hands, to work on their beloved Kittens, Foxes, Regals, even though out here, we are in midwinter but it's pretty mild, compared to your winters.

BR. Frankie No. 601 from Santiago in Chile.



~~~~~

Hi Brian,

October 2020

I hope you and yours are "weathering the storm". We certainly live in strange times!

I'm attaching a revised and up to date copy of the Mewsletter Index. I have also shared an internet version with John.

I have attempted to tease out some of the bigger references which has made the index longer but, hopefully, a little more accurate. The index now covers up to and including Mewsletter 154.

Stay safe!

Best wishes, Steve (Casey) No. 772 from Nuneaton

~~~~~

## EPILOGUE

Once again I find myself running later than I had intended / hoped to be with this edition. Almost makes me wonder if I should consider making this quarterly, and in doing so avoid the need to raise the subscription level for the foreseeable future, what do you think?

As I type it is Thursday the 15<sup>th</sup> of October, fast (thankfully!) approaching the end of our schools' autumn break. We have had one or other of the boys here every day since last Friday, including 2 sleepovers. It is great to have them, but we must be getting old or something, because we are both exhausted.

I sent out our second last pair of Kitten back springs last week, and got quite a fright when pricing up replacements.

The spares situation is something that could do with a look / update. I really need to step even further back from this, and with our willing band of helpers all over the country holding the heavy bits for us, has the potential downside of multiple delivery charges.

Your thoughts / suggestions, recommendations or ideas will be both welcome and eagerly awaited.

Then, on the 16<sup>th</sup> (today!) the postie brought me a completed application form that I had only sent out on the 12<sup>th</sup> (they do not often come back that quickly) and I was, very happily, sidetracked – see page 8.

The next edition will of course be our Christmas one, please help fill its pages if you can, and save our readers from more of my mutterings.

Do I really need to remind you about the need for regular lubrication? **Just do it!**

Till Christmas then, take care and stay safe. *Brian.*

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