



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

# RELIANT KITTEN REGISTER



## **Mewsletter 156**

**November-December 2020**



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The Register caters for all the under 1.1 litre Reliant 4-wheeled vehicles plus all of their derivatives: Foxes, Rebels, Tempests, Salamanders, Ciphers, Jimps, Asquiths, Vantiques and all other specials including the Liege and the Sipani Dolphin.



## **The Reliant Kitten Register**

Hon. President John Box

*Chris Heaton s very pretty Fox, shown here taking part in a Car show at Castle Howard this October. Much to his surprise, it won the commercial section! Well done Chris.*

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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# Dinky Cars

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# INDEX

## Mews 156

Page 3	Index.
Page 4	Editorial.
Page 5	From a shrinking Oval Office by John Box.
Page 6	Rebel Round up by Phil Hallam.
Pages 7 - 9	Update from the Netherlands by Rik Borgman.
Pages 10 - 12	Getting Technical by Keith Gittus.
Page 13	5 Year Subscriptions.
Pages 14 – 16	More on back axles by John Pearce.
Pages 17 - 20	Behind the Scenes – by John Pearce.
Page 21	A Moving Kitten Tail. (well, the beginning!)
Pages 22 - 24	F.B.H.V.C. Update.
Pages 25 & 26	Diesel do... by Phil Hallam.
Pages 27 & 28	A little light distraction.
Page 29	Epilogue.

E & o e

Festive greetings to you and yours, and a warm welcome to our Christmas edition.

Right now, Friday October the 30<sup>th</sup>, I am just back from dropping 214 copies of edition 155 at the printers for posting, so, while you might not have seen it till November, I did, just, get them off in October (*only a month later than I had at one time hoped for!*).

I will be interested to see if I can get this to you ahead of the Christmas break – time will tell.

Having lost the plot a bit last time, and, to some extent, fearing similar confusion this time, I will make serious efforts to end articles in an appropriate manner, and not interrupt too often with, hopefully, witty, or even helpful, distractions.

I'm not sure if it was just my inability to manipulate images exactly as I might wish, or more a lack of focus. Whatever, I did cringe a few times when deciding to let the final proof stand. Hopefully normal service will be resumed forthwith.

At this point in the decade I have usually decided what to do regarding the matter of our 5 year subscribers for the future. Right now I am unusually hesitant, trying to decide the most sensible way forward.

As I mentioned before, I have been considering options. This has been a challenging year, and the future looks uncertain (*did it ever not?*) On balance however, I have opted to carry on, and try to maintain some stability in these rapidly changing times.

So, the 5 year deal is still available, the Mews will remain at 6 editions a year, (for the time being) and the subscription will be £ 22 for 2021, or £ 90 for 5 years, which will take you up till December 2025.

Given that a quarter of our readers had taken out the 5 year offer last time, back in 2015 (yes, that really was 5 years ago!) It will be interesting to see how good the take-up is now. The fact is, that in spite of the extra work now, it saves time and money going forward. Only 1 card to produce instead of 5, and potentially less folk to remind every year, it is a win for me, a lot less cheques to bank, though the digital age is calling, and the bank are making it more difficult for me to process cheques these days. Not only will the 5 year deal save you a few £££s, but guards against any increases for the next 5 years. Are you with me?

I had a call today 9/11/20, from our President, asking if I knew how many of our wonderful wee cars were on the road, and if we knew how many were under active restoration. See the next edition.

As regular readers will be aware, the renewal notice both shows details of the relevant vehicles that we believe you have, or had, and gives owners the opportunity to provide up-to-date information.

## From the Oval Office.

I have it on the best authority that our President is thinking of downsizing. As evidence, he submitted some Reliant factory pictures from an imaginary railway station. Thank you Mr. President.



# Rebel Round Up?

## *Phil Hallam's progress with his special.*

Hi Brian

20/11/20

Hope Moira and you are ok in the latest lockdown - I am making progress with the chassis. I made new spring mounts a la Rebel design, but then found that because these were further back, it would be difficult to get a nut on the bolt. The solution was to go a la kitten, so I welded two 5mm plates either side of the chassis, drilled a hole, and welded in a thick walled tube to carry a bolt (long) which will hold the front of the spring. Looks a bit better anyway.

I have cut off the mounts for the gearbox cross member, and extended them, so that I can move this further back and modify it to fit the kitten gearbox mounts.

Dependent on the weather, I am getting close to temporary fitting the back axle, then the prop, gearbox and engine, so that I can find out where the new mountings for these need to be welded. I think that the front of the engine should come just up to the rear of the wide front crossmember.

By the way, has the Register ever supplied front dampers for a Rebel? ***Not yet Phil, but if they were needed??? Talk to me, Rebel owners one and all, would you be interested in a pair of Gaz adjustable front dampers?***

With that, I can decide where the bulkhead should be, and then weld in suitable outriggers to carry the body.

Hopefully, I can send you some photos when I get on a bit more. Thanks to John Parker who sent me a load of bits - now I have the missing brake drum.

At least between this and wood turning, I am keeping the grey matter turning over.

Keep safe. Regards Phil (Hallam) No. 164 from Ayrshire.

Hello Brian,

20<sup>th</sup> October 2020

How are you doing? And Moira? It's been awhile since we spoke to each other. Meanwhile I hope you and yours got well through the Corona crisis?

The Kitten is still driving OK, with about 2,500 KM each year. Last summer we did our summer holiday with the Kitten. As it was not really advised to leave the country, we went to the east of Holland for a week, to relax a bit. In that week we drove around 850 KM all over secondary roads, some small hillclimbs and some non-paved roads.

In the attachment a nice picture from the Kitten besides a Dutch steam train, *(we used it on the last cover as you may have noticed, below is the other one, and, over the page (or two) the full version of last month s cover picture. ou can, I m sure, understand how difficult it sometimes is, to choose between options when it comes to deciding which picture to use on your covers, that said, it is truly wonderful to have choices, thank you Rik. Ed.)* and some typical Dutch houses. Maybe nice for the front cover of the magazine?



In the meantime, during the lockdown in Holland, I continued working on my Regal which I am restoring, and I am looking for the right carburettor from a Robin 750 (the Zenith 30IZ) with the correct jets inside. The carb I have is from a 600cc and has too small jets. For my recognition you once were a Kitten parts custodian. Just an odd question, might you still have such an old carburettor lying around somewhere? Here are the details for the jets.

Sorry Rik, the Kittens used the SU carb, but I'll ask, The Rebels however, used what is, I suspect, just what you need (though I am not certain about the jet size,) Ed.

Fuel tank capacity	27.27 litres (6 gallons)
<b>Fuel pump</b> Type	Mechanical
<b>Carburettor</b> Type	Single choke, down drau
<b>Jet sizes (mm)</b>	<b>30 IZ Carburettor</b>
Main jet	105
Compensating (correction) jet	160
Slow running (idling) jet	50
Slow running air bleed	80
Accelerator pump jet	40
Accelerator pump back bleed	35
Economy jet	50
Needle valve	1.6

I hope you are OK, and maybe I am lucky, otherwise I will continue my search!

Many greetings from Holland, and stay safe.

Rik Borgman No. 743, from The Netherlands.

.....





It is great to see a well restored Kitten still giving useful service half a century after it was built, and to learn of Rik continuing to benefit from his investment of doing a full body off rebuild to a high standard back in 2010 was it? Ed.

# Getting Technical

Back axle overhaul – by Keith Gittus.

## **Part 2 deals with the half-shaft bearing and seal replacement.**

I was interested to read Brian's safety comments at the start of :- Reliant Rear Axle Mewsletter 155, which came from a conversation I had with him in the 1980's, It involved the first axle I took apart, at a time when I was building a new garage in my garden. The building had reached the point where the roof was about to go on. I had a bench, with a vice, so proceeded to take the hub off, removed the nut, fitted the 12 ton hydraulic puller, and wound it down - nothing happened so I applied some heat, still nothing happened. It was at this point that I decided to hit the wheel hub with a hammer and drift. There was an all mighty bang, and my reflexes made me flinch away. When I looked back, the hub and puller were nowhere to be seen? Pete from next door appeared and asked me if I'd lost something? with the puller and hub in his hand! The force on the half shaft had shot the assembly through the roof area, and into next door's garden. I now always leave the half shaft nut in place.

Right back to the subject in hand.

Hang on a minute – Keith pointed out to me that I had some of the pictures in the wrong parts of the article last time – I did wonder, but, in spite of Keith's offers to check it, I failed miserably – one day.... So, the question is, did you spot that? Ed.

### **Right, now we can return to the subject in hand.**

Remove the handbrake cable and cylinder brake pipe, after putting a container beneath the end of the pipe. Remove the wheel, drum, shoes, handbrake cable lever, and springs. Place an appropriate lever across the wheel studs, to stop things turning, and undo the wheel hub nut, to be level with the end of the half-shaft (do not remove it!). Fit a hub puller of the type you can hammer around to put the pressure on, and then strike the center, to shock, as shown, to remove the wheel hub.

Undo the bolts holding the back plate in place. Use a hammer and drift on the wheel hub, to, hopefully, drift the half shaft and bearing out. I say hopefully, as on a number of occasions, I have found that the bearing has rusted in solid, and I have had to resort to removing the

axle, split it in the middle, and hammer the half-shaft out, hitting the inner end of the half-shaft with a hammer and drift.



With the half shaft out, you can prise out the seal - making note of which way around it fits - then clean the area, and fit a new seal.

Place the half shaft in a vice, fully remove the nut, use a leg type puller to remove the old bearing, and replace with a new bearing, Lubricate the oil seal, and where the bearing sits, refit the half-shaft, taking great care not to damage the seal.

Fit the back plate, secure with the bolts. Assemble the brake shoes, springs, and handbrake lever, onto the back-plate. Fit the wheel hub, hand brake cable, plus reattach the brake pipe to the cylinder.

Fit brake drum and wheel. The remaining thing left to do is to adjust the brakes and bleed the system. The brakes will need to be checked and adjusted again once they have settled in.

Keith. (Gittus) No. 154 from Burntwood.

Many thanks for that Keith, see over for the other puller picture.

Once again, I find myself with a picture at the end of an article!



*This one I could not resist sharing.*

### **A lesson in why we should not jump to conclusions!**

A New York attorney, representing a very wealthy art collector, called and asked to speak to his client. "Saul, I have some good news, and I have some bad news."

The art collector replied, "You know, I've had an awful day, Jack, so let's hear the good news first."

The lawyer said, "Well, I met with your wife today, and she informed me that she has invested only \$500 in two very nice pictures that she thinks will bring somewhere between \$15 and \$20 million ... and I think she could be right."

Saul replied enthusiastically, "Holy cow! Well done! My wife is a brilliant business woman, isn't she? You've just made my day. Now, I know I can handle the bad news. What is it?"

The lawyer replied, "The pictures are of you and your secretary."

## 5 Year Subscriptions

2020 marks the end of our 3<sup>rd</sup> 5 year deal. I remember being somewhat anxious back in early 2016, wondering how many of the previous long-term guys we would retain. The fact is that I never did check that out! We had about a 50% increase in those taking up the offer that time.

The thing I find most difficult about the 5 year deal, is knowing when to have the membership cards produced!

I normally have them done late in January, to give Phil and I time to get together for our annual afternoon's encapsulation exercise, ahead of mailing the March / April edition of the Mews.

One of the savings for the Register (*and Phil and I, who encapsulate them*) is only having to produce a card twice a decade, rather than annually. If I give the go-ahead to the printers too soon, I potentially end up with a lot of obsolete cards, that expire in December 2021.

One option of course would be simply to overwrite the expiry date on your 2021 card, rather than have to have a late run of cards expiring 2025 produced. I would not be keen on that, as that sort of intricate work is, sadly, not something I am particularly good at these days, and it would probably look untidy.

You can help me out here, your prompt renewal will help to avoid any such concerns. So, please, get back to me before the end of January, and, if you would like your card sent to you before the next magazine goes out, please enclose a s.a.e. with your remittance, thank you.

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*Hard to believe that it was exactly 30 years ago when I finally began to realise I really could not talk Terry Scott into taking this on!*

## More on back axles - by John Pearce

One of our recent subscribers (Welcome Philip) has corrosion problems on an axle tube, here is the story so far :-

Can you advise if axle tubes are available to buy? as mine are badly corroded. Many thanks Philip Leask, Shetland Islands.

Philip,

9/11/20

Apologies for the length of this reply – it's not exactly a simple subject...

Axle tubes were never, as far as I can find out, listed as available by dealers separately from the axle casing complete – they were not designed to be disturbed after assembly. That said many (including me) have fully disassembled axle cases, and whilst not easy, it can be done. That said, all sorts of things have appeared NOS since the factory closed so.....

I would contact James Holland at CHG Classics to see if he has any, or a decent second-hand axle, but read below first!

It depends on which of the two different (and not directly interchangeable) axles you have fitted. The so-called early one, or the late one. I say so-called, because both types were fitted, as and when available, throughout Kitten production, but the "late" ones seem to be more common.

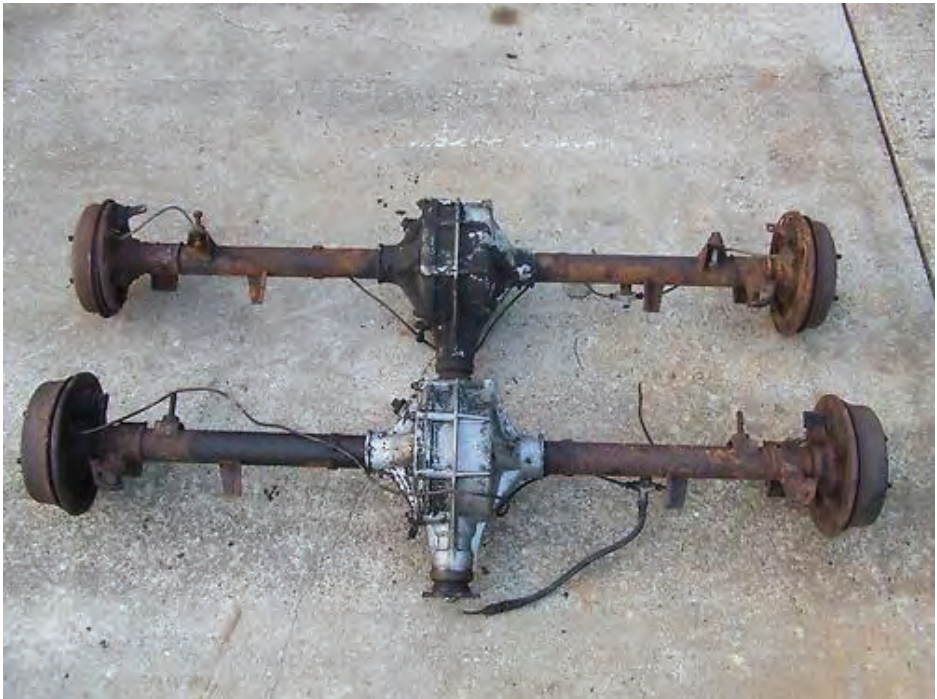
Original "early" Kitten axles have heavier duty tubes, and completely different shock absorber mountings. I doubt that there are any tubes for these available anywhere, but complete axles do become available second-hand occasionally – I bought one myself to recondition for my car about 7 years ago, and even then, completely worn out, rarity meant that it wasn't cheap. It was however, virtually rust free, but had clearly been run for a long period without oil!!

On this "early" axle, the shock mountings are to a stud, welded to a thick, flat bracket, welded directly on the centre line of the axle tubes. I do still have my old axle here, but it too suffers from heavy rust pitting to the axle tubes, plus it's been "round the clock at least 5 times mileage-wise!!

The other (and more common) type was effectively a version of the three-wheeler axle. Physically interchangeable with the “early”, bar a shock absorber issue. The shock absorbers on these axles are bolted to drop plates welded to the axle tubes lowering the actual mount by approximately 2-3” below the centre line of the axle – the same setup as the Robins / Rialtos and Foxes.

Both types use identical length shock absorbers, even though one design, in theory, needs much longer shockers. The factory got round this by having the upper mounts located on the chassis closer together nearer the centre for the “early”, inclining the lean-in more. The “later” cars had the upper shock mounts located further apart, leading to a closer to vertical angle of lean.

To use the “late” drop mount axle on early axle chassis during production, the factory fabricated a pair of cast iron upper mount drop brackets to bolt to the upper chassis mountings, thereby extending the physical length of the dampers to stop them “topping out” on rebound. These brackets are like “hen’s teeth” these days, as they were never supplied as a spare part.



Three-wheeler axles can also be made to fit, but are different again, if you can find a decent one. All had the “late” drop-type mounts and identical internals and ratios, but the axle tube end castings were different, having narrower rear brake shoes, plus a totally different handbrake system. Also, the rear brake plates/shoes/cylinders were Standard-Triumph sourced and 4-bolt fixing to the end castings, whereas all Kitten rear brakes were sourced from the “classic” BMC Mini, and are 3-bolt fitting.

Fitting a Robin axle to a Kitten, means a bespoke handbrake cable is required (I concocted a Robin rear to Kitten front cable for one I did for a Register member years ago). His also needed thin (5mm) spacers to move the tyre walls away from the spring leaves by a safe distance, as the narrower brakes meant a slightly narrower axle.

Fox axles can be fitted – if you can find one. The ratio for these though is way too low and all are “late” drop mount types. This same axle, with the standard 3.23;1 crown wheel and pinion, was fitted to the later, post 1995 (12” wheeled) three-wheelers, by the factory (which also had the Mini-sourced brakes on them).

A careful perusal of the attached picture will explain things further. A picture I took probably 25 years or more back. Both these are Kitten axles, the “early” being the lower one, the “late” the upper.

As an aside, the “early” axles always had the same “square edge” drums as fitted to the front wheels, and the “late” ones usually had the tapered edge “Robin” type drums fitted, also visible in the picture (though with the addition or removal of a spacer between the brake back plate and axle end, either drum is interchangeable).

John (Pearce) No. 304 from Mansfield.

.....

My thanks to John for that, though I have some questions – later. As he is on a roll, I thought I would share the following with you. In actual fact it relates to a three wheeler, and so does not actually fall into our area of responsibility, but the story explains that very well.

Once again, thank you John.



## A glimpse behind the scenes, at some of the work that John Pearce gets up to, to help Reliant owners.

An enthusiast (who we will call “M”) needed a dating letter to get a ROI registration for his newly restored Robin, but the V5c was not with the vehicle, having been returned to DVLA as exported. Inevitably, converted to a van, and “Trottered”!!

I used my RKR hat to do this, for no other reason than I still don’t have ROC headed notepaper!

John (Pearce).

From: Reliant Kitten Register <[info@kitreg.org.uk](mailto:info@kitreg.org.uk)>  
Sent: 07 November 2020 13:25 Subject: Dating letter

M,

7/11/20

Please find attached the promised dating letter.

I’ve used the Kitten Register, because it’s DVLA registered (as am I by the way), and it is far more “tech” related than the Reliant Owners Club, which, although DVLA registered, is much more a social Club, rallies, camping, bingo, games for the kiddies and such. Also, strangely, it doesn’t have a headed notepaper.....

The Reliant Motor Club is not DVLA registered. I’m also on the committee of this, albeit in a technical support role.

The Register does have three-wheeler driving members as well! If you visit the web site you’ll see it’s somewhat inappropriately named – but on its foundation it was only for Kittens!

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

Let me know how you get on please.

John (Pearce).

From the chassis and engine numbers, I can confirm that it was built during June 1976, and was originally painted Desert Tan (a shade of orange).

## To explain....

All Reliants registered from 1975 - 1979 carried an in-house coding in the chassis (and engine) numbers detailing the year/month/colour and exact model as well as the actual vehicle number. This applies to all three and four wheeled variants, including the Scimitars.

I have appended a scan of Reliant Service Bulletin 1976/1 which explains (for dealers) how the system works, but it's a bit long-winded so to make it easier I'll translate below.....

The first digit of the chassis number – the number 6, refers to the year the vehicle was built. This numbering system was as follows: 5=1975, 6=1976, 7=1977 etc. In October 1979, Reliant switched to the international 17-digit "Vin" numbering system (along with every other vehicle manufacturer) but the chassis identification codes continued as before. Hence 1980=A, 1981=B etc. and so on up to the factory ceasing trading in 2001. The letters never included the letters I or O, to avoid confusion with the numbers 1 and 0... So, in your case, 6 = 1976.

The next digit is a month letter. Reliant used A for January, B for February, C for March and so on, again missing out the letter I – finishing with M for December.

So 6F means that your vehicle left the factory during June 1976.

The next digit is the colour code – see chart below :-

For Robins and Kittens these were :-

|                   |                    |                          |
|-------------------|--------------------|--------------------------|
| 1= Venetian Blue, | 2= Virginia Brown, | 3= April Yellow,         |
| 4= Tropic Green,  | 5= Caramel,        | 6= Arctic White,         |
| 7= London Red,    | 8= Desert Tan      | 9= Turquoise, 10=Primer. |

All colours used during the 1970's were taken from the British Leyland colour palette, and simply renamed by Reliant, and up to 1978 only the above 10 were listed.

The pre-1979 Scimitar range had a different colour palette, this time, with some taken from Ford cars.....

Hence the prefix 6F8, means a desert tan 1976 vehicle.

The next three numbers are the model number. In the case of this vehicle 132, which means it is a Robin Estate.

The remainder is the actual vehicle number, which Reliant started at 01000. 6F8/13209733 means yours is the 8733rd Robin built. This number was consecutive and constant across the different body types throughout production.

750cc and 850cc Reliant engine numbers too, carried a date code prefix.... In the case of your engine it also dates to June 1976.

From the introduction of the International 17-digit VIN system, in October 1979, chassis numbers on three-wheelers were officially not stamped on the chassis. Experience suggest that Reliant actually ceased stamping them much earlier plus, if the chassis has been renewed in the past, as many have, then it will not have a number as replacement chassis were never numbered at the factory. Many were changed by the factory after a major recall to address fatigue cracks in the steering box mountings in 1978.

In the UK, three-wheelers are firmly in the motorcycle category, specifically as tricycles, and this category considers that the frame is a replaceable item. All they ever have is an attached "VIN" plate, riveted to the frame/body and easily visible.

I have only ever seen a stamped number on the very earliest 750cc Robins. When the range was updated to 850cc in 1975, officially it was stamped on the hoop that supports the inner seat belt mounts inside the transmission tunnel, visible from beneath the car. I've never seen one so stamped!

If it were stamped, or should you decide to have it stamped, then only the actual frame numbers need to be applied, in your case 08733. The prefix and model numbers were only included on the 4-wheel Kittens and Foxes plus the Ant commercial truck. Pre VIN three-wheelers and Scimitars also simply carried the actual chassis number. Post VIN, on Scimitars, Kittens, Foxes and Ants, the full number was applied (again not for three-wheelers).

Many have been stamped post production, usually by dealers or VOSA following an inspection. This is always done in the area of the steering box mount, well away from where corrosion might reasonably be encountered.

Axle loadings were not quoted for the three-wheelers, as the factory did not recommend towing with one.

All I could find was a rated load carrying capacity of 5cwt for the van version. This is published in the owners' manual.

If any further information is needed, please do not hesitate to ask.

John Pearce (Historian – RKR & ROC)

Thanks John,

9/11/20

They were very impressed with your letter and all the detail explained, I got approved to register for Irish ZV plates, thanks again for your help.

M.

.....

## *The future...*

Where to begin? Well, actually, I already did, away back on page 4!

There are still things to resolve, and decisions to be made, but that is no bad thing, and offers the possibility of making, what some might say, are much needed improvements (*others might point out that you cannot improve on perfection!*) Whatever, as I have said before, my mobility issues are making life increasingly challenging, and some changes are being forced upon me.

One effect of the way we handle spares is that, as seems to be happening more often than not these days (a good sign I believe, as it suggests more rebuilds and restoration work is taking place, alongside on-going running maintenance) is the, not insignificant, cost of delivery – from multiple sources.

The fact that we rely on a number of like-minded and willing folk to help out, by keeping the bigger / heavier bits for me, has made it all possible. It was not the intention to compete with anyone, but rather to ensure the supply of difficult to obtain parts, that started it all.

Moving on a decade or two and the situation is causing me some concern.

I am finding it a challenge to make up parcels, and getting them out to either the Post Office or carrier's drop off point.

The good folk at the printers even help me out from time to time these days (I do not have to get out of the car there), I just drive into their yard, give them a ring, and Jean, Christina, Aileen or Tom come out to the car, and collect whatever I have, and post it for me. I am finding it hard to accept that I need such assistance these days, but very grateful that it is given so willingly.

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## *A Moving Kitten Tail*

Once upon a time, in a world that was far removed from today's, I spent a night enjoying the hospitality of Rob & Fiona Wilkes down in Oxon. Those who have been with us for a decade or two may remember Rob & Fiona, and their Kitten estate.

Here it is with its custodian this past decade and a half, Ginger Barker, in Lincoln, on its way to its new home in Dingwall. More anon.





17 Nov 2020

National Historic Vehicle Survey reveals significant contribution to UK economy.

- Number of historic vehicles on DVLA database has increased yet again to 1.5 million
- The historic movement now worth over £7.2 billion to UK economy
- 4,000 businesses employing over 34,000 people
- 700,000 enthusiasts – up from 500,000 in 2016
- Overall, historic vehicles account for less than 0.2% of the total miles driven in the UK
- 35% of owners either already or are willing to contribute to a carbon reduction scheme
- 56% of historic vehicles are on SORN

The results of the 2020 National Historic Vehicle Survey have been announced by the Federation of British Historic Vehicle Clubs. The summary results were revealed during the Virtual Lancaster Classic Motor Show with Discovery, filmed at the NEC this month.

Historically, the Federation has undertaken this major survey every 5 years, the most recent being the 2016. However, in light of the very

obvious impact that worldwide pandemic has had on the UK and is likely to have on historic vehicle habits, the survey was conducted earlier to represent a more typical year in 2019.

The survey is the largest and most detailed survey of historic vehicle ownership carried out in any country. The results will help shape the future of the industry and will give the Federation of British Historic Vehicle Clubs the vital facts and figures needed to protect future of transport heritage in the United Kingdom at the very highest levels.

More vehicles, contributing more to the UK economy.

Growth in the sector is the result of an increased number of historic vehicles registered with the DVLA, over the 2016 figures, to an incredible 1.5 million vehicles of all types from cars, buses and lorries to motorcycles, agricultural, military and steam vehicles. This represents 3.4% of all registered vehicles in the UK. Naturally, more vehicles mean more owners, 700,000 in fact, up by 200k on the previous survey in 2016.

The use of those historic vehicles and their need for services and supplies has kept spending healthy, with the historic vehicle sector now contributing an impressive £7.2 billion to the UK economy – that's more than the equestrian sector and significantly up on the £5.5 billion in 2016. This revenue is generated from the nearly 4,000 businesses that support the movement employing over 34,000 people. Those businesses are working on ensuring the future of the movement as well, with over a third either employing or considering employing an apprentice.

The value of individual vehicles is widely spread, with 51% having a market value of less than £10,000 demonstrating a community of diversity and inclusiveness driven by enthusiasm. 44% are registered as on the road and ready for use.

The survey revealed that increasingly, historic vehicles are not used for daily transport. Indeed, the average mileage covered during the course of a year is just 1,200 miles, which equates to all the historic vehicles on the road accounting for less than 0.2% of the total miles driven on UK roads each year. Despite that tiny mileage for recreational and heritage uses, enthusiasts are clearly becoming more aware of the environmental impact of their activities, with 35% of owners saying they already contribute to, or would consider contributing to, a carbon reduction

scheme. The Federation is actively researching options to identify tangible solutions for enthusiasts.

So, the headlines are positive and it's good news for the future of the historic vehicle community that, despite concerns and uncertainty around Brexit, the movement has continued to grow, develop and contribute a significant sum annually to the economy of the United Kingdom.

David Whale, Chairman of the FBHVC said, "The significant value to the United Kingdom that the historic vehicle industry generates simply cannot be ignored by those in power. We face the most challenging times ahead over the next few years and these results give us the justification to ensure that our freedoms to enjoy our transport heritage continue unhindered. As a sector we cannot be ignored and will be instrumental in the recovery of our nation's economy post-Brexit and post-COVID. The most heart-warming news was that there are more enthusiasts than ever who are immersing themselves in our community and that is really positive for the future."

The FBHVC will be releasing a more detailed report in mid- December 2020. Statistics are from the 2020 National Historic Vehicle Survey, carried out by the Federation of British Historic Vehicle Clubs during Summer and Autumn 2020. Other figures are from DVLA published statistics. JDA Research has been the FBHVC's research partner for the 2020 Survey. JDA Research also undertook the Federation's 2016 survey and is completing a worldwide survey on behalf of FIVA.

For media enquiries, please contact:

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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 500 member clubs representing over 250,000 individual owners. A historic vehicle is defined as any motor driven vehicle manufactured 30 or more years ago.

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



## Diesel do...

Phil (Hallam), is very good at keeping me up to date with relevant things on the Internet.

That said, he is not the only one! Thank you one and all (he said as his In-box topped the 100 mark for the third time in a week, in spite of great time and effort trying to get it under control!)



I am told that, according to the DVLA, there are only three Reliant Rebel vans from 1973 remaining, with the total for all years of about 12 left, so this, the seller believes, is a very rare vehicle indeed!

He went on to say that they are excellent cars, but of course, those of us who had one, or it's very close relative, the Rebel estate knew that!

This particular car has been “updated” to front wheel drive, five speed gearbox, disc brakes up front, rack and pinion steering.

The suspension is Hydrolastic, with individualised spheres, from a Metro, so you can set the rears to be harder if you are towing, by pumping them up a bit. The engine is a 1.4 TUD 3 diesel, as fitted to Peugeot's 102s, Citroen Visa, Rover Metros. It held the economy records in the early 1980s. Old school mechanical injection, non turbo, but all aluminium. Yes, even the block, so it is no heavier than the petrol equivalent.

He goes on to tell us that it had been used as an everyday driver for many years, the original diesel engine only recently having given up

when its water pump seized, and the trimming belt snapped as a result at 100k miles.

So, he fitted a replacement engine, with only 23k miles from new this summer.

It starts and runs beautifully, no smoke or water loss. He also fitted a big radiator. Apparently the whole front end panel unbolts in 5 minutes to give easy access.

It is, of course, MOT and tax exempt, ready to drive anywhere with complete reliability.

The interior, he says, is nice and warm, thanks to having a diesel heater fitted.

He goes on to confess to breaking the law, by using it to tow cars over long distances with no problems, and while, by his own admission, the interior is rough and ready, he claims that it has super comfy leather Saab seats fitted.

It was on e-bay with an asking price of £ 2,750, but I gather he withdrew it from on-line auction early in November.

I'm not sure if I fancy a front wheel drive Rebel, but the fuel economy, assuming something had been done to improve the gearing, would have been really interesting to know, and, in my old age I have come to enjoy the higher torque of diesel power (said he, not having run such a vehicle since "Sammy" Citroen, our last BX, died back on the third of September 2012 when the camshaft broke.)

Moving on, well, trying to, that is quite enough about Rebels, well, one can never have enough of Rebels, but modified ones – I'm not so sure....

It is probably better that some be modified rather than being broken up or scrapped, but, original ones are pretty thin on the ground these days, perhaps we ought to discourage major alterations to the few survivors, what do you think?



## **Another lesson why you should not jump to conclusions! Or, Honesty is the best policy!**

John, who lived in the north of England, decided to go golfing in Scotland with his buddy Shawn, so they loaded up John's minivan, and headed north.

After driving for a few hours, they got caught in a terrible downpour, so they pulled into a nearby farm and asked the attractive lady who answered the door if they could spend the night. "I realise it's terrible weather out there and I have this huge house all to myself, but I'm recently widowed," she explained, "and I'm afraid the neighbors will talk if I let you stay in my house."

"Don't worry." John said. "We'll be happy to sleep in the barn, and if the weather breaks, we'll be gone at first light." The lady agreed, and the two men found their way to the barn and settled in for the night. Come morning, the weather had cleared, so they got on their way and enjoyed a great weekend of golf.

About nine months later, John got an unexpected letter from an attorney. It took him a few minutes to figure it out, but he finally determined that it was from the attorney of that attractive widow he had met on the golf weekend. He dropped in on his friend Shawn and asked, "Shawn, do you remember that good looking widow on the farm we stayed at on our golf holiday in Scotland about 9 months ago?"

"Yes, I do." said Shawn.

"Did you, er, happen to get up in the middle of the night, go up to the house and pay her a visit?"

"Well, um, yes." Shawn said, a little embarrassed about being found out, "I have to admit that I did."

"And did you happen to give her my name and address instead of telling her your name?"

Shawn's face turned beet red and he said, "Yeah, look, I'm sorry, buddy I'm afraid I did. Why do you ask?"

"She just died and left me everything."



If Christmas is hard,  
If you've lost someone dear.  
Just look in your heart,  
and you'll know they're still here.

The star in the sky,  
the light falling snow.  
The robin outside,  
it seems like they know.

If this is a time,  
when you're struggling through.  
Just do what you can,  
for what matters, is you.

There's no need to be merry,  
there's no need to bright.  
Just do what you can,  
it will all be alright.



# Epilogue

Congratulations, you have made it to the end of this edition, and the end of another decade, where does time go?

Two things strike me, just reading through this, I offered no conclusion or recommendation to the spares dilemma, and I left the Kitten Tail hanging, after the picture on page 21.

Once again, I feel things slipping, it will be December next week, and I really both want, indeed need to have this at the printers by then. So I am out of time to adjust things (*I have yet to begin the Christmas cards*) so, with apologies, especially to George “Ginger” Barker, who is sitting on the trailer, saying goodbye to what had once been Rob & Fiona’s pride and joy (it is now in Scotland, at Dingwall, North of Inverness) with its new custodian Tomas Macdonald. I am sure that we will be hearing more about it before too long.

All being well there should be a Renewal Notice enclosed with this edition. It would be much appreciated if you would complete and return it within a month. Please, thank you. I know that I am preaching to the converted here, and they will respond in a timely manner. To everyone else, can I please ask you to let me know if you are leaving us. **Oh, I just discovered that there is to be a big increase in First Class postage from the end of this year – so, if you were going to renew with stamps, please buy them before 31/12/20.** (*Spoken like a true Scotsman!*)

Well, it is December now, we had the first real frost of the winter here yesterday, so it just remains for me to say, stay safe, keep warm, and all the best to you and yours for a more “normal” 2021, oh, and of course you will not be forgetting the lubrication of those things that require it.

*Brian*

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