

RELIANT KITTEN REGISTER



Mewsletter 157

January - February 2021



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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

A Vantique, more specifically Vantique number 2 (of 11) in it's third incarnation. Now owned by our very own Keith Gittus....

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,

Mews 157
I N D E X

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E & o e

A warm welcome to you, it's a sobering thought (for me at any rate) that it was 3 decades ago that I realised that if a Register of Kittens was going to be set up, I would just have to do it, as my efforts over the previous year or so to convince Terry Scott to expand his Rebel Register to include Kittens, were falling on deaf ears (some people know when to quit!) I had, with a lot of help from Michael Bentley, produced the last few editions of his magazine, appropriately called the Rebellion.

Anyway, here we are. As seems to have become the norm at this time of year, I plan to share some of the comments that have arrived with our renewal notices.

It is the 30th of December as I type. With Christmas falling on a Friday this year, we had no mail for 4 days, then yesterday the Postie delivered 21 items, mostly Christmas cards, but also the first 3 Register renewals.

In fact, a handful of folk had renewed already (early), and a couple had already paid their subs for 2021 in advance. My apologies Alan (Fitch), and An Other for forgetting to mark your “pink slip” renewal notice accordingly. It was a combination of my memory, and the last-minute rush to get things in the post in time, that prevented me from marking your form “Already Paid!”. That said, if I am not mistaken, you already have a card with December 2021 as its expiry date.

My car (the very low mileage Jazz, barely 6,000 miles in 6 years, is out on loan to our daughter, Arleen, at the moment), so we only have Moira’s Vesro-S for the next.... Who knows how long! Anyway, the Vesro (or VV as we call her, yes, that is Vee Vee, not W (as in Vicky Verso)) has not turned a wheel since Christmas. That said, as a 10 year old, she has only covered 38,000 miles, and is still on her original battery – which reminds me, I must put the trickle charger on overnight soon – all these sub-zero nights take a toll on a battery, - she is pretty low mileage too! (where did that random distraction come from?).

As I was saying, thank you Martin (Blunn) who, at No. 37, is one of our longest serving (or should that be surviving, or even suffering?) readers. I was trying to find that picture of was it 7 or 8 Kittens that we had at Doune about 1990? When we first met.

Also, in the post that day came cheques from Rob & Fiona Wilkes and Steve Casey. Not only that, but all three have Register numbers below 800 (*and there ain't that many of us in that group these days an te you(are y a third of us if you must noy((and, they all made spares donations, thank you one and all. What a great start, and still 2 days of 2020 left! (ye it yas then ust one and a dit noy(*

On the subject of information sharing, Bob Neal rang me the other day, to tell me of a really good deal on Tom Karen’s book, I can’t remember the supplier he recommended, anyway, Phil just emailed me to say :- For the mag., **the autobiography of Tom Karen, Toymaker, has been published by Bonnier Books ISBN 978-1788703734 price £20 from bookshops or www.bookshop.org**

Thank you Bob & Phil.

Matthew Hewitt, (987) thank you Matthew, was the first to take up our latest 5 year offer, closely followed by Rik (743) from the Netherlands, you saw his very nicely restored yellow Kitten estate in the last 2 editions of 2020, indeed on the cover of Mews 155.

Richard Darling (1076), whose very tidy white kitten estate you also saw last year, it has been adapted, as you will remember, so that it can be towed behind his motor caravan, was the next new 5 year man, his renewal arrived on December the 31st. Thank you for the kind comments Richard, and for your spares donation, but most importantly, for holding the hope, indeed, the expectation, of some further words from you, to help fill these humble pages in future. My breath is baited.

Also, on the last day of last year, Jake Mowatt (1113), also kindly helped swell the spares fund. Thank you Jake, and also for your kind words.

Bob Nash, (283) whose renewal and spares donation, thanks Bob, arrived that day too. As ever, with a wonderful array of no less than 6 stamps on the envelope. 2 of them were not only different 2½ p ones, but one of them was more than twice the size of the other – I had not realised that you could get stamps with a value ending in less than a penny! The others, if you are interested, were an 11p, a 13p, a 17p and a 19p. (I can remember when that was what it cost to send a second class letter, yes, just 19p. How times have changed – in truth when I was a boy it cost thruppence – old money – to send a postcard!) Always a pleasure Bob, thanks.

Monday the 4th of January now, there were 15 items in the mail today, one Christmas card, and 14 renewals (to be accurate, a couple of them had cards enclosed, thanks to those concerned).

Brian Martin, (583) was the first of our existing 5 year folk to sign up for five more years, thanks Brian, and for the spares donation. On the renewal notice, under the options regarding the current status of the vehicle, Brian scored out all but “Running”, though he added the comment that, taking thing easy, as he does these days, walking might be more appropriate! I happen to know that Brian is a keen cyclist, but a Kitten that can walk.....

Frank Stallard (1019) has also opted for five more years. Thank you for your kind wishes Frank, duly reciprocated.

One of the discrepancies between our Subscription form, and the renewal notice, is the absence on the latter, of the question about the date the vehicle was acquired. If memory serves, that was sacrificed due to a lack of space, but, particularly in instances where someone has acquired a “new” vehicle, it leaves a gap. A situation that I really ought to address – one day....

David Mason (1123) is a case in point, thanks for the prompt response David, and the details of your Fox Tandy camper van. I first heard from David in May of 2020, and remember saying to him when he joined, that I have always said that I did not know what gave me more pleasure, learning of a “new” (to the Register) Reliant, or, as in this case, being re-united with one we had lost touch with. We first became aware of C253 RDL in 2002, when it lived in Braintree in Essex. It was sold in September 2006, moving to Portsmouth, running, but not on the road at that time.

Sadly, we lost touch with it after 2008, so it is wonderful to know that it has survived. Interesting to see that it has moved a few hundred miles north in the past decade or so.

Speaking of Tandy campers that have moved north. Derek Wallace, our man in Fort William, dropped me an email in November, asking about one that had been advertised on-line in Plymouth at that time. I did enlist Duncan’s help, thank you Duncan, but Derek is a man of action, and the next thing I knew, he had found a way to get himself to Plymouth (that story could easily fill a page or two I may tell you, but it is not my tale to tell!) suffice to say that he drove it the 600 miles to Fort William on the 13th / 14th of December.

This was one that had made an appearance at Llangollen a couple of years or so back, but the young couple who owned it, sadly never did take up the invitation to subscribe to the Register. D343 OVW now lives in Fort William, and Derek assures me that, once the snow clears, he will take it somewhere appropriate, and take a picture for us. Our youngest grandson then arrived, well, actually I went and collected him, and took him back home 5 hours later, so, I did not finish processing Monday’s renewals till – I’ll need to see – because our middle grandson was dropped off here by his mum, (Tuesday afternoon now) on her way to work an hour ago (not many folk are doing that under the new lockdown announced, but she is a key worker).

I am almost exactly half way through this edition, and not a single picture in it, yet – pity I have all these distractions!

Right, Tuesday evening now, I am not, tempting as it is, going to mention everyone whose renewal arrives this week (or month even!) however, I must say a big thank you to Ray Oldfield, (1065) he knows what for.

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Well, it is now Saturday the 9th, there was no mail today, well, not yet, and it is 4:00pm now. Thwarted again, middle grandson has just arrived – for a sleepover, perhaps I’ll get back to you when he goes to bed!

.....

Hello Brian.

6th December 2020

Very sorry to report that the Kitten caught fire (fire brigade said it was almost certainly a fractured fuel line), and completely burned out... went out in a blaze of glory as you might say, sadly.

Lots of stuff that was in the car was destroyed, but I have a few items (listed below) that may be of use to readers. If anyone contacts me for anything (*a call or text to 07890 286922 is best*) I can post to them, and would ask they make appropriate donation to Kitten Register.

Dave Miller - No. 269 from Leighton Buzzard.

Parts :-

New and unused:: Electronic ignition kit, Non-return Oil Filter.

Set of 4 brake shoes, 1 rear wheel cylinder, 2 sets points.

Used:: SU Carb, 4 bladed fan.

That is very generous of you Dave, thank you. It reminds me of the “wee red car” the Kitten saloon that took me to Land’s End, then John O’Groats, and then to the ROC National Rally. That was back in 1998. I never did fit the much safer float chamber lid to it, nor did Douglas Philip, to whom I sold the car, nor did its last owner, who had to stand and watch it burn on a garage forecourt just over a year after he bought it from Douglas.

Suddenly I seem to have lost a week, it is now Sunday the 17th of January. We only seem to be getting post every other day at the moment, indeed we never had the same postie twice last week! However, in spite of me not being over the door since Tuesday, things on this front have, most frustratingly, slipped.

I'll shut up for now, and let Bill Starkey bring you up to speed with things in Cheshire.



Happy New Year,

11th January 2021

Please find enclosed subs for both myself 386 and (son) David, 1096. The cheque is for a bit more, split it as you see fit.

The “wee car” (**Bill’s “other car” is a Jaguar, I guess it’s the Big car!**) is still a running roiling restoration, on the bodywork, and is mid re-paint. David, as you know, is its custodian these days. He is something of a perfectionist.

He knocked off last month, due to pressure of work, and the winter weather. The car now sits outside here, on my drive!

It is immaculately rubbed down, and, from the front doors forwards, it is in brown primer. Looks good enough to leave as it is to me!

The lad is slow, but won’t accept anything less than perfection, he has ground out and re-done every single crack, and, as you know, there were plenty.

He tells me that the “Dukes of Hazzard” colour scheme is still on, but I shall believe it when I see it!

Hope you are all well in these troubled and confusing times.

Take care, and thank you to everyone involved in keeping things going for us enthusiasts.

Regards, Bill – No. 386, & David – No. 1096, from Cheshire.



Brian,

5/1/21

Best wishes to you, and thanks for your continued efforts with the Register.

Five year subscription, plus a spares donation, attached.

Regards, Jon (Goodson) No. 1069 from Stone.

Thanks Jon, great to know the Kitten is still going strong.

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Hi Brian,

6/1/21

Hope you are well. Update on Fox A655 SUS :- Engine running with new plugs : new fuel pump, New ignition switch & a new fuel line.

All rubbers at the front replaced. Brakes sorted.

To do – Paint? What colour I wonder’?

Wiring, what a mess.

B621 JRC – is MoT’d, but not taxed.

Willie (McKenna), No. 1078 from Aviemore

**Willie, I’m pretty sure that Dougie bought an excellent condition complete Fox loom from Keith to fit to that car. It should have been, if not in the car, in the garage in Dunfermline. I quite understand the colour dilemma, original or modern? The great thing is that, like a blank canvass, the choice is the artists! (would you like me to run a competition to help you decide?) Brian.**

~~~~~

Wee car still in daily using one of Joe Mason’s low mileage engines, fitted last summer, along with upgrade to roller bearing clutch. Those carbon release pads seem to last no time at all these days.

Original engine on the To Do list, for new liners and pistons at some stage.

4.5 : 1 diff fitted in order to help tow small caravan, which the car did, but was too much for the clutch, so, idea abandoned, returning to standard diff shortly.

Thank you for your work on the Register, and regards to you and your wife.

D.N. (David Nicholson) - No. 784 from Penzance.

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Hi Brian,

11/1/21

Herewith my renewal for 2021 – not sorry to see the end of 2020!

As you will see on the form, Tweety Pie is SORN at the moment – we did use her in the summer when lock-down 1.0 was lifted.

With the advent of lock-down 2.0, and now 3.0, plus the chills of winter, we have tucked her cosily up in the garage till both the weather, and CV19 ease a bit.

Hope things are not too bad for Moira and yourself, and that you are both safe and well.

Simon (Robson) - No. 513 from Hitchin. (Liege).

.....

Hi,

29/1/21

The car is running and on the road, though it does still need painted, plus a few other repairs.

Peter O’Rielly - No. 1102 from Dunfermline.

Congratulations Peter, I must confess that I have not recorded, nor can I remember, who had that car before you?

Realising that, brought home the need for a better way of recording things. I must create / update the list of improvements that I would like to have made to the database – my task list continues to grow....

I think you'll like this one, and this seemed like a good place.

With apologies to any D.T. fans.

One sunny day in late January 2021, an old man approached the White House from across Pennsylvania Avenue, where he'd been sitting on a park bench. He spoke to the U.S. Marine standing guard, and said, "I would like to go in and meet with President Trump." The Marine looked at the man and said, "Sir, Mr. Trump is no longer President, and no longer resides here." The old man said, "Okay", and walked away.

The following day, the same man approached the White House, and said to the same Marine. "I would like to go in and meet with President Trump." The Marine repeated, "Sir, as I told you yesterday, Mr. Trump is no longer President, and no longer resides here." The man thanked him, and again, just walked away.

The third day, the old man approached the White House, and spoke to the very same U.S. Marine, saying again, "I would like to go in and meet with President Trump." The Marine, understandably irritated at this point, looked at the man and said, "Sir, this is the third day in a row you've been here asking to speak to Trump. I've told you each time that he's no longer the President, and no longer resides here. Don't you get it?" The old man looked at the Marine and said, "Oh, I understand. I just love hearing it."

The Marine instantly snapped to attention and said ;

"See you tomorrow, Sir."

.....

You should now turn to the lilac text on page 16, read it, then come back here!

Regular readers will perhaps recall that John Pearce's "Jaffa" has 40 BHP at the back wheels, and while a good engineer could probably tell you the power loss through the gearbox and back axle a lot more accurately than I can, which itself probably varies slightly from car to car, I would suggest that you might expect to lose a 15 to 20% loss between the flywheel and the road.

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From the Oval Office

I understand that Tempest No. 1 is up for sale again. It has had a chequered career. It was completed in the winter of 1987 and used on trade plates by Ian Foster for a few months, before being registered in 1998. It was sold to Robert Porter when a production prototype had been completed. Robert was a trials fanatic, and was soon collecting award winning performances on strenuous events like the MCC Land's End and Exeter 24 hour trials.

Eventually the car was sold into the Liverpool area when it disappeared for many years before being rescued by Dave Smith. Dave set about refurbishing it, before passing it on to its current owner with some work to complete. It is now 33 years old and has reached the south of England. If all Tempests are going to last so long, perhaps they will keep popping up as 'Barn Finds' in the years to come. If anyone knows where Bobkat is, please let me know.

Kind regards to your family.

John.

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Rebel round-up

Some shocking news!

Dear Brian,

January 17th 2021

I'm not sure if your RKR is still active but I have records that you knew this vehicle in the past.

I am seeking to recommission the car as an Electric Vehicle (having come to me with no running gear what so ever). Part of this exercise means refurbishing the front suspension, and I can find no detail of replacement parts for the coil / shock absorbers but they must come off a similar car of the time, do you have any clues?

If your Register is still running I would like to join, and share with likeminded people

Stephen Jury.

John beat me to replying to Stephen, this was his reply to John.

John,

January 18th 2021

Thanks for your note, I'll sort registration out with Brian, meantime, as requested, some background info on me, and my Rebel's conversion to battery power.

EV conversion

Having built kit cars and rebuilt a historic Ford 1937 7W (only made for 18 months) I concluded that if I am to continue playing with cars, I'd better understand this electric stuff.

A friend of mine was involved with "Robot Wars", and thus is my electric guru!!

Lynch twin motor (20KW) bolted to Robin gearbox with no clutch. 7 batteries for a gen 4 Nissan LEAF gives the 48v needed.

Based on other uses of the Lynch Motor like this, my batteries are ¼ of the weight, and twice the power, so I am hoping for around 100 mile range.

Battery management and charging is a whole different thing to my previous projects, but I'm learning

Currently (no pun) with body on, I have cleaned off and painted the chassis, made a motor/gbox joining tube, and bolted everything together on a purpose-made sub-frame. Stripped out remaining defunct parts, and am now setting about reviewing brakes and front suspension.

I'm building this as an ongoing research project, so for the moment I'm leaving the drum brakes all around, but, as you say, I can easily upgrade later. I just want the thing running ASAP, and then I can solve issues. It's not intended to be a drag racer, as many people do with these cars, more of a run-around shopper, and as someone had removed so much original from the car, I don't feel I am destroying a heritage car.

Stephen Jury.



Foxes Den

Or not....!

Hi Brian,

December 2020

Hope you and your family are keeping well during these awful times.

We have finally managed to move house to be nearer our daughter and grandson. Unfortunately, I can no longer take my fishing rod off the garage wall, and fish from my garden, like I used to do.

I now have to walk 200yds to the nearest water! Never mind, at least this house is not falling down. Nowhere to keep the Electric Fox just yet, it is back under a tarp, until I can make it a nice snug new den. It is still running well after about 8 years!!! I had to change the joints on the anti-roll bar before the last MOT, which it then sailed through with no advisories.

The batteries are getting a bit old now, so I try to keep any journeys down to about 10 or 12 miles. It will probably do more, but it is not necessary these days, so why risk it? It is still extremely useful for carrying stuff around though. It made many trips to the tip before we moved. I put the old engine back in before the move, in the back that is, along with all its other spares such as petrol tank, exhaust etc, to transport it to its new home. I'm sure I could see it trembling a little when doing 70 up the motorway, on a recovery wagon! I kept all the parts when I converted it, with the thought that if it did not work well, I might convert it back again. But now they are just gathering dust. If anyone could make good use of them, maybe they can call me, see the supplement for contact details.

Oh Yes!!! nearly forgot the reason for getting in touch. Our new address is :- *(not for publication in here! Ed.)*

Cheers, and keep safe.

Barry Houghton - No. 934, from Shrewsbury.

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Still on Foxes.

Hi Brian,

4/1/21

We all appreciate how hard it is to keep up, but you do a wonderful job, and readers should be very grateful for your efforts. I know I am.

As for my Fox. A refurbished cylinder head did make it run very well, but, unfortunately, didn't solve the original problem of oil and water mixing. I have now acquired another engine, which the seller said is a runner, and which will be fitted shortly.

Best Regards, Merry Christmas, and a Happy New Year.

Tony Guest - No. 1012, from Derbyshire.

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Hi Brian,

22nd January 2021

I spotted this sad photo on Facebook. It looks like a Fox, but seems to have coil suspension on the rear axle. The metal work in the back suggests there is some sort of frame added to support the suspension.

It also looks like the front end has been cut off possibly to make it easier to remove the engine.



If the rear axle is original, it could be worth recovering, as Fox differentials are now like "hen's teeth".

The steering wheel is not original, so I wonder, could the Fox have been modified for racing?

I don't know the location.

Latest update on my Fox - it is back in the garage to, again, get the engine fixed (more water in the sump than in the radiator!- even after the head gasket was replaced.). This time there is a complete spare engine for replacement/spares but I do expect a large bill for new parts.

Best Regards, Tony Guest - No. 1012, from Derbyshire.

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Tony's engine problems are, sadly, far from unique. I could go on about Reliant engine performance for quite a long time, you will be relieved to know that I only have a small space to fill here!

Speculation is seldom a good thing, but I think it is fair to say that the power put out by a Reliant 850 engine varies, probably by 100% from the weakest to the strongest – ignoring the really bad and excellent ones!

40 is an oft quoted figure, that was the factory claim, and was measured at the flywheel. In truth, I believe that most of them left the factory closer to 35, and, over the years, I am in no doubt that many have dropped well below that, and, happily, more than a few have been lovingly balanced and restored to give double that.

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Moving on from Foxes!

A Jimp under restoration

I had a pleasant surprise on Burns' day, (January the 25th) from Charlotte Knowles, whose dad is one of the dwindling number of PK Jimp owners in the UK. She sent me an email. It arrived, with an attached photo, (you will see it over the page) that she tells me is a few years old, of her dad's Jimp, which is currently undergoing a full restoration.

His name is Philip Knowles, Philip (No. 1020, from Knottingly), and he has been with us for 5 years now. Charlotte was asking if I might publish a few words of hers, relating to the restoration it has been undergoing over the past year or so. (I wish my daughter had been as enthusiastic and supportive when I was running and caring for my Rebels and Kittens!)

Dear Dad,

25th January 2021

I have asked Brian to publish this article, to let you know how much I have loved being involved in the restoring of your Jimp.

I am really proud how far you have come with it, and I am so excited to see where it goes, and of course am looking forward to seeing the finished product! I am also doing this so it is in writing that I absolutely insist that I will be named on the insurance policy, as I have already let everyone I know I will be taking them for a ride in it!

Keep going dad, it will be worth it when we are finally taking it out on the open road! I can't wait and I love you.

Your Daughter, Charlotte, X.



~~~~~

## *A Slippy Situation - Or Clutching at Straws.*

**This is a, hopefully helpful, summary of communications that I had from Phil Hallam late last year regarding clutches. I know that Phil, unlike me, prefers spring clutches to diaphragm ones, and, given the much reduced thickness of the carbon pad of “new” release bearings – it has about halved since the 80’s, I can see his point. All this of course ignores the Fiesta clutch, complete with a “proper” release bearing which Reliant adopted in the 90’s, but, sadly, never offered as a conversion kit.**

Brian,

30<sup>th</sup> October 2020

This follows on from the question I asked you about Triumph Spitfire clutch cover plates, and just shows that I should have done my research into this subject before asking the question.

Many small cars of the Rebel /Kitten era used the same 6 1/4 inch clutch cover plate. Usually the cover plate had 6 (yellow) springs however early Mk 1 Triumph Spitfires had an updated clutch with 9 (6 yellow and 3 blue springs) and these can be fitted to Reliant flywheels (someone has suggested that early Kittens were also fitted with them).

These clutch covers are becoming rare these days but some 6 spring cover plates have the bosses and holes in them to take the extra springs (Bull Motif Spares, are one supplier) so, if you are keen, you can build one yourself, using an old clutch to provide blue springs and spring caps! (and the tool to set up the finger height saves a lot of work). Actually early 918 side valve and 803 ohv Morris engines had 6 spring clutch covers with 6 blue springs - the other alternative being to find suitable coil springs of the same size and rating.

They did produce a competition clutch cover plate with 9 blue coloured springs - which must be as rare as hens’ teeth.

Personally I prefer an original coil sprung clutch cover plate to a diaphragm one, since the quality of these newer cover plates can be variable, and eventually you get wear between the thrust pad and the diaphragm fingers.

Phil (Hallam) - No. 164 from Ayrshire.

See picture on next page :-



Phil's elusive 9 spring clutch cover assembly with 3 blue and 6 yellow springs

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A tiring matter.

Dear Brian,

26/11/20

Remember the tyres from "RoundTrip Tyres" which were considerably cheaper than anyone else? Well they arrived, all well and good. Would you believe they were sent from Germany!

Hope you are all well. Regards Phil (Hallam) - No. 164, from Ayrshire.

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*The average human walks 900 miles a year, and drinks 22 gallons of beer! Which means that the average human gets 41 M.P.G. Not bad!*

# A LOOSE END?

## *Green earth wires?!?*

Dear Sir,

30<sup>th</sup> November 2020

Having just spoken to Brian, I have been directed to yourself. Brian tells me you would be the man to answer my question of where do the multiple green (earth?) wires connect on my recently acquired Kitten, see accompanying photo: My feeling is they fasten to the negative battery terminal, but, like many of my life's assumptions, this may well be erroneous. Further could you tell me please where the braided earth strap running from adjacent to the thermostat housing connects? , the vehicle in question is a Kitten deluxe saloon 1977 reg. TYJ69S.

It is my intention to join the Register, and, if you send me the details required, and the address to send it to, I shall address the matter forthwith. Please note that whilst I do desire access to the Register's knowledge and parts, it is more important to me to contribute, if possible, to the zeitgeist that Brian, yourself, et al, have generously given your time to over the years. In my accompanying letter I will enclose my contact details, which you may make available to the members, as if any of them break down in the Crewe area, I will help wherever possible. I may not be able yet to make the wheels, but grease I can provide.

Yours faithfully.

Giles H-J (Herbert-Jackson) - No. 1145, from Crew.

Greetings Giles and welcome to the Register. Brian will be posting a "welcome" pack to you shortly.

All Reliants use the standard Lucas colour code for wiring. The factory workshop manual has a wiring diagram in the electrical section with colour keys – not, alas, in colour but simple to understand.

From the picture, all the "green" wires appear to be no more than bodes. Earthing wires are always black! Green is used for ignition fused switched power feeds, items like wipers, indicators, heated rear window, blower, screen washers, etc. Purple is for un-switched fused items like the horn, interior light and such. Also, the accessory feed.

The 4 fuses are 1 x switched supply – input wire white, outputs green: 1 x unswitched supply, input brown, outputs purple: side and instrument lighting input and output both red, and accessory, input white (linked from switched supply wire) output not originally connected. Fuses should be 17A continuous, 35A blow glass type (usually labelled 35A).

Headlamp circuits on Kittens were not fused, though many owners have added aftermarket line fuses to these circuits, or, better still, relay switching.

A simplified colour key as follows:

Primary fused un-switched supplies, are always brown, side lights red, un-fused ignition switched supplies white, and headlights blue, blue/white and blue/red.

I would advise following the wires back to source then destination and removing if they are deemed unnecessary. If there are repair bodes, then re-do the repairs properly... By and large, the wiring on Reliants is usually quite reliable, just items like switches, and the fuse box, tend to suffer from internal corrosion etc. Replacements are not difficult to source, but some items are not cheap. I upgraded my own Kitten to modern blade fuses years ago, splitting the various circuits as far as possible, so I now have 8 fuses, instead of the original 4.

Companies like AES usually have the correct coloured wires in stock, Halfords DON'T!!! Or look online.

The braided earth strap is in the wrong place. It's usually fitted beneath the car, between one of the rear gearbox cover bolts and the chassis side of the gearbox mounting plate.

There should be a clutch of black earths fitted to one of the front timing cover bolts, coming out of the main loom.

Please feel free to call for advice if necessary.

John (Pearce) - No. 304, from Mansefield.

**I must apologise to all concerned. I know very well, just how much time & energy John, and Susan, put into running the web site for us, and, as you just have read, he is a font of knowledge.**

**However, what I could, and probably should have done, was point Giles towards Alan Osborn, whose expertise on matters electrical is, I have no doubt, every bit as extensive as John's.**

**As I am forever telling anyone who will listen – One day I'll get organised!**

**On that front, Giles' kind offer of breakdown assistance reminds me of a similar scheme, run by the oldest one make Car Club on the planet. I am sure that we considered something of the sort in the distant past, or am I getting confused with the parts scheme which Phil used to run for us? – disbanded, as the usefulness of the internet, and a lack of take-up, rendered it obsolete. Or is it like my long held desire to issue a list of Register subscribers – one of the few things that John and I have differing views on!?! Ed.**

~~~~~

A Very Canadian Joke.

Stan & Nadine are at the airport in Phoenix, Arizona, awaiting their flight. They are dressed in heavy boots, parka, scarf, mittens, all ready to head home to the Canadian winter.

An old American couple standing nearby, in shorts, are intrigued by their manner of dress. The wife says to her husband, "Look at that couple. I wonder where they're from?"

He replies, "How would I know?" She counters, "You could go and ask them." He says, "I don't really care. You want to know, you go ask them."

She decides to do just that, walks over to the couple and asks, "Excuse me, I've noticed the way you're dressed and I wonder where you're from?"

Stan replies, "Saskatoon, Saskatchewan."

The woman returns to her husband who asks, "So, where are

they from?" She replies, "I don't know. They don't speak English."

.....

Golf!

A married man was having an affair with his secretary. One day, their passions overcame them in the office, and they took off for her house. Exhausted from the afternoon's activities, they fell asleep and awoke at around 8 p.m.

As the man threw on his clothes, he told the woman to take his shoes outside and rub them through the grass and dirt. Confused, she nonetheless complied, and he slipped into his shoes and drove home.

"Where have you been?" demanded his wife, when he entered the house. "Darling," replied the man, "I can't lie to you. I've been having an affair with my secretary. I fell asleep in her bed, and didn't wake up until eight o'clock."

The wife glanced down at his shoes and said, "You liar! You've been playing golf!"

.....

Getting Technical?

A shocking thought...

Hi Brian,

25th January 2021

Hope Moira and you are ok and managing to see the grandchildren, at least being with them takes your mind off the virus.

Just got the Merc mag, and an interesting article in it says that electric car production produces twice as much CO₂ as conventional cars, mainly due to battery production.

Obviously they say that over its lifespan CO₂ is less, however when you consider that you may have to replace the battery pack after 5 years, are the facts right?

Should we not be looking at hydrogen, where at least the CO2 produced in the cars manufacture is probably the same!

Keep warm, regards Phil. (Hallam) No. 164, from Saltcoates

Don't get me started! Hydrogen has its problems, (mainly to do with infrastructure and safety) but, in my humble opinion, it would be a whole lot better for the planet than battery power.

In my mind, though I'll grant you to a lesser degree, batteries are a bit like nuclear power stations – waste disposal is both difficult and expensive. I gather that old electric car batteries do have an afterlife storing windmill power short term. However, given that they are by then past their best, does that not make the wind turbine industry a lot less efficient than it might be? And, how do they dispose of them?

~~~~~

Good morning Brian,

27<sup>th</sup> January 2021

My poor little Kitten van is mid rebuild in my club's workshops, but alas these facilities have been limited and largely closed over the last few months, due to UK Covid restrictions.

The body is off and in reasonably good condition, but I have started removing the many paint jobs it has had in its life (Paint code 10, so left Reliant in primer). The 3<sup>rd</sup> / 4<sup>th</sup> engine It has had, was started before dismantling, and seemed serviceable.

Lights and electrics :- new rear lights with reflectors and various other new items have been procured for that stage, including an upgraded heater / blower assembly which I will be looking to install .

Running gear, new rear shocks, 1 new lower ball joint in stock, plus serviceable parts are awaiting completion of the chassis repairs, which, although small and localised, are required around the front end, and I do keep stalling on that section.

Trim wise, I have a black deluxe trim fitted in place of the original seats (which I think I have in storage somewhere !!!!!).

Just need the time and the workshops to reopen before I can continue.



I intend to refinish it as non-standard (for a van) but with period upgrades and modifications which could have been done by Reliant for the late 70's.

As it is still a van, I do intend to have it sign written and incorporate its nickname (Pugwash) but at this rate I won't have to decide what to put on it before my new 5 year subscription expires!

I hope you and your family are safe and well.

Kind Regards, Paul Adgar (membership number 001).

~~~~~

I won't arise and go now, and go to Innisfree,
I'll sanitise the doorknob, and make a cup of tea.

I won't go down to the sea again, I won't go out at all,
I'll wander lonely as a cloud from the kitchen to the hall.

There's a green eyed yellow monster to the north of Kathmandu

But I shan't be seeing him just yet, and nor I think will you.

While the dawn comes up like thunder on the road to Mandalay

I'll make my bit of supper, and eat it off a tray.

I shall not speed in my bonnie boat, over the sea to Skye,
Or take the rolling English Road from Birmingham to Rye.

About the woodland, just right now, I am not free to go,
To see the KEEP OUT posters, or the Cherry hung with snow.

And no, I won't be travelling much, within the realms of gold.

Or get to Milford Haven, all that's been put on hold.

Give me your hands, I shan't request, albeit we are friends,

Nor come within a mile of you, until this shit show ends.

Investment Research.

Investment with an eye to the future is not a topic you might expect to find within these pages, however....

Once upon a time, probably a couple of decades or more ago now, the subject of having a batch of aluminium rocker covers was mooted.

At the time, it was Phil Hallam who got the ball rolling, not only did he fancy trying his hand at pattern making – he still had the woodworking set-up behind his garage – something I imagine that he used a lot during the renovation and extension of what became the family home for the best part of 40 years.

Not only that, but he knew of a really talented pattern shop, who had a good relationship with a number of foundries.

The only frustrations about the whole idea, were the fact that the pattern shop and foundry were in England. We had, and still have the remnants of such skills and facilities up here, and one of our Kitten owning readers had contacts in the Falkirk area, and was keen to help.

Decisions decisions.... The other matter of course was money – isn't it always?! How to estimate demand, how to finance it, and what price to charge?

Phil had done the basic pattern work as his contribution, and the cost of having the pattern shop refine it, and produce a sample, came to a very few hundred pounds. The problem, not knowing anything about demand, how to proceed?

We initially thought if we sold 50, then we could allocate between £ 5 and £ 10 to each one, towards covering the set up costs. At the time, that represented somewhere between 15 to 35% of the price.

So, the big question was, how many to produce in the first batch? It did not seem realistic to try to recover the investment costs in one batch, but, with the uncertainty surrounding demand, we did not know if or when a second batch might be needed. Suffice to say, a decision had to be made. Back then I was quite good at making them, less so nowadays, sadly!

As a result we came up with a figure, and, through these pages we invited interested individuals to send a 50% deposit.

At the same time we decided to use a different material for the gasket. The plan was to bond these to the covers, and, at a stroke, simplify installation.

Phil quickly cut two pieces of MDF, which he used to cut out the gaskets with a knife, good old Stanley.

That involved a huge amount of waste, and I was thinking we might do other gaskets in the same material. That however, was for the future. Right now, we had to just swallow the cost of the waste.

In the event the material we choose for the gasket proved to be less than successful, thankfully the design of the covers allowed the use of the original cork gasket.

On now from history to the future, or, to use a well-known film title – Back to the future!

I am reliably informed that there exists the possibility of a new batch of Kitten side window rubbers being manufactured. The saloon and estate ones are clearly very different, and quantity will affect the viability, so, the question is, would you buy a pair?

James is the man who needs to know, it was always easy to get tooling made and run off a big length, cutting as required, however, James has now found a firm who will happily cut, mitre and glue the rubber to the exact size and shape required. They are, given his recent experience with three wheelers, a tight fit, but you really need that to have a good seal.

If you are in the market, give him a ring on 01945 352047, or better yet email him at sales@chgclassics.co.uk.

Oh, the price – well that depends on the quantity, but likely about the £ 80 mark for a pair of estate ones, and slightly less for the saloon, and yes, that includes vat, but not delivery.

~~~~~

## 30 Years on.

I know that I often go on about the state of my memory, and, looking back from current times, to when this all began, I come face to face with a number of emotions.

It is the third of February today (*I had hoped to have this at the printers last week, if not the week before, but..*).

Today is Marion's birthday, Marion is the widow of Sandy Riddoch, who, fed up with me going on and on about getting someone to get on with starting a Register for Kittens, surprised me, by handing me a tenner, and saying, "Well, get on with it then!"

I wish I could tell you that Sandy ran a Kitten as his daily transport back then – this is where the memory fails me – he might well have done, he did for years. He and I were both members of the Reliant Owners Club, indeed I suspect that was how we met.

Anyway, looking back can be – oh, that elusive adjective again.... I cringe now, re-reading the earliest editions, how times change – for the better in that case.

The main objective has, undoubtedly, been achieved, and that was, and remains, giving owners and enthusiasts a means of communication, and helping to keep the cars on the road by doing our best to secure a supply of "difficult" parts. And doing what we can to help keep folk motivated. That said, I must acknowledge that many of our readers are a lot more motivated than I am these days!

Over the years we have met many interesting folk, and made many good friends. I take great comfort from such things.

I still derive great pleasure from running the Register, producing this magazine, and talking to people, old and new, who share the interest in Reliant's wee 4 wheelers.

As you will be aware, I thought long and hard before offering for the 4<sup>th</sup> time, a 5 year deal again, and I can tell you that, to date, (8<sup>th</sup> February) 30% of those who have renewed, are with us for the long haul, which makes my job easier, thank you.

## Epilogue

O.K., I admit it, I cheated a bit this time, not many pictures in this edition, and a lot of copy typing from your renewal notices, thank you, your confidence and encouragement is truly inspiring.

I will include more pictures in future (and not just because that saves me a lot of typing!).

This month, January, is always very busy, from recovering from Christmas and the New Year, to processing your renewals, and now trying to understand the “new normal” that our lives seem to have become, as we try to learn to adapt.

One task I have taken over is “doing the shopping”. I am delighted to be able to contribute a bit more to helping out with things household orientated. That said, I doubt if Sainsburys, Asda or Tesco, have many, if any, on-line customers who edit their on-line shopping lists as often as I do! I really need to find a way of spending less time on that task.

Oh my goodness, where did January go? It is now February, and I am about 3 pages away from this edition being ready to go to print. I say about 3, it is actually 1, and half a dozen small spaces.

After what I was saying before, about having to take a look, and find a new approach to the spares situation, I have given the matter very little thought, and have done nothing whatever to change anything. In my defence, I did open the floor to discussion, and the silence has been deafening!

Anyway, Grease those ball joints and hardy spicers, and oil your dashpots, indeed anointing the carb spindle will do no harm at all while you are at it.

Stay safe, keep cosy, and drive, when you get the chance, safely.

Ttfn *Brian*

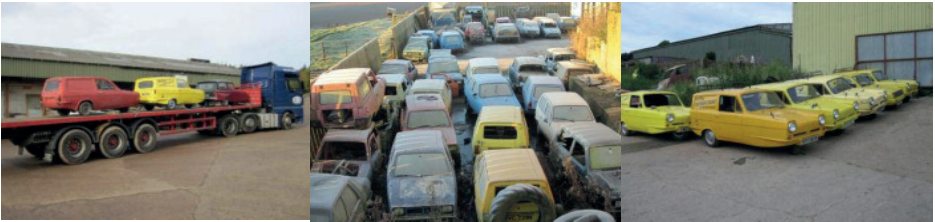
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