

RELIANT KITTEN REGISTER



Mewsletter 158

March - April 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

This time a Jimp bodyshell, prepared to be easily moveable during the rebuild. This belongs to Phil Knowles, assisted by daughter Charlotte, from West Yorkshire, you read about this Jimp a few months ago, (Mews 157), As we can see, the rebuild is making progress, more details next time.

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.kitreq.org.uk>

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

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SALES, SPARES, REPAIRS,

Mews 158

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E & o e

A very warm welcome to you, as ever I am running behind, I had hoped this would be with you before Easter, but that is just next week now! As I was saying to Phil just last week, I need to focus on things I can control, or at least have some effect on, and stop dwelling on matters over which I have little or no control whatever! At this rate I will be lucky to see Phil before he goes back to France next month.

Thanks to Bob Neal, for reminding me where he recommended, for a good deal on a copy of "Toymaker", now I know someone reads these pages!

I must apologise to you, and in particular John Pearce and Hans, last time I told you that John Pearce's "Jaffa" has 40 BHP at the back wheels, in fact the correct figure is 44. 10% of a difference, I'll bet Sir Lewis Hamilton wishes he could magic up 10% more power in his Merc – just like that!

On the renewal front, sadly we have lost a few folk this past year, Peter Swan is a name you may recall. Peter, from near Ormskirk, had been with us since 1999, number 395. Sadly he passed away on the 8th of March, and I am struggling to save what remains of his yellow Kitten estate. Frustratingly the local council are involved already. He had no close relatives. I am reminded of Adrian Hanwell's advice about wills, and old cars and parts, from about 25 years ago. A wise man Adrian.

More positively, at the time of writing, we have 47 gluttons for punishment, who have elected to stay with us till 2025, **thank you**, both for your confidence, and saving me some work in the coming years – don't lose your 2025 card (possibly enclosed, if you do not have it already!). On top of that, it changes if not daily, certainly weekly, 118 others are also with us for this year. I am in no doubt at all that those numbers will be out of date by the time I get this to you! **I will take the opportunity to let anyone reading this, who has not renewed for this year (or till December 2025) that this will be the last copy of the Mews you will receive till you do – you have been told!**

You will be delighted to learn that I have so much input this time, that there is no room for my usual Epilogue. You have Mark Johnson, Dave Price, John Pearce and Giles to thank for that. On top of that, I am told, by another Mr. Johnson, that a good Cipher article will be with me later this year, thanks Paul & Gay.

Regular readers may have seen some of Mark's Rebel Pick-up story some years ago, however I felt that this update benefitted from complete inclusion. Thanks Mark.

Just one final apology, I fear I have mixed up the order of some of the communications between John & Giles towards the end of this edition, I am sure you will get the gist of it all without any bother whatever. It goes without saying of course, that not everyone has the same experience, expertise, abilities or self-confidence, and some jobs are better, and safer, left to the experts – who, I fear, sadly, belong to a diminishing gene pool these days!

Thanks John, and welcome Giles.

I am going to hide behind 30 years of doing this, as regards our

Reliant Rebel Pick Up

An update from our man in Benbecula.

We left my pick up back in issue 98, when I was deciding how to lengthen the wheelbase, I had decided on trailing arms, which allowed me to use the chassis without alteration. I was concerned that the original axle might twist and break the half shaft, so I decided to brace it, which would mean that I could keep the original brakes and wheels; there is a bit of a penalty in unsprung mass, but probably no more than using an MG axle, which was my other option. The bracing also gave me firmer points to mount the springs.



That decided, I had the propshaft lengthened and balanced, which gave me the extra 16 inches in wheelbase. The hand-brake system of rods was replaced with a metro cable, which uses a similar back plate, and was a fairly straightforward fit.





More shots of Mark's unique solution to creating a really very useful, longer platform Rebel pick-up.





I had the chassis welded by a local professional fabricator, and there are tubes welded into the axle, to stop the suspension plates crushing it, or wearing holes oval.



The back I welded up from 3mm angle iron, I let the trailer wheel arches into the back, so the that bed was not too high for loading, and the tail gate can be removed easily, when it is down for longer loads. There is a bit of an overhang, and loads of any significant weight need to be kept forward of the axle. The paint on the back is Hammerite red, with a little black added, to make it match the VW red of the body.

The wheels are Rostyles from a round wheel-arch Midget, which were already on the car. The 155SR13 tyres seem to give reasonable gearing with the 850 engine. I had them blasted and then sprayed them silver, I did not paint back in the black detail, as that did not seem appropriate for a commercial vehicle.



The fuel tank is from a (real) Mini, it fits in the space fairly neatly, and has the bonus that the sender works with the original Smiths fuel gauge. I made a new loom for the real lights and tank, which includes the parking and reversing lights.

The exhaust was already stainless steel when I got the car, and exited to the side, so I needed to do nothing to that.



The body tub rear section has a box section that was an unused Rover P6 inner sill bonded in, this provides strength, and seat belt mounts. The cab is fairly roomy, with a rear seat (sort of crew cab?) this is across the back, and the extra fibre glass involved again braces the cab; the cushions were cut down from the original rear seat.



The seat is remarkably comfortable, but does need the passenger seat to be fully forward, with hindsight, I think that I would have had more use for a longer bed on the back.

The head lining was made by my mother from a pattern made from the original, all the vinyl I sourced from Zebedees in Boscombe, who also provided useful advice. The interior lights are the reversing lights from my MGB GT, that dissolved in the salt here in the islands.

The dash vinyl was tatty, so I started again. I formed extra gauge slots but cutting over-size holes, and using flower pots as moulds in situ. I filled in the ashtray aperture, and the extra hole that had previous been cut in the dash, and added extra switch recesses by reusing the ones removed for the gauges.



The additional switches for the interior light and parking lights came from my long-gone Rover P6. With a little heat, the vinyl is surprisingly easy to stretch. The windscreen demister vents were a bit rusty, and I managed to loose one, so I treated myself to reproduction MGA chrome vents, which fitted perfectly (Smiths heaters are a bit - one size fits all). I fitted a wiper motor from an MGB, which just required changing the drive cog to produce the correct sweep, then I was able to

use the MGB column stalks, and now have 2 speed wipers; the original shroud fitted, with just and extra slot cut.

So, it is now running and on the road. Insurance was not particularly dear, although having gone through all the modifications over the phone, I was asked for an extra premium when I filled the modification forms out, because it was not the original colour! After some discussion they agreed to waiver the fee for this.



Mark, I am feeling so proud of myself, for not interrupting, and congratulations on getting the Rebel back on the road.

Regular readers, with good memories, may recall that Arleen and I drove that car (it was still a Rebel saloon then) from Ayr, to Portree on Skye, where we handed it over to Mark. That was about 2002 I think, the Skye Bridge had only been open for a few years. Arleen followed me up in her car, so we could get back home! Oh, and of course, we made a detour over Rattagan, to call in on John Stork, while passing.

It had been one of the late Robert Fairfoull's Rebels (he had 3 of them back then) and was trying to reduce the size of the fleet.

The stainless steel exhaust was made by the late Bobby Brown (of Stainless Steel Silencers) from Prestwick. Robert took it back, as he did not like the increased noise of the stainless system, and that tiny extra rear box you can just see in the picture at the top of page 11, just in front of the outrigger, behind the cab, was the compromise solution, it was not terribly effective!

Anyway, Mark's renewal cheque, for another 5 years, thank you Mark, arrived here within hours of me posting the last edition of this publication, and came with a DVD of the pictures you will just have seen, and the one below. Well done Mark, I am absolutely delighted that Robert's old Rebel saloon (well, one of them!) has found a new lease of life. I hope it serves you well for many years to come.

A huge boost to getting this edition well under way, and its still February! (well, it was when I was this far, it will be April by the time I get this to the printers if I don't get a move on!)

Many thanks Mark.



I DID IT MY WAY UPDATE

By Dave Price.

I could not believe that it was 2017 when I last wrote in these pages that I hoped the Tempest would be completed by spring 2018. Here I am in 2021, and the Tempest is only just getting to completion. I can't even claim that Covid 19 got in the way, it has actually helped, by giving me a complete year in the garage. My fault, as I had been too enthusiastic with the car's specifications.

I left you last time, rebuilding the engine, which was completely rebuilt with a new spec camshaft, low compression pistons, high lift rockers and new valves and oil pump.

With the rebuilt engine connected to the gearbox, and fitted to the chassis, I was able to get the new longer propshaft made and fitted.



This let me fit the body-shell, with the use of an engine hoist.



Ahh, how nice it is to see everything so spick and span.



I then remade the dashboard, rewiring it at the same time. New Year 2018 I refitted the dashboard and connected up the battery. Ah, shock, horror, lots and lots of smoke! The main battery cable to the Ammeter had moved, and shorted against the ammeter body. I replaced all the melted wiring, it did not stop with the ammeter, but travelled along some power cables. I refitted the ammeter cable clear of the gauge body, and really tightened the connecting nut.



With that sorted, I fitted and wired up the rear lights, rear fog lamps, and rear indicators, which are now LED.

I turned next to connecting up the engine equipment. I have had a turbo charger to fit to the engine for 8 years, but when I checked it over before fitting it, I found it was badly corroded. I spent three months carting it around trying to find somebody to rebuild it for me, but nobody wanted to know, claiming a lack of spares. I was about to give up, when we went to Bradford for a family wedding. Arriving on Friday afternoon, we went for a walk, and passed a large factory warehouse with the words "ANY TURBO REBUILT" So I called in and saw the workshop manager, who said he could rebuild my turbo, and gave me a card,

saying, when I was ready, to ring him, and he would arrange for the turbo to be collected. He would let me know the damage in £. The turbo was duly rebuilt, and fitted to the exhaust manifold.

This enabled me to fit the SU carburettor to the inlet manifold, and then to fit both to the engine. Next I made an exhaust system from stainless steel 2 inch tubing, and fitted it to the turbo exhaust outlet, running the exhaust to the rear of the car. No silencer needed with a turbo, I knew it may be a little noisy, but I had to wait and see.



Next was a new electronic distributor. The position of the distributor on the engine was close to the steering column, which made the distributor cap very close to the steering column. This dictated fitting a cap with side mounted spark plug leads, instead of the normal top mounted leads. The only problem was, the cap was meant to have screw fixings, but the distributor is for the more common clip fixings. The normal clips do not hold the cap on very well, and it jumped off a few times whilst trying to start the engine. I looked at changing to screw fixings, but decided to stay with the clips, with a cable tie around the distributor, and put over the clips as the cable tie was tightened. This holds the cap and clips in place well with the engine running.

Whilst trying to start the engine I saw a large oil leak from the turbo oil feed connection. This took some stopping, and resulted in the oil filter supply line, oil pressure switch connection, and the turbo oil line connections, all being reconfigured to stop the leaks.

Whilst sorting the oil leaks I noticed the carb was flooding with petrol, so next turned my attention to the carb. Checking the carb did not show up the problem. Partly because the HIF 6 carb is a lot different to the old SUs I was used too. So I telephoned SU carbs in Winchester, and they said they would need to do a rebuild service to find the problem at £350. A new carb would cost £450!!!! So I was not going to do that!

At the beginning of 2020 I saw an advert for the "Classic Car Magazine" for 6 copies at £12. A deal I took up, and am now in my second year. A lovely magazine. I e-mailed the editor and told him about my problem with the SU carb. Amazingly he replied within two hours, with some of the things I had already checked. The next day I replied to him thanking him for his rapid reply, and told him that I was not sure if somebody had made some changes, as the fuel feed pipe on the float chamber was not connected to the float needle valve. He replied saying for me to change the petrol supply hose from what I know as the fuel inlet to the breather pipe, as he thought that SU had built the carb with the two pipes on the carb, reversed to what normally happens.

This done, I turned on the ignition, and bingo, no flooding, (electric fuel pump, remember!) I pressed the starter button, and the engine started straight away. A little noisy, but lovely.

A friend who lives in the same road as me, who comes around to help when I need two pairs of hands, agreed it was a little noisy. I bought a tail pipe implant that fits into a 2 inch pipe and its internals are like what is in a normal silencer. I fitted it to the tail pipe and pressed the starter button. The effect was brilliant, and so was the exhaust note. Brian, (my friendly neighbour) came around and asked if I had got the implant yet, to which I operated the starter. Oh my Goodness, he said, that is incredible, you hardly touched the starter, and that noise is beautiful.

Just before last Christmas I had some louvers cut into the bonnet to release the hot air that will be generated by the turbo charger. I had been trying to find somebody to do the job for several months, I even phoned Morgan to ask them if they would cut the louvers for me, but was

told "Only if the car is a Morgan." In the end I found an engineering firm in Iver, Bucks, so I took the bonnet to them just before Christmas. "Come back in two hours." he said, so I went to visit an old Fire Service mate I had not seen for many years, half an hour's run, and I was parked on is drive. I spent a nice hour catching up with him, and went back to Ivor, true to his word the bonnet was ready, complete with louvers, very smart it looks as well.

That more or less brings me up to date. Last week I got two new headlamps, two spot-lamps, and two horns, and fitted them to the, already wired, points at the front of the car.

The Tempest was nosed into the garage front first. Before I fitted the headlamps, spot-lamps and horns, I fitted a plastic box behind the steering wheel as a seat. I pushed the clutch pedal down with engine running for the first time, putting the gearbox in reverse, let the clutch pedal up, and drove the Tempest back out of its garage, onto the road, turned it around, and reversed back into the garage. The first time I have had a chance to check the clutch works.

I now know that my new alternator is not working, (i.e. not charging). So I have had to take it off the engine to get it checked.

This was carried out, only to find I had wired it up wrong, I had put an earth to the warning light, but this comes from the alternator. So, I changed this to a live feed from the ignition. Guess what, it works fine!!!

The only thing now is to get two new seats, which I hope to get at the end of Lock-Down in March.

That will leave a new MOT+ test. As it is more than a normal MOT, I have seen the test mechanic, and explained what I have done, and he has confirmed he can do the extra testing and examinations needed.

Hopefully I'll bring the Tempest to the next annual get together. See you there 2021, or 2022?

My best wishes to all.

Regards, Dave Price - No. 327 - from Moreton in Marsh.



Dave, many thanks for the update, and pictures. It is both reassuring and uplifting to know that, despite the challenges of the past

year, some progress continues to be made. Congratulations, and well done.

Your mention of a get-together reminds me that we need to make a decision about that. There are a number of options being considered, and we really need your feedback – yes that means YOU, good reader! Malcolm has had contact from the new proposed venue at Hadley Park, Whitchurch, the question there being when? However, there is the possibility of a return to our usual site behind the Llangollen Motor Museum. The questions then would seem to be – which would you like best? and should we do either, or both (this year), or would it be safer and or wiser to leave it till next year, and see how things settle down.

Our health situations may influence our ability to attend, though we really would not want our situation to have any influence (either way!) on your decision about coming. As the Green man used to say (or am I Miles off the mark?) Vote, vote, vote because remember, your vote counts.

**Please let Malcolm know your thoughts on: -
rkrshowpostbox@gmail.com**

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### Some technical chatter

Communication on a number of Kitten matters between John & Giles.

Greetings Giles,

March 2021

Inlet manifold mod not worth doing if you've a variable jet carb (SU), but works well if you run a fixed jet (Weber, Zenith, Solex). This has been thoroughly dyno tested. Must be something to do with improving the mixture density methinks as, again, on fixed-jet carbs, inserting a mesh gauze between the bottom of the carb and the manifold, also improves things, I'm informed. I admit I've not tried that personally.

Just contact James at CHG Classics, and he'll sort you out a later float chamber top, with a built-in overflow, something I would do urgently. Later today I'll be making a consoling telephone call to a long-

term Register member whose Kitten has recently been burned out from just this. He never got around to replacing the float chamber lid, despite me telling him personally to do it last time we met, about 5 years ago!!!

Just buy a good quality 20-50 mineral oil, Millers, Morris's. Valvoline "racing" or Duckhams. Avoid the so-called "Classic" oils sold by Halfords, Wilko, supermarkets and back-street car spares places. I always buy my oil online from Opie Oils, fair prices and quick delivery. I'm currently using Duckhams 20-50 in the car and Rock 10-40 motorcycle oil in the bikes.

Rad weld is evil stuff, clogs the radiator and heater matrices, destroys the water pump seals. Best not used (not actually recommended for alloy engines anyway). Better to simply diagnose the leak and repair it. Just hope it's not the cylinder head core plug that's leaking – being at the back, the head has to come off (or engine out) to access it...

I just clipped my 8mm "microbore" copper pipe to the chassis using "p" clips. These can be bought in packs from Halfords in various sizes. I just bought a box of assorted ones, then used self-tappers to fix them to the chassis. Due to the affect that modern fuels have on rubber it would be foolish to run the whole line in rubber pipe. Even the "ethanol" resistant stuff has to be changed every year or two to be safe. I only use R9 rubber tube as short links from tank to pump, pump to filter, filter to line, then line to carb.... (I use an electric SU pump mounted in the boot).

It is not a good idea to have the in-line fuel filter under the bonnet. They are not too clever with heat! I moved mine further along the supply pipe to the rear, attaching it to the chassis with a "terry" clip, easily accessible and visible via the offside wheel arch.

The bolt at the rear of the block is very short, but the build-up of scale behind it can often be so great that it will feel like the bolt has sheared leaving the bottom in the block – it will clear with effort though, just be wary and avoid using a hammer if you can, because the casting is thin at this point (hence the short bolt). Even clear, the flow is unlikely to be great.

Be sure to use the alloy-engine rad flush. Standard rad flush is highly alkaline which is not kind to aluminium. That said if thoroughly

flushed out afterwards and immediately replaced with de-ionised water and anti-freeze (which contains an inhibitor) it'll likely be fine. Also, you cannot use "oat" (orange) anti-freeze, it'll cause serious damage, as it dissolves copper and brass, plus it damages alloy and rubber. It's only designed for modern cast iron engines with plastic radiators and silicone hoses!!

You need the traditional blue or green ethylene glycol stuff. It's also vital to change this at least 2 yearly as it tends to go "off".

Enough for now, I think.... John.

Morning John,

Hahaha you must be psychic, the drain plug shortness did make me think it had sheared off!

Thank goodness you've warned me off oat, I have unfortunately used it once, but this has leaked out, and been flushed.

My hole is in the radiator (there may be others), pin hole-ish it seems, I have the radiator off the car, and had thought to apply case seal (ceramic based leak stoppa) with boiling water and low pressure to help it find the hole, then flush the excess case seal out of the rad, would this drastically lower the chances off blocking other waterways? Otherwise I have to somehow get a solder or brazing iron onto the pinhole when I locate it in the matrix (the rad frame appears riveted, annoyingly), or buy a rad I've seen for under thirty quid, but it's a later Rialto design I think.

Thanks for your other words, all noted, CHG Classics will be selling a float lid today, the plumbers merchant will be getting a visit too.

Giles.

Giles.

The Rialto rad should be the same as Kitten. Only the very late Robin mark 2 and 3 models changed, first to a Mini radiator, then to a composite plastic and alloy unit. Pin holing, usually due to using oat, is terminal and, if bad, just replace the rad. When my rad pin holed, all around the filler neck on the top tank, (I had previously used oat before we found out what it does to older cars) I fitted an aluminium rad, (when they first came out) and it's been terrific. The Reliant dealer I got mine

from has now long retired, but James at CHG keeps them. I did have problems back at the time locating a plain “blank” rad cap, as these are small “Japanese” types. I use a Scimitar header tank on my system, the only small 0 psi ones I could find were in Australia!!! Nowadays James has all this sorted out, including a 13lb cap (my rad came with a 45lb cap!). I just disassembled the supplied cap, and cut out and glued on a piece of inner tube – still works fine, so a good “bodge”.

I also acquired an alloy heater matrix, Queensway Garages had a batch made for Scimitar SE5a's (they are the same as used on the Kitten) so, in theory, if I changed the hoses for silicone, I suppose I could now use oat, but since 2005 I've used only Evans waterless coolant – I can thoroughly recommend it. Wasn't worth the effort though – the heater performance was still lacklustre. I fitted a pair of Mazda MX5 heated leather seats in the end – very warm, and supremely comfy

The engine in my car was effectively brand-new old stock when I got it, and since, it's never had water in it. It came from a mid-1990's Robin that had been written off (t-boned into a telegraph pole by a drunk driver) within an hour of being delivered to its new owner and with just 4 miles on the clock. Somehow it was never recovered and remained down the side of his home until he finally bought a 4-wheeled “micro” car to replace the Robin that had replaced the smashed one. That's when I got it! I just changed the seals and gaskets, as these might have deteriorated in storage, and then fitted it, along with its matching gearbox and pre-engaged starter, plus the later “Fiesta” roller thrust clutch release. A party trick at rallies is that with the engine at full temperature and the fan cut in I can just remove the cap – no pressure!!! My car is set up to run at 90 degrees - fan cuts in at 100 down to 88 cut out. 88 degree 'stat. The gearbox failed terminally within a week (as mid-90's Robins were wont to do) – I learned how to rebuild gearboxes, changing all the internals for my old ones, bar the reverse assembly, as the new 'box had reverse on the opposite side of the gate.

By about 1994, the accountants had pretty much taken-over at Tamworth, and they were heavily out sourcing. Gearboxes were being bought in from India. Nothing wrong with the engineering, which was excellent, just the quality of the steel used. Mine had stripped most of the teeth off the lay gear. When the mark 3 Robins came out in 1998, engines too were being imported from India. The warranty claims were, one suspects, a serious factor in the collapse of the company.

When we stripped it to rebuild and blueprint my “new” engine in 2013 (after about 190k miles) the water jacket was spotless internally – even the cylinder liners’ walls were still bright steel!!

Waterless coolant is simply a light oil, so contains no water, so it cannot boil. It also cannot pressurize, and is very gentle on hoses – mine has only needed one replacement in the last 250k miles – the top hose pin holed a month or so after I changed, and, because Evans doesn’t pressurise, all I saw was a smear on the perished hose.

I used to lecture at Cranfield University, and, me not being a “uni” type, I tended to associate with the mechanics at Cranfield aerodrome who put me on to it. Evans was and is widely used on light aircraft. Safe from -40C to 180C... It also never needs changing, though I did refill with new after the engine rebuild.

For cars, it’s sold in three different colours – as far as I can tell there’s no real difference! I just bought the “vintage” – the cheapest. I also buy my coolant from Opie, but as it hasn’t needed any topping up since 2013, I won’t run out for a while! John.

Thanks John you've cheered my morning up.

I fancy the Mazda MX-5 Mk1 seats, as the MK 2 tombstone style seats look like the head rest is fixed? And therefore potentially useless, further the Mk1’s are going for a song, comparatively. I note your remarks viz overflow, I suppose I can afford to lose the odd eggcup of fuel. I swapped the fuel pump for one off a Rebel, same shape, type Y base, but a cast actuating arm, it was then that the overflowing manifested, (my kitten pump has a broken part inside) so I guess overflowing on start-up is de-rigueur.

Regards, Giles.

Hi John,

Thank you for the reply, you will have noticed the £75 price tag on the titanium clutch bearing, yikes.

So, seats; do you know if every Mazda mark of MX5 seats fit please? and are there any other car seats that will fit, it's just that getting a decent pair of leather Mazda Mk2 heated ones, (at the right price) is

quite tricky-ish, so alternative seats from other small cars would expand my scope of search, I've seen Mk1 seats at a great price, but for all I know the runner spacing is different, sigh.

I saw Wheeler Dealers (TV show) putting waterless coolant in a radiator the other day, I immediately thought of you, the TV's people reckoned on £80 + for the coolant, where do you buy your Evans stuff from please?

Thank you for the offer of the carbon bearings, I have no idea how much is left on mine (75,000miles) it will have been replaced, hopefully.

You will be pleased to know, James should have posted my new fuel pot lid with overflow by now, I intend to feed it back to the fuel tank unless you recommend otherwise? as the overflow is under pressure (when overflowing) it should be possible to feed it uphill to the fuel tank filler neck perhaps?

Regards Giles.

Giles,

20 March 2021

The "saloon bar" experts online seem to recommend that only the Mk 1 seats fit Reliants – I know otherwise, as my Mk 2.5 ones fit fine, albeit a little tight width-wise on the passenger side, as this is narrower. I also have the "BN" centre arm rest in my car, which narrows the space further!! This said, they're probably talking about 3-wheelers, though as far as I'm aware, the floor width is the same, just the door cards on the tricycles are wider.

In practice, any narrow-fit type of seats can be made to fit. Virgo/Aixam/Microcar ones are also popular. **What do not fit**, are Ford/Vauxhall "Recaro" ones – these are far too wide.

From memory I paid £150 for my Mazda seats, but it was over 4 years ago. Before that I had a set of '60's genuine Ford GT40 (yes really!) racing buckets fitted. As I got older though, getting in and out of them was less than easy. I got these off a guy in Cheddington, near where we used to live, who had bought them to fit in a Ginetta junior his son was racing. Rules changed, so he was no longer able to use them, hence I bought them – advert in a car magazine. I think they too cost

me £150, but when I sold them (on e-bay) I got a sharp surprise. I had been told not to accept less than £500 for them so I put this in the listing as a buy-it-now. Within 10 minutes of listing them they sold to a guy in Hungary (who also arranged collection).

I first replaced these with a pair of Virgo seats (which were a freebie) but these never matched the interior, Microcar seats in general being a tad "loud", plus, the ones I was given were from a 2-seat Virgo, and did not have either a fold, or reclining system. Although I rarely if ever use the back seat, it's useful to be able to access it!

They are now back in a Virgo would you believe, owned by a guy in the ROC Birmingham branch.

I usually get my oils and coolant from Opie oils online. Can't help on price, as I last bought a "top up" can about 8 years back – still unopened!! You do also have to use a "prep" liquid to purge the cooling system completely of water before putting Evans in, unless the entire system has been first physically removed and dried out. This can be filtered and re-used though.

Do not run the carb overflow pipe back to the tank! All you need to do is route a pipe across the rear of the engine to the floor under the drivers' footwell (away from the exhaust heat). Then, if you smell or see fuel, you'll know its overflowing....

All the rubber/butyl fuel pipes MUST be replaced regularly as the methanol in modern fuel destroys rubber (Not the ethanol everyone is panicking about – this causes metals – steel/brass/alloy zinc etc. to dissolve over time but FBHVC laboratory tests could not find any real problem with rubber/butyl).

I only use top-grade R9 rubber pipes which I replace every couple of years. Lower (R6 is the one Halfords sell), grade ones need replacing annually. I also keep as little rubber/butyl pipe as I can, just the links from tank to pump (no pressure) and pump to main line (1.5psi) using copper for the main run from pump to carb, clipped to the bulkhead with a short link of R9 to the carb inlet.

DO NOT BUY R9 on e-bay – all is snide!!! Either James, or the VW owners Club, are the only sources I know for the genuine stuff.

John.

Hi John,

14 March 2021

Here's a link to a titanium clutch release bearing, any thoughts? I am interested, as it would remove the need to upgrade the clutch.

[https://www.ebay.co.uk/itm/NEW-RELIANT-KITTEN-REBEL-REGAL-ROBIN-SUPERVAN-ROLLER-CLUTCH-RELEASE-BEARING-/154363092275?\\_trksid=p2349624.m46890.l49292](https://www.ebay.co.uk/itm/NEW-RELIANT-KITTEN-REBEL-REGAL-ROBIN-SUPERVAN-ROLLER-CLUTCH-RELEASE-BEARING-/154363092275?_trksid=p2349624.m46890.l49292)

Thanks. Giles

Giles,

15 March 2021

Yes, these, or something similar, have been around quite a while – the release is a Volkswagen item I believe, modified to fit a Reliant clutch fork.

Back when I still had the standard carbon system I never bothered, as carbon wear was never a problem for me. The Kitten having a left-foot rest next to the clutch pedal, meant that riding the clutch wasn't an issue.

Even when I updated to the later engine and gearbox, which requires a hump in the inner side lower corner of the footwell to clear the starter solenoid, and hence the removal of the footrest, I simply shortened it by removing a section just above the lower stud, refitted it by the upper stud only, then whacked a 6mm hole through it and the metal reinforcing, bonded in and used a short "Dexion" screw and a nyloc nut. I then covered the starter temporarily with some foam, then laminated the new clearance hole over it, removing the foam after it had set – been fine since. *(Any pics of that mod John? Ed.)*

The pre-engaged starter being a fair bit smaller than the inertia one was, means removal is probably easier than before, even if it is a bit fatter overall.

However, given the rubbish quality of carbon thrusts recently, some disintegrating on first use, it is an idea worth considering.

That said I might have one or two very old n/o/s carbons out in the workshop, if you get stuck.

John.

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