

# Reliant Kitten Register



MEWSLETTER – TWENTY-SEVEN

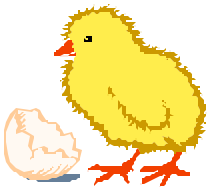
*March / April 1999*



The Register caters for all the under 1 litre Reliant 4-wheeled vehicles plus all of their derivatives – Rebels, Foxes, Tempests, Salamanders, Ciphers, Jimps, Asquiths and all other specials including the Liege.....

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We are indebted to the following individuals who both give and receive information on the following subjects on our behalf.

**Rebel alternative parts** contact:- David Myers on 0113-2570144 or at Danagarra, 23 New Street, Pudsey, LS28 8AQ e-mail – [cvdsm@leeds.ac.uk](mailto:cvdsm@leeds.ac.uk)

**Kitten alternative parts** contact:- Brian Millar, 01779-471139 or at Fairview, Boddam, Peterhead AB42 3AD e-mail – [Brian@mogdog.demon.co.uk](mailto:Brian@mogdog.demon.co.uk)

**Fox alternative parts** contact:- Bob Nash 01485-520476 or at The Old Oak, 14 Weasenham Road, Great Massingham, Kings Lynn PE32 2EY (no e-mail)

**Mutual Aid Spares Scheme** – run by Phil Hallam, of 4 Greenhead Holding, Stevenston, Ayrshire, KA20 4JX

**Mewsletter pictures** – can be sent in via Brian, or direct to John Pearce, 22 Brook Street Leighton Buzzard, Beds LU7 8LH tel. 01525-384928 or by e-mail to – [john@atodini.com](mailto:john@atodini.com)

◆ The Register has a page on the Internet at: <http://www.uk-classic-cars.com/kitten.htm> ◆

At Last! We get to see The Hallam Kitten, thank you Phil for the selection of pictures, and John for choosing one of them for us. I understand that all of the moulds exist for the skirts, valences, and rear window mods to the body, talk to Phil if you are interested.

I was going to say that I would keep my input to this edition down, and include more of your letters, then the computer crashed just as I was about to finish this edition (02/03/99), and everything changed! I have almost 14,000 words to retype, and that is just so that you get this, the other lost documents will take a long time to reproduce, yes, I have put better back-up systems into practice, as my old lecturer used to say " There are only two types of disk, those which have crashed, and those which are about to crash!"

Don't panic, "The Kitten Register" was last backed up in February, so it is not too out of date.

One great difficulty, or is it an opportunity, in retyping this is that I have more knowledge now than I did when I started this edition. I now know for example that Footman James are paying the additional postage to enable me to include their flyers with this edition, so I can safely make this a few pages longer than normal, and they are paying the postage. Thanks to Phil Hallam I now enjoy cheaper copying than I used to, so the cost will not be much more than a 'normal' edition.

I am however forced into new software, simply because I am not able to climb into the attic to try and find the original master discs, and here we are, so, back to what was here - before the crash of '99!

Rob and Fiona Wilkes, who many of you will remember used to be regular correspondents, are indeed still with us, and while they tell me that they do still use the tandem in the better weather, the trusty red Kitten estate is still serving them well.

A diversion from the norm, just to keep my desk clear, and salve my conscience. I will make you all aware that the Beaulieu Auto-jumble has moved "back to its old date", and will take place on the 11th & 12th of September this year.

Still on the subject of events that we get invited to / made aware of, the Middlesex Group R.S. Owners Club have invited members vehicles to their event at Staines Rugby Club in Feltham Hill Road, Hanworth, two minutes they tell me from Junction 1 on the M3 on Sunday the 9th of May. (I only got notification on the 8th of February, and was at that time waiting for edition 26 to come back from the printers). Now I don't have time to do much about this, but the contact, if you would like to know more, or get involved is one Lindsay Colley who can be contacted on 01923 246801. I have spoken to Lindsay, and he tells me that they have plenty of space, and so a week before the event is time enough to book. Talk to him if you are interested.

Then there is the matter of how many of our wonderful vehicles were actually built. Hugh Rolfe dropped me a note with his subscription renewal asking me for details of vehicle production. Now I know what the blurb says, but round numbers always make me suspicious, and there are grey areas. Thanks to Adrian Hanwell I have much more detailed information about Rebel production numbers, and early Kittens. The trouble is that even the detailed information I do have needs interpretation - watch this space.

Just to show that this is not all one sided, that is to say to redress the balance of me interrupting everyone else, I just thought I'd slip this in here:- (also because by using it now, it won't lie on my desk for long!)

Dear Brian,

27th January 1999

A letter as promised following our telephone conversation. I see from the last Mewsletter that you have a TW9 'Ant' on the Register. Here are details of mine should you wish to include it. I suppose that

being over the 8 cwt. Three wheeler weight limit, it qualifies as a 4 wheeler, certainly road tax wise it does.

1973 TW9E drop-side Pickup (750cc engine) Chassis number 671365, engine No. 501602, Reg. No. BTM 585L. The Pick-up body was factory made in square tube, alloy clad, and cost me £31/10/ Total price was £415 in 1973!

The engine has done 87,000 miles and has never been touched apart from plugs points and oil changes etc. and it is still used about the farm sometimes. I have owned it from new and intend a complete restoration when I retire.

The red Fox, A106 PEG I bought locally in a rather sad state, it mixed all its oil and water together on start up and pumped the lot out of the radiator breather, after having just had a new head gasket fitted. So it is in need of a complete engine strip and rebuild. A pity as I was hoping to use this engine in my other Fox, used every day for work, it has now done close to 140,000 miles. It still goes reasonably well, but runs out of puff on the hills (don't we all says Janet!) of which we have plenty round here! The mileage recorder stopped working at 137,000 although the speedometer still works - does anybody know how to fix this?

The Scimitar is still languishing in the yard, not having had much attention during the abysmal summer weather.

I do not doubt that all the other members of the Register were intrigued by the Liege on the cover of the last edition - *Yes, I did have a few telephone calls, Ed* - A set of performance figures for the supercharged version and a B.H.P. figure sometime in the mag. would be appreciated. (If you haven't already done so - I think you did mention something on the telephone).

That's all my news for now, all the best.

John Whitfield - North Wales

Well, the main reason for letting you see John's letter was so that I could scream a bit while you were reading it! This Ant thing - Oh dear, do I really want to get involved? It's a bit like the time that Sandy and Adrian gave me the nudge to get this off the ground way back in 1991/92. Someone really ought to do it, I don't particularly want to, but there are so few of them out there, would it really be all that much extra work? There is the point that many of them could provide a donor engine for a Kitten or Rebel (the advertising blurb of the time offered the Ant with a Triumph Herald engine as an option. I have never come across one so equipped.)

Also, just in passing, I hear what you say about taxation class John, but I have driven an Ant which was classed as a Tricycle and paid the then £55.00 a year road tax, no I don't know how he got away with it, but I am certain it was true. I guess it was a case of the individual in the tax office being taken in by the fact it was a three-wheeler, and not checking the weight, which is now up to 550Kg. By the way, how did you get away with it Bob, or was it like that when you got it?

Right, enough of this digressing, I can well remember the day, just as well it wasn't a night or we would have another song title in here! that the Reliant Owners' Club agreed to have a Club Historian but rejected my proposal for a Registrar for the vehicles (made by the Thistle branch to be constitutionally correct) by 15 votes to 12 (The then Chairman, one Mr. Pleadon as I recall, voted against the idea even though constitutionally he had only a casting vote, but I was too slow to realise it at that time - who'd

work with a committee?!?) Still what was the point again? Ah, yes, I remember saying then that while I was going to do the four wheelers, I really was not proposing doing the rest as well, and that they should appoint an individual in charge of each model - try to remember the NO word Brian, there's a good lad.....

I have nightmares about this becoming the "Reliant Register", and I really don't want that much work, then again, if I set up one for each model - FORGET IT BRIAN, you have quite enough on your plate, perhaps after the Jowett Millennium Rally in Pitlochry next year, you might have more time to think about it..... . .

Right, sorry about that, just thinking out loud again, must stop that, most embarrassing, back to business, file John Whitfield's letter, and get on with tidying the desk, which seems to be my constant task these days, the next bit of paper is the response to Footman James' proposal re. their desire to have me include their flyers with this edition - just to keep you up to speed , it is 06:00 on the 29th of January as I write, see, John's letter did not lie on my desk for long! Phil got the front covers for edition 26 yesterday, thank you John (Pearce), and so I am hoping to have it here, all collated and stapled , by early February. This of course you won't see till sometime in April, perhaps I'll get to gather Lilacs by then - what shower - springs eternal, oh no, that was hope wasn't it? Careful Brian, you're losing it .....

No, no men in white coats yet, but I'm going to sign off for a while, I feel a coffee break coming on.

.....

Right, this is not working, it is now the 14th of February, happy Valentines day, I have finished typing up the Tempest update "I did it My Way" and completed the John Bowcott Technical pages, and we are out of room, and as you may have noticed I can never shut up for long. If only I knew what Footman James were going to do. I quoted them £25 to send you all their flyer. I arrived at that figure because to include it would put the postage up from 20p to 31p, the next band, (11p times 240 odd magazines, you work it out) but if we were going to have to do that, then you could be treated to a few extra pages, and it would not cost any more in postage! But will they accept my offer? I can't wait to find out, I'm going to keep on and risk it.

The one big drawback of getting the magazine ready early, is that any adverts, or articles, that arrive after I send it away to be copied, will have missed the boat so to speak. Now it may be that the solution is to put out a separate sheet, I really don't want to do that, because then I have two documents to prepare, and the chance that I'll pick up the wrong one to copy and include in the envelope. Not only that, but when do I make the cut off point? If I wait till the magazines are done, I will have missed the copy run, and will have to wait my place in the queue again to get the adverts copied, perhaps I could do them locally , albeit at a greater cost, but then again do I really want to give myself more work - **No , I definitely don't want to do that !** The other drawback of sending it away early, is that I won't have the front covers available then, so I will have to put them on later - more work!! (He loves it - really).

One day I'll learn to do nothing, absolutely nothing at all - then you won't have to read all this waffle, and I'll have even more time to spend in front of the wide screen television that Moira allowed me to buy last year, which has allowed me to catch up on all those wonderful programmes that I missed first time round, like "When the Boat comes in", and "House of Elliot", and the American building and renovation ones like "This Old House" and "New Yankee Workshop", (Woodwork was my best subject at school) Sunday mornings are difficult mind you, having to choose between "Frost on Sunday" and "Blakes 7".

The reason for the above, apart from keeping you aware of just what kind of eccentric you have at the helm, was part of the content of a letter from another Brian, this time a Brian from Northern Ireland, (he has a Kitten as well as the other Reliant mentioned in the extract quoted below.) who, after the praise that they got in the last edition, had the following comments to make about P.F. Spare, the insurance people that I had been recommending:-

"I'll restrict this initial letter to just one or two topics in the meantime, and hold back the floodgates! Firstly Insurance: My recently rebuilt Rialto was completed in December 1998, but was not M.O.T.'d till 01/02/99, and I'm pleased to say it passed, only slight iffiness concerning the CO2 emissions (topic for another occasion), so before I can get it taxed I need insurance. I thought, mistakenly, that it would be dead cheap, but I am being quoted £158 T.P.F. & T.. Which for such a small car, and an old experienced owner (at 56!) is really too much. So I acted on a suggestion in the Kitten newsletter, and 'phoned Robert Spare, but not only did they not suggest ringing me back after they had done their deliberations, they kept me hanging on, and eventually told me that they don't even do N.I. Cover!"

Brian's letter went on about poor service from another broker, not one I have mentioned in here, however I was more than a little concerned, having given you all the benefit of the letter from our Mr. Bennett from Grantham in the last edition praising P. F. Spare, so I gave them a ring, and spoke to Robert Spare himself (he was busy when I rang, and he rang me back!) He expressed his concern about the situation and asked for time to check what had happened, a copy of Brian's letter, and a right to reply to it, since I was intending publishing the relevant part of Brian's letter in here. Naturally, being a fair minded individual, I agreed to all of his requests.

I should point out that at that time, indeed even at the time of typing, Brian Davison is not yet a subscriber to the Register, though he assures me that he will shortly be joining the flock, and has given me details of his Kitten, anyway, watch this space:-

Dear Brian,

2nd March 1999

Re. Reliant Insurance.

I refer to the above and would advise that our objective in respect of arranging Insurance for any Reliant is a commitment to provide quality service and friendly advice to all Reliant owners irrespective of membership of any club. We are specialists in the insurance of Reliants and feel that we have extensive knowledge of the problems involved.

Sometime ago you agreed on behalf of MEMBERS of the Reliant Kitten Register that if they requested a quotation from ourselves and the Members identified themselves as belonging to the Register, we would subsequently telephone them back to obtain details and subsequently offer a quotation.

We are happy to continue on this basis, but you will appreciate that if your MEMBERS do not identify themselves there is no way that we can hold to our agreement. We must further stress that people being dealt with on this basis MUST belong to the Register.

We pride ourselves on our service and advice to Reliant owners. Any comments received are welcome whether complimentary or constructive, but we would appreciate comments being made on the facts so that we may respond in the correct manner.

With best wishes for the future of the Club

Yours sincerely, ( signed ) R. Spare

I guess I really ought to include their telephone number about now ! It is 01530 270574.

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Well, in the original document there was a space here, and I was saying that there was a plan ! Something to do with me keeping my mouth shut in this edition. Then with the possibility of treating you to lots more pages than usual thanks to Footman James, so rather than deprive you of my questionable wit, or indeed have to serialise either of the two particularly good articles that should appear in this edition - just who was it that first remarked that size doesn't matter anyway? I just hope that when the Royal Mail reduce the cost of a second class stamp next month, that they do not reduce the weight you can send for the basic rate!

=====

### **Rebel Round Up**

Dear Brian,

28th December 1998

Thank you for forwarding the letter from the Talbots - am finally returning it. I have decided that the slipping out of gear problem is probably down to a worn selector. This may have been caused by using cheap recycled gear oil. The problem now is to find a good replacement. The two gearboxes I have bought, seem to have the same problem. Indeed it seems to be a common problem judging by the adverts I've seen. Perhaps one day someone will make up a batch in oilite and solve all our problems. I wish I had the time.

It's M.O.T. time again soon, really must find someone to make a stainless exhaust. To set the record straight, my '67 Rebel has a 'through the chassis' exhaust pipe, like the one on the front cover of Mewsletter 23. It also has the same chassis cross members. Thankfully the spare wheel is in the boot. One problem I have with the chassis is the bottom radiator hose. The radiator metal inlet (at the bottom) is angled. Over adjustment of the fan belt results in the dynamo pulley rubbing the bottom hose. A previous owner overcame the problem of engine judder causing bottom hose wear by replacing the engine mountings with solid ones - not recommended! I have yet to find a source of bottom radiator hoses. Presumably when it does wear out (or I get fed up replacing rather than adjusting the fan belt) I will have to find another radiator.

Came across someone with a Rebel and a rusty Toyota Starlet in the summer. They were intending to make a special. Am tempted to follow suit, gave them your name after I bought the Rebel engine and gearbox.

Seasons felicitations, or should that be happy Hogmanay?

Mike Hine - Par, Cornwall

*Thanks Mike, on the radiator hose / generator pulley familiarity, I am sure that the simplest solution is to take your car to your local radiator repair specialist, I find Serck Marston to be good up here, get the foreman to come out and have a look under the bonnet of your car so that he clearly understands the problem, take the radiator out of the car, yes there in the street, a five minute job in a Rebel (you might like to have a dry run at home first, old rusty jubilee clips can increase the time*

dramatically, as can rusty radiator securing bolts which are too long, fit stainless ones first too!) and have him alter the angle, and if necessary the radius of the pipe which comes out of the bottom tank, to a more appropriate angle / direction. They will pressure test and paint the radiator while you wait, and you can put it back in - don't forget to add anti freeze, and then you can drive home, hey presto, no more hose chewing generator pulley! Just like that!! Yes it's true, modern radiator paint really does dry that quickly, I know, I did it with the Kitten last year, yes, they suffer from the modern equivalent of this problem, alternator pulleys have the same appetite as generator ones used to have, must be in the genes.

Ed

Dear Brian,

12/1/99

I had a 'phone call earlier today (just after you called in fact) from somebody who is interested in buying the Rebel, I say "interested in buying", but this chap seemed more concerned with the registration plate on the car - *Yes John, I had to promise the chap I bought that car from that he would have the option to retain the number for two years from when I got it in 1994! Ed.* What to do, if I wanted to separate the number from the Rebel to which it is attached, I would do that myself, but only if I keep the plate on a retention certificate for my future use. (*Am I correct in thinking that there is still a 6 month limit on them, retention certificates that is ? Ed.*) Still, needs must, and it would be one solution.

Why does life need to be so complicated?  
( No answer required ).

I will certainly try to pop over and drink some of your tea before too long, this side of the new millennium certainly, though it could be argued that 2001 is actually the first year of it as there would not have been a "year zero" between B.C. and A.D., but that old chestnut is best left to the theologians and philosophers to debate. Guess I could see you in 2000 then, or is that twenty hundred? No, I thought not, food for thought though, as is the question of what our M.O.T. testing stations are putting in that little space where last year's certificate says "ninety nine".

That's all for now, best wishes to Moira, Arleen and whatever selection of livestock currently resides at number sixteen.

Yours J.P.B. (John Blagburn) North Shields

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Dear Brian,

14th February 1999

Please find enclosed my membership renewal. I enclose the details of my other two Rebels as they don't appear on the Register (*Sorry Bruce, Ed.*)

During the past year I have carried out quite a few jobs on the "Moss encrusted Hut" (XWA 369G). In May I fitted new oil seals to the N/S rear hub, and replaced the handbrake linkage across the back axle, this was so badly worn that it wouldn't operate the rear brakes. I also replaced the oil seal and bearing in the gearbox extension, this was leaking so badly that an oil slick was forming where the car is usually parked.

I freed off and reconnected the seized heater control cable, giving me the luxury of controlling the heat?! from inside the car.

During November I fitted the steering idler that I had refurbished in 1997/98 and had only just got round to using. As the M.O.T. was imminent I thought I'd better give the car a check over, and I ended up replacing all the brake flexible hoses, front and rear wheel cylinders and shoes and two of the front brake adjusters. After doing all this work I decided to fill the hydraulic system with silicone brake fluid, and I booked it in for an M.O.T. which it passed with no problems.

Unfortunately progress is painfully slow with the blue Rebel VRC 68G, which has been sitting in my garage since October 1997 when I bought it from Bill Logan. I have managed to replace the brake master cylinder and fit new wheel cylinders, brake hoses and associated pipework to the O/S front brake, there just doesn't seem to be enough hours in the day. With a bit of luck I hope to be able to get it back on the road later this year.

I better finish now or you will never get this, look forward to the next edition of the Mewsletter,.

Regards Bruce (Emery) Leigh-on-Sea

*Bruce, as you will have gathered is an excellent custodian, but suffers, as do we all, from the frustrations of having too many vehicles. We only have so much time and money to put into these things, and the more cars you have, the thinner your resources must be spread. I am of course delighted that Bruce has done such a good job of looking after the Hut, as I think I have said before, since coming under his wing, it is no longer moss encrusted. The blue one however is immaculate by comparison, good luck with them both Bruce. ("Bruce the Avenger, saviour of Rebels", has a ring to it, but only really of relevance in relation to his very nice Hillman, another particular favourite of mine, and that has nothing at all to do with the fact that my grandfather loaned Moira and I his to go our touring honeymoon in back in 1975!)*

*Anyway, back to the current time, Tuesday 16th February, see, Bruce's letter barely got to lie on my desk for three hours before filing! But seriously, what do I do with his information about his other two Rebels, not yet on file? It would be easy to simply add them on as numbers 513 & 514, but there are still those dozen or so people out there to whom I have yet to make the time to contact to see if the information about the Reliant they had when they first contacted me is available, and if not, I could re-use their numbers, and fill some of those gaps with the likes of Bruce's Rebels. But that will take time, and prevent me from really filing Bruce's letter - whatever should I do?? ("Work harder sounds appropriate to me." says a little voice!) Oh jings, he's hearing voices now .....*

*O.K., I've had another coffee, decided to use 513 & 514, but Bruce, please can I have their dates of first registration if you get a minute, and if I don't manage to write and ask for the information before you see this? Thanks, Brian.*

Ah, this was an odd corner before I had to re-type the entire thing. I received an interesting bit of paper through the post earlier this year, and I must apologise to the individual concerned because I separated his letter from the bit of paper, and can't now remember who deserves the credit, but my thanks anyway. I have now had it encapsulated to protect it, thankfully the heat involved did it no harm at all. The very flimsy bit of paper in question tells us that:-

The RELIANT ENGINEERING COMPANY (TAMWORTH) Ltd., were contractors to the ADMIRALTY - AIR MINISTRY & the WAR OFFICE. They were manufacturers of RELIANT cars and commercial vehicles. And that all communications should be addressed to the company and not to individuals. They operated from WATLING STREET TWOGATES TAMWORTH STAFFS, Phone TAMWORTH 3761/5 grams RELIANT-TAMWORTH-3761.

The Directors of the day were T.L. Williams M.I. Mech E. (Chairman and Managing) R. W. Wright (Deputy Managing) E. S. Thomson (Works) T. H. Scott (Sales) and the Secretary was one R. H. Wright, and if you think the font that this is printed in is small you really ought to see that old letter heading or whatever it is (the paper seemed too flimsy to have been a letter heading, at least as light as the very flimsy Airmail stuff you used to get ) which is why I had it encapsulated to protect it. I assume that it comes from the 1950's and is yet another bit of historic paper which Moira would no doubt include in the "Brian's junk" category, but come on, you can't throw things like that in the bin, can you? Mind you, where am I going to keep it? Especially if I ever want to be able to find it again, other than by accident? I'll put it in the yellow file, remind me of that if I ever ask please.

=====

### **I did it, My Way Another Tempest is born)**

#### PART 2 - Chassis rebuild

With the body frame away to be powder coated I turned my attention to the chassis and it's rebuild.

The first decision was what rear springs to use. The Fox springs are too stiff, as soft springs are required for trialing. I considered the Robin rear springs, and the four leaf, three leaf and two leaf Kitten ones which after much reading, and various conversations with people I opted for the two leaf ones which I obtained from the Bournemouth dealer where the Fox originally came from. With the new springs and bushes I returned home to fit same.

Fitting the rear springs brought to light the next problem, which is that the Kitten spring bush has 7/16" holes, while the Fox has 1/2" ones. Again spending several hours on the 'phone to the factory / John Box / Brian, and several dealers, I failed to find the Fox part number, although it seemed to be common knowledge that the Fox bush is a different size. To overcome the problem I turned the outer half of the Fox bolt down to 7/16", and put the bolt in from the inside of the chassis and mounted the spring on the 7/16" half of the bolt. However I would like to think that this is a temporary modification till somebody can solve the problem. Somebody out there must know where to get Fox rear spring front bushes. If anyone reading this has the information would they please let me or Brian know, I would be very grateful.

With the rear springs fitted, the Morris Minor axle was loosely fitted to mark the spring saddle positions. This done, the old spring saddles were cut off and re-welded in their new positions. The rear axle was then painted and fitted to the chassis using Morris Minor spring mounting rubbers, plates and 'U' bolts. The remainder of the axle was built up, i.e. diff., brake back plates with new wheel cylinders, and brake shoes.

Fitting the brake hydraulic pipes I found that I needed a bracket to hold the three way union on to the back axle, having already realised that I also needed brackets for the rear shock absorber bottom fixing. I welded these in place, ruining the posh new paintwork, which was then all redone.

Turning to the front end now, so out came all the boxes of parts which had been stored away. The wishbones were stripped of bushes, some rust holes welded up (only minor) *I trust you are not meaning Morris Minor here - Ed!* And then sent away for sand blasting and powder coating. Whilst this was being done the front stub axles and brake plates were cleaned and painted ready for the return of the suspension parts.

Returned looking like new and shining, the suspension was rebuilt with new bushes and bolts. The original Fox front shock absorbers were cleaned, checked and found to work O.K. wanting a fairly soft suspension made the fitting of new shock absorbers not really worth while, although not a choice for the rear ones as they were completely shot.

Again new brakes and wheel cylinders were fitted after the adjusters were sprayed with WD40 - *Sorry to interrupt again Dave, but, just showing off that not all of the old memory cells are quite dead yet, I wonder how many of our readers remember that when it first came out in the early 1960's I think it was, that the product was called ROCKET WD40? Ed.* - to ensure that they stayed unseized. I was amazed at the amount of water that was driven out (from the washing out after being cleaned with Gunk).

Time now to turn my attentions to the steering, engine and gearbox.

I had earlier, about April - May time, missed an engine at John Box's which went to a Kitten north of the border, now I really want my magazines, so I need to be careful here, he was competing in a Land's End to John O'Groats run, and so needed a sound engine (on loan I think) but I think he had difficulty removing it again, by the sound of it I missed a good engine.

*O.K. O.K., I confess, it was me, and I had offered the engine to Dave, and Les Cruickshank wanted it too, or am I getting confused? I think it was a chap in Wales wanted it to put in his Liege, anyway, I really can't remove one myself these days, and by the way I was not competing, we were participating in the Le-Jog, the wee red car, as I may have mentioned before, was the only Kitten amongst 30 odd assorted Reliants to take part on the Reliant Owners' Club's 40th anniversary run. I must resist the temptation of starting a "Let's get John Box to retire - again - so that he can resume building Reliant engines for us!" campaign.*

Fortunately I received a 'phone call from Harry Darby in Cardiff, to say that he had a reconditioned engine and gearbox I could have, and so I arranged to visit Harry one Saturday morning. Harry gave me precise directions which got me straight into his drive without once getting lost. Being my first visit to Cardiff, That had to be good. After an interesting hour plus with Harry, I left with a good engine and gearbox, plus some other parts. Harry also agreed to sort out a spare cylinder head for me to get "unleaded" to which I must ring you Harry.

*Sorry people, me again, this is your fault Dave, for bringing Harry into my train of thought - a Hornby one if you must know - I was going to write to you the other day Harry, but not enough time, so I'll just cover it here while I have your attention, the rest of you just talk amongst yourselves for a moment please. I was thinking about you last Friday Harry, the 5th of February. I had tickets for a concert in a local hotel which was being put on by the Cardiff Athletic Male Voice Choir. They were in Scotland to watch and support their team at Murrayfield in Edinburgh on the Saturday, and were good enough to give up their time and talent to entertain a few hundred people in support of the mentally handicapped charity Enable. I took my mother along and we enjoyed a wonderful couple of hours entertainment - real music, you know, like they used to make it. I only wish that I had insisted that Arleen had come - I had a spare ticket, as I had got one for my step father, but unfortunately he was too ill to come along. They began the evening's concert, this as Welsh Male Voice Choir remember, by singing "Flower of Scotland" (our unofficial National Anthem). The evening was full of good music, and some wonderful humour. Too many marvellous pieces to mention in here - never mind my memory! But they sang a musical version of the Lord's prayer that I had not heard before, through pieces like "Jerusalem" and "The Rhythm of Life" pretty slick stuff from a 30 odd strong Male Voice Choir I may tell you, and ended the evening with a piece that I always associate with Cleo Lane, "Cavatina". What a talented group they are. Their conductor, who had us singing along for a number of the songs, told us that we*

were famous now, as we all had something in common with that famous young Welsh school girl soloist - whose name I can't remember, and I am not going to hold this up while I do the research, anyway, she has performed with them too, so we were in good company. (Yes, I did ask why they had not brought her along, I never did get an answer mind you). I almost felt sorry for them the following day when we trounced their team on the Rugby field 33 - 20 I think it was. The only name I have from the whole wonderful evening is that of one Tom Haffenfen, who was kind enough to allow me to separate him from his copy of their "Singalong Scotland 1999" booklet which has now been added to my collection of such memorabilia. Right, back to your story Dave, and don't distract me like that again please!

On return from Cardiff the engine and gearbox were fitted together temporarily, without flywheel and clutch, and installed into the chassis. Firstly to check that the new chassis parts were in the correct place, and secondly to fit the new front engine mounting brackets in the correct place on the front cross member. Having done this, the engine and gearbox were removed, and the engine mounting bracket welded in place. The front cross member was then repainted.

A new MG Midget clutch (same size, but stronger, I think) was then fitted with new stainless steel roll pins in the clutch thrust race operating fork.

Whilst this was going on Dave Smith in Bedfordshire came to the rescue with a good steering rack and pinion and a spare engine for me to overhaul at a later stage.

The engine and gearbox, now fitted together correctly, were installed into the chassis, as was the overhauled steering rack. A set of old wheels and tyres were fitted, and the chassis was lowered onto its wheels for the first time, and put onto its trailer. One problem showed itself, the half shafts were not fitted properly, a gap (about 25 thou) between the half shaft and rear hub carrier gives the game away. So it looks as if I will have to remove the rear hubs to sort the problem. (But later).

With the rolling chassis on its trailer it was put into it's garage and the new looking body frame and floor pan brought home for marrying together and build up the pedal box (to be modified), steering column, heater motor, wiring loom, inner body panels, handbrake lever and mechanism.

The handbrake lever mounting was modified slightly for the seat belt mounting, and then sent for powder coating, together with the gear change relay.

The gear change relay is necessary because the driving position in the Tempest is further back than in the Fox or Kitten. The John Box design of relay, like the early Rebel one, is no longer available, so I had to make up my own. I will not say too much about it, until I know that it works. The temporary fitting worked O.K., but you know how these things change when finally installed.

John Box has a really clever idea for a really good relay, but I am not clever enough to put it into practice - yet. Hopefully when time permits, John and I can get together and sort it all out. I am sure that Tempest owners will be interested. (*Possibly some of the Rebel owners as well, Ed*)

Anyway, my version will be fitted before the floor pan and body frame are secured to the chassis. The frame was sealed with Silkaflex between the frame and floor pan, along the door sills, rear panel upright and front panels, and pop riveted with 4.8mm stainless steel pop rivets.

Next come the modifications to the brake and clutch pedals so that the pedal box can be fitted, with the steering column heater motor etc.

As I am having a new garage built with an extension to the house, the Tempest build will slow a little, so I will end this part of the story here.

Dave Price - Gloucestershire

Thank you Dave, you have not had your troubles to seek on the project so far, dare I ask in print what this is I hear about you doing another one for Dave Smith to use in "The Last Endurance Rally of the Millennium"? Or is that a secret?

Anyway, my apologies for all the interruptions, it in fact took me most of Saturday afternoon to type the above article up, David Leslie knows what I am talking about as he telephoned me in the middle of it (he has a Fox now) and even his Welsh girlfriend could not help me with the name of the Welsh schoolgirl singer! Then I had to stop to peel the spuds for our dinner, and then there was another 'phone call - so it goes on. Odd coincidence really, but as you will know I am having to retype the whole magazine after a computer failure together with ineffective back up practice, it is now 05:33 on the 9th of March, and guess who was on the telephone again yesterday, yes, our Fox owning Welsh resident David Leslie, and I forgot to ask if his girlfriend had remembered the name yet!! Oh, by the way David, my guess was wrong, you are not number 521 at all, you are in fact No. 503, Reliant PartsWorld please note!

*Right, at the risk of including all the good articles in the one edition, here is some more technical information from John Bowcott, thank you John.*

### **TECHNICAL TALK**

Dear Brian,

December '98 - Droitwich Spa

I am scribbling this epistle out to you as I have not sent you anything for some time, and Christmas is coming up fast! The following will I hope prove useful to your readers:-

#### **Poor Heater Performance**

We suffered this each time we drained the cooling system. It seems that the displacement rate of the water pump is not enough to purge the heater matrix. I found it best to top up the radiator header tank, put the heater water circulation control on maximum flow, and whilst running the engine at some 2,000 RPM, loosen the return hose from the heater and having achieved full bore flow, jamb the connection back on again before allowing the engine to slow down, tighten up the clip on the connection, and top up the radiator header tank. After a few miles, check that the radiator header tank level is still satisfactory, and the system, long term, should perform trouble free.

#### **Fluttering Petrol Gauge**

The petrol tank sender unit is simply a mechanism, which causes the rise and fall of the float in the tank to change the electrical resistance of the sender. It achieves this by means of a contact on an arm actuated by the float, moving along the length of a wire wound resistance. The usual problem is that the arm loses contact with the resistance wire. To cure this problem, remove the sender unit, and bend the contact arm so there is adequate - but not too much - contact pressure. Note that some sender units use printed circuit resistance elements instead of wire wound ones, but I have never encountered them in either Rebels or Robins. The same problem, cause and remedy, apply to the printed circuit type.

## Changing from Dynamo to Alternator

The general conception is that when you change from a dynamo to an alternator you get a greater charging rate and improved load balancing when running.

This is not always the case.

A C40 dynamo of 22 Amp maximum output is limited to around 10,000 RPM, achieved with a belt step ratio of say 1.6:1. The 115mm alternator range on the other hand is happy up to 16,000 RPM. To achieve this at maximum engine RPM usually means the alternator has to be fitted with a very small pulley because there are two reasons why the maximum diameter of the crank pulley has to be limited.

1. If the engine had its water pump and crank centres too close together then the combined radius of the two pulleys must be less than their centre distance. A real problem on small over square engines (large bore / short stroke).
2. The belt has a maximum linear speed limitation, and if it exceeds this it starts to fly on instead of following the pulley radius (reducing the angle of lap and inducing slip) and also suffers centrifugal oversteering. Increasing the tension of the belt cannot offset this effect as it just increases the loads on all the bearings and hastens the demise of the belt.

The use of a smaller pulley on the alternator increases belt flexure, which results in a shorter belt life, and induces internal heating in the belt itself.

If you compare the output characteristics of the dynamo and the alternator, against rotational speed, you will find that the dynamo cuts in (starts charging) at a relatively low armature speed, has a very rapidly rising output with speed, and thus has to be used with a regulator which will restrict its output to a level where it will not burn out. The alternator on the other hand, cuts in at a relatively high rotor speed, has a shallower rising output characteristic, and its related output is that achieved at 6,000 RPM. As an alternator is current limiting in itself, you only need to fit a voltage regulator.

One might think that given the choice from a Lucas 15, 16, 17 and 18 ACR alternators which have outputs of 28, 34, 36 and 45 amps, you would opt for the 45 as being the best machine and go out and fit one.

However, for day to day general purpose vehicles, the 17 ACR with its lower cut in speed and its steeper rising output characteristic will give a far higher output and better load balancing. The 15, 16, 17 and 18 ACR alternators all have the same outside diameter - the 15 and 16 are the same length, and the 17 and 18 share the same longer lamination stack. The only difference 15 to 16 is the number of turns and diameter of the wire on the stator, and the same goes for the 17 & 18. To get maximum rated output you always sacrifice low speed performance.

The more recent models - the A115 range - use generating elements identical to those used in the ACR range, but they incorporate a different regulator and rectifier configuration, and have barrel slip rings to make them shorter and more compact. The nomenclature of the "A" range, for example the A115-36 just means that it has an outside diameter of 115mm and a nominal maximum output of 36 Amps.

The best solution for anyone who has a dynamo and wants to change to an alternator is to use one from a scrap Robin as this will give you the correct size of pulley. You have to use a shorter belt - be certain to obtain one of the "Raw" edged ones and not the fabric type - as they have a superior life

and durability. In addition the raw edge grips the pulleys more effectively, and reduces the tendency to slip under a combination of rapid acceleration and heavy electrical load conditions. I found that I had to make a longer adjusting strap for the alternator as the very short one used with the dynamo was not suitable - once again get one from an old Robin. When I fitted the 17 ACR alternator to my Rebel, the original equipment was still a dynamo, so I had to do my own designing and adaption.

*Excuse me John, can I just interrupt here for a moment, you don't mention in your article the significance of the larger diameter of the alternator compared to the dynamo, on my Rebel, on which we did a similar conversion, we had to change the front engine plate, simply because that seemed easier than drilling another hole in it - sounds daft now! - and drill an appropriately positioned hole in the crankcase lug which supports the rear mounting of the electricity creating device, to give us the necessary clearance between the larger diameter alternator body and the crankcase.*

*Also, on the Rebel cooling system priming situation, yes, I have experienced it also, my solution was to fill the system with a filler funnel through the heater by taking one of the heater hoses off, and filling the system through it, avoids the burney fingers potential of doing it with the engine running.*

Ed

### **Electrical Connections on changing to an Alternator**

The old dynamo used Positive earth, and all alternators are Negative earth.

You must obviously change the battery lugs.

The starter is equally happy with Positive or Negative earth.

What to do with the dynamo regulator ? I suggest that you remove it.

#### **Connection changes at the Regulator**

- If it was a RB106/3 type, connect together the D (0.375:) connector, A, and A1 leads.
- If it was a RB340 type, connect the B and D leads (0.372") connectors together.
- With both regulator types you connect together the D terminal (.025") connector and the F leads.

The .025" connector on the D connector goes to the ignition warning light on the dash panel. It is essential for the warning light to be connected and work as it comes on when the ignition is switched on, because the current through it switches on the output transistor in the regulator and provides a small amount of rotor excitation. The WARNING LIGHT SHOULD BE 2.2 WATTS if it is less the alternator cutting-in speed increases. With no warning light the alternator will not cut in till something like 4,000 RPM. However once it has cut in it will continue to be 'cut in' until such time as the engine stops. \* (See comments at the end)

At the dynamo end of the harness, push the 0.375" connector onto either of the two 0.375" main terminals on the alternator, and the 0.25" connector onto the matching 0.25" blade "aux" terminal. The reason for the twin connectors on the main output of the alternator is that with the 18 ACR and the S115-45, twin cables between the alternator and the battery were recommended to carry that level of current. So twin 0.375" connectors in parallel were considered advisable. The same rectifier / terminal arrangement was used on the whole range for commonisation in manufacture of that component.

## **Ignition System**

The polarity of the HT must be Negative earth for optimum function. There are two coil terminal marking conventions. The old ones are marked 'SW' and 'CB' and are marked also as for Positive or Negative earth.

The later coil's terminals are simply marked '+' and '-'.

If you have one of the old coils for Positive earth, simply connect the 'SW' terminal to the distributor and the 'CB' terminal to the supply from the ignition switch.

Both changes give a Negative polarity HT.

With Negative polarity HT supplied to the centre electrode of the spark plug, it is found that the plug sparks at a much lower voltage than if it was Positive polarity - resulting in better starting and less electrical stress on all the HT components, the contact breaker and the capacitor (For those with a technical turn of mind - the higher the HT voltage, the higher the induced voltage in the primary coil).

## **Radio**

Beware! Check your radio, and if it is designed for Positive earth and has no polarity change facility, you will need to replace it with one designed for Negative earth.

## **Flasher Unit**

These, unless electronic, will function equally well with either polarity supply.

## **Reliant Rebel in supermarket Trolley Mode**

The original Rebel in development experienced quite a spate of wheel wobble - from what I heard - and one of the cures was to fit a double acting piston damper between a point on the drag link and the chassis. BUE had this arrangement when it was bought in 1970. I did not feel it should have been necessary as the steering box was tight and there was no play in any of the joints and the wheel bearings were correctly adjusted.

I disconnected the damper and it shook like a dog that had been for a swim, at the slightest provocation.

Re-balancing the front wheels did nothing to help.

I believe that the real cause was that someone in development had had some instability problem and (on the premise that increased castor angle provides for increased system stability) increased the castor angle to the degree that the wheel wagging phenomena found on many supermarket trolleys resulted, and in desperation, fitted the damper.

With the damper refitted the system became once again quiescent - but I never believed that to have been a satisfactory engineering solution.

When the front suspension was re-aligned some time later, I reduced the castor angle so that it had, what from my experience with other rear wheel drive vehicles, was just an adequate amount. I did

not refit the damper and - hey presto - the front end was completely stable at all speeds and on the roughest of roads, and remained so ever after.

## **Brake Master Cylinders**

The 5/8" diameter unit I used was a standard Girling component. Apart from the bore it is identical to the 3/4" unit. The **essential thing** is to find one with a matching flange with the correct mounting hole centres (for fitting it to the chassis).

I could not find one with the correct push rod and clevis arrangement to link it to the brake pedal - that however is no problem as all you need to do is use the push rod and clevis from your old unit (using the new gaiter rubber from the new pushrod). I still have both scrap 5/8" and 3/4" diameter units, but apart from 'Girling' there is no part number to identify either.

When I first tried to find a 5/8" diameter unit I discovered that there were 2 types of fitting - horizontal and vertical flanges - so take care to specify which you need, as well as the hole pitch and diameter that you require if you ever need to order one.

John Bowcott - Droitwich-Spa

*Well John, my thanks for sharing your knowledge and expertise with us. There are a few points I would like to make, and my apologies John for the changes that I made to your fascinating article.*

*Firstly I have to say that your depth of technical understanding clearly way exceeds my own, and one point I found particularly interesting was your explanation of the functions of an ignition warning light, in particular its task as an exciter - now I understand a bit better the behaviour of some aspects of the "wee red car". It has an odd electrical problem which I have been unable to resolve, so I have by-passed it by disconnecting one of the thick brown leads from the fuse box. This prevents the horn, hazard flashers and interior light from working, but more usefully it prevents the ignition and oil warning lights from coming on! The problem is that with the wire connected the oil pressure and ignition warning lights are on all the time, it matters not whether the ignition is on or off, whether the engine is running or not, the two warning lights are on constantly. So I took the wire off, remembering to reconnect it for the annual M.O.T. of course! The one fault which I was left with, and now understand better, was that in order to get the voltmeter to show a charge, all right, I know that voltmeters don't show a charge they show voltage, but to get that voltage to rise above about 10.5 - 11v, I had to exceed 35 - 40 M.P.H in second gear! - not a normal feature of my economic driving style, but necessary to get the alternator to do its stuff - and now I understand better why that should be the case! I must try and get to the bottom of the problem It was suggested to me that it could be an incorrectly wired ignition switch, and yes that wiring was tampered with to get the radio to work in certain circumstances and not in others, but I had a Reliant dealer check it out last year, and they could see nothing wrong with it! I would say watch this space, but realistically I guess it will be a while before that job gets anywhere near the top of the priority list.*

*Update on that situation, last Sunday, 14/03/99, Jim Spence kindly fixed it for me, amongst a whole list of things he was doing on the wee red car for us, it was the fuse box that had been incorrectly wired, however it is fine now, and the car will most likely have a new M.O.T. by the time you read this, indeed may even be back in active service! Thanks Jim*

*The other thing was the brake master cylinder situation, thanks for that John, but here my practical experience needs to be added to your technical expertise. You see, Reliant used both horizontal and vertical ones during the Rebel's production life, not only that, but the 750cc Rebels had a hydraulic clutch, and it used the same master cylinder - or was it the same, perhaps it had a different bore from the brake one! We always learn more about these cars as the years go by.*

*Anyway John, my thanks again for taking the time and trouble to keep us informed, and if you can manage the other technical story that we spoke of, it will be appreciated.*

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As a certain robotic individual used to say :-

**WARNING ! WARNING ! WARNING !**

Dear Brian,

22nd January 1999

**URGENT - Kitten Konflagrations**

Fires are not necessarily due only to faulty electrics! Please print this urgently!

On a recent holiday in Ireland we left my 19-year old daughter with my wife's Kitten for transport. Towards the end of the week we had an urgent 'phone call to say that it had caught fire under the bonnet, she had managed to put it out, the engine compartment "was a bit of a mess", but thankfully my daughter was O.K.

We were due home the next day, so, somewhat shaken, I looked for the electrical fault in the blackened engine compartment which I assumed was the cause. None was to be found. The fire had been centred around the heater inlet above the back of the engine. The large air duct had been destroyed along with the vacuum pipe and the choke and throttle cable sheathing. The petrol pipe was half burned through. The car has been prone to the occasional whiff of petrol after a run. Adding this small piece of evidence to the charred remains under the bonnet, the picture is now clear.

A few minutes after switching off the engine the residual under bonnet heat causes the petrol standing in the carb to expand. It seeps out of the top and drips onto the hot splash plate above the exhaust manifold where it vaporises. Without further prompting it will dissipate and offer no particular threat, leaving no evidence other than a passing smell.

However if, as my daughter had done, you restart the engine for another journey, engaging the starter motor just as the petrol / air mixture is critical will cause it to ignite explosively with potentially disastrous consequences.

With great presence of mind, but not realising the danger she was placing herself in, Jackie switched off, grabbed the spare half-gallon of water container from the back seat, opened the bonnet and dowsed the flames. I have told her never to do that again, and I shudder to think of the consequences if she had taken a few seconds longer, and the petrol pipe had been burned through.

I put in hand emergency repairs and mentioned the incident to Dennis from Michaels when I rang for some parts. He immediately related to me precisely the sequence of events, confirming that they had come across the problem, but only a few times over the years. The risk can be eliminated by replacing the float chamber top with one with a vent / overflow pipe. Or of course making sure you never restart a hot engine if there is the remotest whiff of petrol.

As if to emphasise the point even before I had had a chance to fit a vented top, I was sitting in the car waiting for my wife a few days later when I heard the splash and smelled the petrol as it vaporised !! Opening the bonnet revealed the seeping carb top and the pool of petrol beneath. This is obviously a real danger so beware!

Yours faithfully,

Jeremy Gibbins - Caernarfon

*Well, Jeremy, what can I say - glad that Jackie is O.K. - This, coming as it does on the heels of a similar letter in the last edition which resulted in the death of a Kitten ( must be a song or book title there somewhere ) But seriously, we can debate and ask questions like did your engine have the thick spacer gasket between the carb and the inlet manifold ? But it really doesn't matter at all ( more song titles, well words at any rate - sorry , it was originally 04:15 on the 25th of January when I typed this(it is now 18:45 on the 11th of March 1999) ( and the brain was obviously not in the right frame of mind ) This is clearly a danger, and one that we can do something about at minimal expense. So let's do it people - fit one of the later float chamber tops. They all have a breather pipe, not just a breather hole, the problem is that the original Kitten ones have it (the breather hole) hidden behind a tiny steel plate which hangs on the fuel inlet pipe, and covers the hole in the aluminium float chamber that is the overflow. The reason that it does not rattle all the time is because the fuel pipe is usually pressed hard against it, preventing any movement.*

*So, the answer is to fit the later type of top with two pipes, one for fuel in, the other for overflow fuel to escape, and if you put a pipe over it, you can easily direct it away to somewhere harmless - back into the fuel tank would be good, but that is a shade complicated - I think the later tricycles had a small container, rather like a second float chamber, mounted behind the front wing into which such fuel was directed, and just abandoned to evaporate harmlessly away in the fullness of time. Whatever fire prevention method you should chose to adopt, it has to be an improvement on the alloy drip tray which the original design used.*

Sadly I think this may prove to be a bit like insurance, and in particular agreed value insurance, in as much as I fear that we will all, well almost all, sitting in front of the fire reading this, think to ourselves, well, yes, he has got a point, but it is much too cold out there to do anything about it just now, I'll do it sometime, then it goes out of your mind - just like my good intentions of backing up the computer – till the car catches fire, and then you will think - Oh yes, Jeremy and Brian did say that I should have done something about that - what was it now ? ... And another Kitten gets cremated. So, lets start a serious campaign. Someone can find out what the Rover part number is for the float chamber lid we are talking about, or can Burlen fuel systems help here? You may want to change the cork gasket at the same time, though they often do come off intact. All this is of course assuming that you don't want to get your hands dirty simply liberating one from a scrap yard. Later Reliants, and so I should think almost any Mini, Maestro, M.G. or whatever from the period, will have what we are looking for. I will confess to not frequenting scrap yards these days, can anyone be more specific for us?

No I have not modified ours, as you will probably remember, we took the wee red car off the road last August, and it has been hibernating in view of the river Forth, at Bo'Ness near Edinburgh, and yes I did give that address on the SORN notice, and no, given the horrendous expense of keeping the Citroen on the road these past 4 months, between M.O.T. work and many other replacement parts being needed since then it has managed to prevent any work being done on the wee red car. Not that she is needing much to get her back into service, but after the budget, perhaps I will wait till June for the new cheaper road tax. I think you will be quite entitled to surrender your old tax disc at the end of May, and take out a new one on the first of June, so if you have recently bought a years tax for your Kitten, Rebel or Fox, that might save you a few pounds, and only have the car off the road for a few hours - be warned, you have to surrender the old disc no later than the last day of the month, I believe that posting it to them that day will suffice, providing it gets lifted that day, posting it on the first of the month is not good enough and they will deduct a months tax from your refund if it is not franked during the month it is being surrendered in.

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Dear Brian,

18/1/99

Just a note to wish you all the best for 1999.

Also you will be pleased to know that my Kitten project (heart transplant consisting of a Ford 1600 OHV and Automatic transmission) is still moving at a slow but steady pace, and fingers crossed my creation will live and breathe towards the end of the summer all being well. I'll keep you posted.

Steve Birkwood - Daventry

*Thank you Steve, and good luck, but I think you'll find the work on the car a lot easier if you uncross those fingers! Ed.*

Dear Brian,

26th December 1998

I thought it about time I spent a couple of minutes to add a letter to my renewal subs for this year.

As I have probably stated previously, my Kitten was bought back in July 1991, mainly to get me to work and to enable spares to be carried for my main passion, my '78 Scimitar SE6A GTE. When our local noggin Secretary suddenly passed away some 4½ years ago I was pressured into taking over the role, so this takes up much of my time. The Kitten however does enable me to restrict the mileage covered in the GTE and has provided extremely reliable and economical transport these past 7 years. I know that if it had been a Mini it would have passed to the scrap yard long ago. My daughter had two Minis in quick succession and they both fell apart very rapidly.

I don't see many 4 wheeled Reliants around here, though I have read that the Chester area is supposed to house large numbers of three wheelers. Pity there aren't more, then we would have more room on the roads. I am sure the days of the GTE are numbered, but it's my only real interest, I shall struggle on a bit longer, helped by the low cost of running the Kitty.

Shall finish now and stick this in the post, so happy motoring in 1999 and lets see what Reliant produce for us in the year ahead - just hope they keep going this time, though I am sure we all wish them the best of luck.

Best Regards

Bryan Sedgwick – Penyffordd

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*My most recent communication from Geoff Eldridge of R.S.S.O.C. fame, was in December, when he was kindly making me aware of his intention of resurrecting his Kitten Korner in Slice, their fine magazine. It concerned a couple of Kittens that Sam Stretton had a hand in making go a little more quickly than most. This was accomplished in both cases with the help of Kawasaki motorcycle engines and gearboxes. His first attempt involved the use of a 750cc air-cooled one, and the second attempt, a 1 litre water cooled version. Not that the first one did in fact overheat, but the thought was always there. Oh, by the way, John Box, listen up John, you were asking about 'A' registered Kittens the other week, well this is one of them A684 HEH, and it is one of those rather brisk ones. It is reported as having been built for Simon Bull of the BBC's Antiques Road Show fame, and so can presumably be seen around London from time to time, where I do not doubt it's turning circle will be put to good use owing to the absence of a reverse gear in the motorcycle gearbox.*

*Oh bother, that font slipped again! I must learn how to control this new software!!*

*The article was written by Rod Kerr for the August '98 edition of Motor sport and Leisure magazine whose reference to the Reliant engine's entrails going into orbit at 7,000 RPM indicate a true lack of understanding of the capabilities of a well balanced 850 Reliant power plant, someone else to write to in my spare time!*

I do however concede that 125 BHP in the place where 40 used to reside must make it go rather well. The quoted 0 - 60 time of 7 seconds sounds a bit slow, but the top speed of twice the legal limit sounds just about spot on - I just hope it is not shod on 145\*10 tyres, and lets be honest discs up front would be nice too.

## **R.O.C. FROG RALLY - 1999 11-12-13-14-15-16 the August Where? – HOLLAND**

A R.O.C. Rally in Holland, why? Because we had so much fun during the LeJog Rally in 1998! And because Holland used to be the biggest export market for Reliant Ltd. Between 1968 and 1995 thousands of Reliants were sold. There are still about 600 Reliants on the Road in Holland. 100 of those cars come together in the Dutch Reliant Club. One more reason, because the R.O.C. had a rally in Holland before, 31 years ago

Who will organise it? Thomas Touw, member of the R.O.C. Lancs branch, Dutch Reliant Club, RSSOC, Dutch Scimitar Club, Kitten Register and Bond Bug Club, and Paul Weltevereden member of the R.O.C. Lancs branch and Dutch Reliant Club.

Frog Rally, why that name? A famous expression in Holland is : Nederland Kikkerland, (Holland, Frog Country). It is a way to say Holland is full of water, bridges, tunnels, islands and other water related stuff. If you join this Rally we will guide you around some of the best places in Holland.

Why should you join us? Because you don't want to miss this and all your friends are going. If you like Reliants and Reliant owners, it is the place to be!

What will the costs be? The 5 day Frog Rally will cost about £150 per unit, from and returning to camp site at Utrecht. Fuel, camping, social events, regalia and boat trips included (you will need to add the cost of food and your trip to Utrecht and back home).

But I can't speak Dutch! All Dutch people have had English in school, they will understand you.

But they drive on the right hand side of the road! We will avoid busy traffic and motorways, driving on the right should cause no problem. What if my car breaks down?

There will be plenty of spares and know how available to repair your car, including complete engines and gearboxes. Don't worry, we will keep you rolling.

Can I bring my saab, Mercedes or Volvo? Sorry, Reliants only. If you want to join, but do not own a Reliant, we will try to get you a seat in one of the Reliants already going.

How much driving will there be? Because you will already have to travel to get to Holland, we chose a route with lots of attractions and stops, and only 100 to 150 miles a day driving. The distance covered in the 5 days of the Frog Rally will be about 600 miles.

We need to sleep! Camping sites are selected with plenty of room and good toilet / washing facilities. For those who would rather not sleep in a tent, cheap hotels or B & B can be arranged at extra cost.

Social Events? Every day there is a social event of great interest. We will drive through the centre of Amsterdam with police escort, we will visit one of the islands, the hand built replica of the VOC-ship Batavia and a lot more interesting locations.

Can we win anything? Prizes will be given to the longest distance travelled, the smartest car, the most sociable competitor and more.

Which Ferry / channel crossing? We are still working on a special price with one of the ferry companies. I'm sure we can get a good deal on that. We will keep you informed.

The Press. Various newspapers and television stations already showed interest in the rally. A car magazine will cover the rally.

Will people laugh at me? Reliant does not have the "Plastic Pig" image in Holland. You will get noticed though, and people will take pictures of you and your car, so don't be shy.

Who will be invited? R.O.C. Dutch Reliant Club, Reliant Club Germany, The Kitten Register, Rebel Register, Early Reliant Club and Bond Bug Club, Scimitars are also welcome.

When do I have to decide if I want to take part?

As soon as possible, that is easier for the organisation. We must have your entry form by 30th June at the latest. If you have not decided yet, but are interested, please do send in the form and state that you are interested.

More information:- By filling in the entry form, (Available by return of post if you would like one, just ask - Ed) we will put you on the Frog rally mailing list. We will keep you informed at all times.

#### Temporary Programme:

Wednesday 11th August 1999.

Get together at 19:00 hours at campsite in Odijk (Utrecht) 21:00 hours drivers meeting.

Thursday 12th August.

Odijk to Helloo, lunch in an old windmill and visit to Pampus island.

Friday 13th August.

Helloo to Texel, visit to the Zulderzee museum.

Saturday 14th August.

Texel to Arnhem, visit to the VOC-ship Batavia and famous nature reserve De Hoge Veluwe.

Sunday 15th August.

Arnhem to Enschede, big mystery tour and party tonight !

Monday 16th August

Enschede to Amsterdam where a police escort will guide us through the centre of the city ! return to Odijk camping.

## SALES & WANTS

For Sale :- 1975 Reliant Kitten Estate. No M.O.T. or Tax, just expired, runs well, new battery, £ 150 Tel :- 0191 290 2603, ask for Tony.

Wanted :- a Kitten, contact Denis Jackson of Hull on 01482 849200 if you have one for sale and are not a million miles away.

Wanted :- another Kitten, in good mechanical order, body condition immaterial. North of England or South Scotland preferred, contact George on 01946 813611.

For Sale :- The following second hand but serviceable parts for Kittens. Lower steering columns, Headlamps, rear lamps, Steering column, Steering wheel, indicator switch, Radiators, Windscreen - not laminated - Wiper motors, rear axle, front shock absorbers, assorted switches and instruments, most parts available, ring Dave Smith on 01525 404638

For Sale :- A red Kitten Van, complete with side windows and rear seat, is looking for a new home. Many new parts can be included in the deal if desired, including Kenlowe fan, steering rack, lower steering column handbrake cable, set of flexible brake hoses - too many new parts to mention. Offers to Brian on 0141 8866117.

For sale :- Rebel factory workshop manual, original in its blue plastic folder £15 delivered, contact Mr. Courtney of Bristol on 0117 9248682

For Sale :- Reliant Rebel saloon. Road tax exempt. Sound chassis, looking for a good home. Offers over £500 to John Johnstone on 0141 8815953.

For Sale :- Reliant Rebel estate, road tax exempt. 850cc engine Fitted with alternator, stainless steel exhaust, and many new parts. Fitted sun roof. £500. Contact John on 0421 355483.

For Insurance for your Reliant, contact Lyn of P. F. Spare on 01530 270574.

Don't forget our Mutual Aid Spares Scheme, send your forms with details of parts wanted or for sale, or for any patterns you require to Phil Hallam. Phil's address can be found inside the front cover. If you don't have a form ask for one, give Brian a ring on 0141 8866117.

A Brand New, never been on the road Rebel saloon chassis may be available (price in the three to four hundred range I think) Talk to Phil if you are interested 01294 462089

There are a couple of derelict Foxes in the North of England, and I can't remember either where they are, or who told me about them. If whoever it was has not done anything about them, perhaps he would be so good as to remind me of the details, thank you. Ed.

The lack of interest in Fox stainless window frames, only three people have expressed an interest so far, means that it is unlikely that it will be viable to go ahead with this project, talk to me if you are interested please - Brian.

## NOTES

One of the problems I face is trying to remember where everyone else is in terms of which articles you have seen. This gets to be a really confusing situation when I get too far ahead of myself, well, too far ahead of you! I first started this edition of the Mewsletter not long after you received the Christmas edition, so, when people talk to me about a particular story in the current magazine, I have to realise that they are in fact probably talking about two editions ago from the one I am currently working on! Confused? Well, why should you be any different from me. Yes I realise that if I got the magazine stories to coincide with the front cover pictures that would be a big help, but it isn't a perfect world.

Adrian Hanwell was one of many people who included a note with his renewal notice, and in case I have not said so elsewhere, my thanks to those of you who renewed their subscriptions promptly - if I am as ruthless as I intend being, the 'others' won't get to read this until they do renew!

Anyway, as I was saying, or more to the point as Adrian was saying, he thinks it might be a Ford Anglia steering rack that the Kitten uses, perhaps with shorter track rods, I must pursue this line of enquiry - Oh, wait up, Jim Spence has just bought a MK 1 Escort rack, and is convinced, apart from the position of the mounting brackets, that it is the same, however he is planning using it to convert his Rebel to rack and pinion, so the ease of converting it to fit the Kitten will not be known. The shop only charged a £5.00 surcharge for the absence of an old unit, and the total bill was something like £42.00. But, who said never to start a sentence with a preposition anyway? I don't suppose that there are many places that do reconditioned racks for either MK 1 Escorts or Anglias these days (even fewer that would let you away with just a £5.00 surcharge on the old unit!).

Andrew Norman left a message on my machine yesterday, asking about recommended insurance companies, now I know we have talked about this in the past, and that it is an on-going situation, but Andrew's case is special because his Kitten is a van, and his sole transport, and he uses it for business use, so if anyone reading this can recommend a broker or company who offer a good deal we'd be interested in hearing from you. Update on that, the Guild of Master craftsmen, of whom Andrew is a member, were able to point him in the right direction. Not many of us however I would imagine belong to that fine body, so the matter is still open.

Still on the insurance front, Carole Nash, well known in the motorcycle insurance field, have written to me pointing out that they now also specialise in Classic Car insurance. Their freefone number is 0800 298 5544, Andy Cameron is the man to speak to, the only drawback seems to be that their definition of a classic car is anything more than 25 years old, so it looks like a Rebel thing, but if they are paying for the call and enough of us Kitten folk ask questions, who knows....

Back to the subject of the Register, and in particular the magazine. Enquiries continue at a level which both surprises and delights me, about 1 a week I guess. Why only half of them choose to subscribe I don't know, well, actually it is not that bad, but some folk take over a year to join after enquiring! I know that because I got one of the £8.00 forms back last month !! I again ran out of some back issues in February, both for sending to new subscribers, and also to those who enquire about the Register. I decided to simply delay my replies till supplies became available, but that took longer than I had anticipated, and I ended up with quite a backlog. I really find that if I do not deal with the mail the day it arrives, then things get buried, and the result is a confusing nightmare. The problem is that even when I try to plan ahead, as for example in the case of Reliant's new address and telephone numbers, I had asked well in advance, too well in advance because the information was not then available, and by the time you did finally get to see it, the information was two months out of date, my thanks to those who let me know, though as you will have realised I was well aware of the situation, simply not able to react to it in time.

Moving on, I am still, and I suspect will be for the rest of this year, trying to recover from the 'Great crash of '99', and every day I realise someone else with whom I have probably now lost touch because the P.C. was not backed up properly. The 10,000 words that I had written, about half of the tale of my Lands End to John O'Groats run last year has been lost, and I do not know if I can remember all the details now. People like Andy Argyll of Berkley Cars - oh it is all too much! Enough of my frustrations, have a happy Easter, talk to you again in the summer, till then keep well,.



