

# *Reliant Kitten Register*



**MEWSLETTER Thirty-One**

**November/December 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.....

Edited and distributed by Brian W Marshall, 16 Glendee Gardens,  
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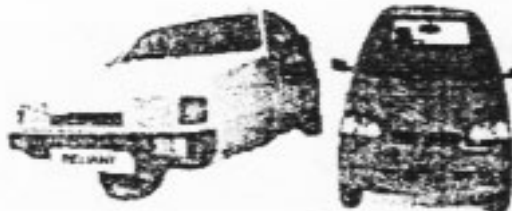
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# The Reliant Kitten Register

***MEWSLETTER No. 31***

The following individuals have kindly agreed to give and receive information on the following topics on our behalf :

**Rebel alternative parts** contact Brian

**Kitten alternative parts** contact Brian

**Mutual Aid Spares scheme** contact Brian

**Mewsletter pictures** contact Brian

We have a vacancy for a Fox parts information co-ordinator, contact the Registrar if you are interested in filling this position.

Our Christmas 1999 front cover is graced by Andrew Hudson's Jimp. I know that we have featured a Jimp on our cover in the past, but not for a while, and not in the new magazine format.

We have only a few Jimps in the Register, and I believe that about 120 may have been built in Sandbach in Cheshire by Peter Kukla between 1981 and 1984. Alas the company folded due to funding difficulties. The Jimp was a John Crosthwaite design.

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Welcome to our bumper Christmas edition (it's easy saying that just now – the end of September, and this is only two pages long so far!) but I have great expectations, and thanks to John Bowcott a good bit of well set out technical stuff, normally I would thank the individual concerned at this point, but sadly in this instance it is John's widow Margaret who I have to offer our condolences to, and thank her for agreeing to let me use John's wiring article. John died on the 13th of October just a week after an operation which was thought to have been routine. Margaret our thoughts are with you at this time of year.

That's the sad news, the bad news is of course that subscriptions are due soon, please take the time to return the enclosed renewal notice along with your cheque so that we can enjoy another year of this ... Ah, the elusive adjective rears its head again, well whatever, you choose to call it.....

You will be well aware of my attitude to most things I read in the press, but I thought they missed a golden opportunity recently when the Mars space probe disappeared when on the other side of the planet, out of sight. They spin us a yarn about the metric and Imperial incompatibilities of different scientists, when the headline they failed to use was the one which would have told us that the Martians are not ready to be discovered, and so they cunningly waited till we couldn't see what was going on, and shot it down! I really am amazed not to have seen an appropriate headline, someone is not paying attention to the opportunities that we from time to time get presented with. But there we are.

Closer to home, and at the risk of being accused of digressing even more than usual, I really feel that I ought to mention a couple of things that have been preying on my mind for a while now. They have lots to do with Kittens, but nothing at all to do with our Reliants!

The first Kitten that I am aware of is the Dart Kitten, a small single seater aircraft of which 4 were built in about 1937. (Which in aircraft terms must make them about as rare as ours!) A German designer was responsible, he was not a great fan of Adolf Hitler, moved to England a few years before the war, and became involved with glider manufacture near Dunstable I think. As far as I am aware Alan Hartfield is the man who most recently, if not currently, owned the only surviving example. No.2. My information is that nos. 1 & 3 were crashed a long time ago, and No. 4 was damaged in a hanger fire in Australia in about 1993. These interesting little aircraft were powered by a flat twin engine, no, not a Jowett, though I did think that would have been a real co-incidence given my interest, but a JAP (J.A. Prestwich if memory serves) which I think was an American design manufactured under licence over here ! If any of you are aeronautical, or have access to information on aircraft registration number, G-AEXT is I think the one in question.

Still on aircraft registration numbers G-ETDC (remembered because it used to stand for Top Dead Centre when I was a lad) was a Cessna which we had a close look at as it came in to land at Plockton (where the series Hamish Macbeth was based) last week (13/10/99).

Back to the Dart Kitten for a moment - They had a wingspan of about 30' and the 35 H.P. engine could make it go slightly faster than one of ours, well about the same speed as Moira's actually!

Enough rambling, oh no it isn't, there was a model car, (a kitten) and somewhere I have a copy of the article from the 1950's magazine which featured it which Donald Jack, thank you Donald, gave me a loan of. I think I gave it (the original magazine) back a year or so ago Donald, but have never used the article. By now it will be filed "somewhere safe", so you will probably all be spared the gory details of that little wooden model kitten car!

Then again there is this atomic kitten that I see advertised on television these days – what is that all about?

Andrew Hudson of Birchington in Kent tells me that his wife is not speaking to me because I keep advertising Reliants in her neck of the woods, and Andrew has yet to learn the NO word. Quite what her

problem is I really do not understand as the collection saves her from cutting the grass, or having to open the garage doors to put her car in ( because the garage is full of Reliants as well as the garden ) so all in all I think she has a great life.

Moira, my beloved, was quick to point out that during the eighties and early nineties I liberated quite a lot of Reliants from 'Englandshire', and it is only recently that a few are being re-patriated, so she has little sympathy either !

On a completely different note, it was good to see Reliant so well represented at the Scottish Motor Show last week, and particularly good to see Stewart Halstead and Doug Jeffery there on the stand, keep up the good work.

I even got to meet Jackie Stewart while I was there, getting out of an Aston Martin no less (and I thought he was into Jaguars these days as well!)

## **REBEL ROUND UP**

Robert Fairfoull's Rebel saloon has to be the most visually improved Rebel known to me in the latter part of 1999, as the result of its recent respray, unless Paul Cox has completed the rebuild on the ex-John Blagburn's GUS,. Update on that, Paul has converted the Rebel to disc front brakes as part of his improvement programme, and had the respray in blue done, a picture if you can, would be great Paul.

Bruce Emery deserves a mention on the Rebel front as he won the driving competition at the Micro car rally at Hengrave Hall back in September in what we used to affectionately refer to as the moss encrusted hut, well done Bruce, but the moss will never grow back if you keep washing and polishing it !

Jim Spence was just on the telephone this afternoon. November the 5th will in future be remembered for a different reason than failed parliamentary explosive attempts (or disastrous fires Mike) What we will remember in future on this day is that Jim's Rebel came back into service. I got this wrong the last time, it is an 1800cc fuel injected Vauxhall engine and gearbox (not 2 litre as I had said in the past) that now powers his wee Rebel saloon, which is also all very nicely resprayed, well done Jim. I am sure that I mentioned them on the telephone at the time Jim, but a couple of photographs would be great if you get the time. Oops, I have now seen Jim's car, and it is in fact the most improved one, as it used to be a lot scruffier than either Robert's or Paul's ones !

It is really good to see such a relatively large number of Rebels receiving such care and attention these days, almost motivates me to organise some progress with my one remaining Rebel estate car, well, why not, I need a millennium project do I not?

Adam Grieve, who has recently acquired one of Richard Plaxton's Rebel saloons, tells me that he hopes to have it in active service next year after a body off job, so while their values may still have some way to go to become in any way realistic, at least some of them are being well looked after.

Michael Ertl, who sadly died earlier this year, was one of those individuals who was always too busy doing things in life to take the time to subscribe to clubs. He converted a Kitten to electric power many years ago, and has owned 15 Rebels over the decades – even more than me, just! His collection of a lot of spare parts are available. They are in East Sussex. It always saddens me when I learn about such interesting individuals when it is too late to meet them, but such is life. My thanks to Bill Dick for taking care of that situation for us.

Then this letter arrived :-

Dear Brian,

6th October 1999

At the last R.S.S.O.C. Berkshire Noggin at The Swan, Three Mile Cross near Reading, one of the members, a Brian Owen, handed me a copy of one of your Mewsletters. I had previously voiced a desire to own a Rebel again. Therefore the purpose of this letter is to ask you to forward me details of your Register / organisation.

Over a goodly number of years I have run quite a few Reliant vehicles. Commencing, when fed up getting freezing cold on a motorcycle with :-

1 – 1957 Mark 3 three wheeler with 750cc side valve plodder of an engine, but at least it was dry! Bought for £45, sold after two years for £100, probably worth a fortune now as the registration number was 34 KEV.

2 – 1966 Regal, the height of luxury after the Mk 3. Acquired as a non-runner as the petrol tank was holy(!) and the big ends were shot – no problem for a double jointed masochist !

3 – My pride and joy – a brand new 1973 Rebel estate PSD 944M, Sahara Red with a 750cc engine. I was too impatient to wait for the 850cc version to appear. At the same time my father was swooning over the advertising blurb for the purple pearl Robin which was about to make an appearance – there's no accounting for taste! *(I couldn't possibly comment about that John, because I think that was the colour that Princess Anne's Robin was!)*

4 – New higher paid job, bought a second hand SE5a, MMO 4L. Magnificent machine. Unfortunately it had to go when my third child appeared on the scene. Five into a SE5a simple doesn't compute! Very much regretted now, owing to the Historic (previously 25 year) rule.

I'll skip the next few years as I was driving tin Euroboxes with no character or soul, and still haven't.

5 – Having always regretted selling the SE5a and now having a bit of breathing space I bought a 1982 SE6b, TPN 328X. This needed restoring, which has taken a couple of years. In the meantime I acquired a 1985 1600cc SS1. This is a fun machine, especially when the sun shines and the hood can be lowered – yes it does sometimes!

I haven't mentioned the Reliant vehicles my wife has driven over a period of time, including a couple of Regals as well as a 1974 Rebel Saloon, HRE 459F and a Rebel van GEP 747N. I jokingly (I think) tell my wife I ultimately want a complete set of Reliants. Therefore – 6, A Rebel – hence this letter to you.

I have a desire to obtain a Rebel, preferably an estate, and it would be nice to have an 850cc engine. They appear to be few and far between and are seldom advertised in the local papers or Exchange and Mart. I would be grateful if you would send me details of your register and any relevant information on membership etc. I enclose a SAE.

Yours sincerely – John Unwin - Reading

*Well, as you might imagine I wrote straight back to John, and then typed his letter in here before filing it. Thanks John for the history lesson, I hope that we can find you a suitable vehicle before too long. Oddly enough I was in Hook Norton just last week, (November) just along the road from Reading, but sadly had no spare time in hand to call on you. Ed..*



# FOXES DEN

*I meant to say that I was most impressed with the seat mounting brackets that Simon Chisholm has made up to let him use Subaru Justy reclining seats in his Fox. The Subaru seat mountings are 1" shorter, 1" narrower and 1" different each side in height from the Fox ones, so the brackets are fairly complicated! I spent a couple of hours sheltering from the rain at Doune, listening to the Belgian Grand Prix in his drivers seat, and most comfortable it was too. I don't suppose you have any drawings of the brackets do you Simon?*

*One thing this, my longest, stay in a Fox did bring home to me, and that is how much wider they are than a Kitten! The Fox uses the same dashboard as the Kitten (and Robin come to that) but in the Fox it is a good inch or so short at both sides. I had never realised that before!!*

~~~~~

## **Words of Wisdom from Stable Cottage**

Dear Brian,

25th October 1999

A few thoughts on unleaded heads. The unleaded head was introduced in 1990 at engine number 9L/85/87143. The experimental engines were run continuously at maximum revs during the test program. No four wheel chassis were fitted with unleaded heads other than 1 Tempest, which had the head replaced prior to delivery, and the last four Fox chassis built by Beans and fitted with Vantique bodies.

The face to face dimension of the 9.5:1 unleaded head is 66mm. As a rule of thumb, for every 1mm you take off this dimension, the compression ratio rises by 0.5:1 and the thicker gasket should be used. The 'Yellow Top' 10.5:1 heads should only be re-used if they have NOT been machined.

The Fox suspension tie rod *You mean Strut, (or track control arm even) don't you John?* was modified due to a number of failures on Asquith vans, doubtless aggravated by the artillery type wheels they used. The modified struts can be over tightened, and the castle nut should only be tightened up until the split pin can just be fitted.

Regards John (Box)

*Thanks John for giving us some insight to these matters. It does raise the question in my mind at least as to the real story behind Tom Wardley's unleaded engine – oh, jings, now I'll have to look through the back numbers to find its number, hang on an hour or two .....There we are OK/95/B00001R – Thanks Tom ( we read it from the crankcase on my visit last week ! and yes it really does seem to be 95, not 85 !! ) Anyway, this was sold to Tom's father John, by Reliant, and at that time was claimed to be the first remanufactured unleaded engine to come from the factory*

*Oh, do remind me to tell you all about Wroth Silver sometime when we have an odd page to fill. Ed*

~~~~~



## READERS LETTERS

Dear Brian,

24th September 1999

I write with response to details published in Practical Classics magazine with regards to the Reliant Kitten Register.

Last week I purchased a 1976 Reliant Kitten Estate, registration number OOL 498R for the princely sum of £130.00. The car came with 9 months M.O.T. and can best be described as being in fair condition for its age. I believe it to have covered around 111,000 miles and mechanically it sounds a little tired although still running ok albeit with a little blue smoke! The bodywork and chassis are in good condition if you ignore the faded paintwork and the slightly askew passenger door hinge. The car came with a boot-load of spare parts. An interesting point to note is that I bought it from an address in Tamworth, Staffordshire near to where the car was originally made.

Having driven the car for over a week, I have found it to be an entertaining vehicle to drive to say the least, with go-kart style handling and an unbelievably tight turning circle. I consequentially have decided to keep it with a view to carrying out some work to improve its condition. I would therefore be grateful if you could send to my address details of the Reliant Kitten Register so that I may join as soon as possible. I would also be interested in any information you may have on tuning the Reliant engine.

If you require any further information, please contact me as soon as possible. I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Yours sincerely Craig Schofield - Tipton, West Midlands

~~~~~

Dear Brian,

24/10/99

The time is seven fifteen, the day damp, cold and windy. Imagine if you would, that this letter is being written by my specially trained team of pigeons, their claws trained in a unique way which enables them to operate a keyboard – slowly. Unfortunately while this would be a wonderful idea, I decided instead to adopt the honest approach: I have spent the major part of the week slaving under a cold Kitten. The fitting of the replacement clutch could be delayed no longer, and it seemed like a good idea to scrub all the flakey old paint off the chassis while KMF 268P was up on the stands, ramps, railway sleepers and whatever else stayed still long enough to be captured for use as a car supporting device. (Apologies to next door neighbours – I was sure that you would not miss the transmission jack – sorry workmate!)

I had the chance to rescue a “scruffy but sound” Kitten estate from a council lock-up down in Redcar (that’s Teeside for those who were wondering) last week. The car needed some work, but was mine for the taking. Unfortunately, though not untypically, I neglected to make the necessary arrangements when the car’s owner was on the phone, and when I called back to make arrangements, I was unable to get an answer. Eventually, one week on, having been trying the number every day, several times, I got through, the phone had been faulty, and, you guessed it, the car had been taken to a scrapyards in Middlesbrough during the intervening week. C’est la vie.

Today (Sunday) Kitten and self were at Ryhope Engines Museum near Sunderland for the ‘End of season’ gathering of the Sunderland and District Classic Vehicle Society. The rain kept the public away, but the turn out of exhibitors was very impressive even if it is impossible nowadays to find a car of the fifties or sixties that has not appeared in “Heartbeat”! One exhibit in particular would interest those of us with a Kitten fascination: 1930’s Austin 10 light commercial with a Reliant 850cc engine and matching gearbox! The owner of this oddball has been issued with a Kitten Register Flyer – think about it – if the Liege is

eligible, then why not this unique device?) If anyone is worried, let me put your mind at rest – the conversion was a “nuts and bolts” job, and the correct bits can be re-instated at any time)

I had hoped to have a rest now that the maintenance programme on KMF is up to date, but there's this Kitten saloon in Sunderland wanting some suspension related repair work, the Martin Blunn's very original Kitten will have to be re-homed as he no longer has the time to enjoy it. Nor does he have the time to sell the car, so enquiries to me please if you have around £ 400 to spend on a meticulously maintained low mileage torque Kitten DL saloon with the original alloy wheels. The car has been carefully stored for a few years (*I seem to remember it being at Doune a few years ago – Ed*) so if you want it with an M.O.T. that could be arranged for a reasonable sum.

Further to my offer (Mewsletter 30) of advice / technical support for the Kitten Reg. folk over the phone, I have spoken to quite a few of you, so if I have forgotten to get back to anyone, please ring me on 0191 2570053 or ring or send a text message on 07747 614830.

So that's it for now – except to say to Paul Cox that you were quite correct, I had indeed kept the U/J's – I've found them since looking again after Brian told me that I still had them!

Bye for now – John P. Blagburn - North Shields

### **It's Alive, and worth it!**

Dear Brian,

8/11/99

Thought I'd write and let you know that PAP passed her MOT thankfully, she only needed front anti roll bar bushes doing. So I now have a year ahead of me with her. Great feeling isn't it? Also thanks to HUNTERS MOBILE TUNING from Gillingham, she runs great now.

I did have a lot of trouble over the last couple of months, with her keeping breaking down on me. The last time I ended up walking five miles to work in fury after leaving her broken down a few minutes away from home; it was too early in the morning for buses. Anyway my boyfriend's father came out to me yet again and we towed the sorry sod home. Dead battery this time, as well as bad running before I exhausted the battery trying to start her. Well, yet again it turned out that the points had closed up again! But why?! Out of frustration I phoned my local Reliant dealers, and spoke to Ken. We discovered that there was a flat washer missing from under the spring washer on the contact breaker points, yes, I thought, now she'll be O.K. Well yes she ran better after we renewed the parts, condenser, coil, battery (the old one had had it) distributor cap, rotor arm, H.T. leads, the lot was renewed. I'd got so upset and distrustful of this little orange demon I offered her free to Keygates, but Ken talked me out of it, bless him, not all garages are as honest and helpful as Keygates, that's for sure! Anyway, Dave (my boyfriend's father) spent hours trying to figure out what was wrong, and I wished I'd kept my faithful old Rialto! He did his best bless him, no fun in this cold weather I know! So of course I daren't ask Dave any more favours, I know he gave me the car for nothing in the first place, but it wasn't really his problem in all fairness. I wasn't happy with the Kitten, she still didn't want to start very easily, and when she did start she had no go in her at all, really lifeless! To be honest I thought it was that blasted lead replacement petrol's fault, Dave had checked the timing, it couldn't be that! And I couldn't afford to go to a garage, and didn't want to throw much more money at the car, she struggled up hills, I was surprised actually that the milk float didn't overtake! Well, in the end I decided I really did want to keep this car, and I wasn't giving up yet, so I phoned Hunters Mobile Tuning, and he assured me it wasn't the LRP, he owns an old Land Rover and that runs fine on it, and he said he'd tune up the Kitten for £35, so I said O.K. He came out last Friday morning, he found the petrol mixture was far too weak, (we never touched that I hasten to add). The choke wasn't going fully off, the timing was a bit out, the distributor cap was faulty (it was new darn it!) The poor Kitten wasn't set up properly at all, but he worked miracles. Now she starts easily, ticks over happily, and bombs up hills, he also said he couldn't believe how good the engine is, really good condition and claims our Kittens are worth

a lot more than we realise – *believe me Julie, some of us do know just what they are worth, the problem is getting people to pay that much for them! Ed.* He told me there is a demand for them in Birmingham (from whom I forgot to ask) So please you Kitten owners out there, they are worth spending a bit on after all. So I now have a 23 year old Kitten who runs / drives like new, and looks pretty neat too, GOSH!! To think I nearly gave her away! Well, my thanks to Ken & Burney at Keygates for not letting me give up on her. By the way she does run quite happily on L.R.P. Hope the valve seats don't come to any harm! I'd better close now before this turns in to a book. From a very happy Kitten owner

Julie A. Bevan - Chatham

*Thank you Julie for keeping us informed. I am well aware of the – not unreasonable – assumption that we all make that because a part is new, it must be in good working order, sadly it is no guarantee! While I am interrupting the proceedings anyway, you mentioned LRP – Lead Replacement Petrol – I really can't recommend its use to anybody. Sadly, as you will see on the pumps, there is no BS for it, the fact is that the great powers that be could not bang the heads of the petrol companies together firmly enough, and, as a result, they almost all use different chemical solutions to the problem. Which effectively means that you must not mix one oil companies product with another. Much safer, and cheaper, to use unleaded, and if you feel strongly about it, use one of the F.B.H.,V.C. approved additives we mentioned earlier in the year.*

Dear Brian,

19/11/99

Thanks for a great set of newsletters from the Register, long may it continue. I thought you might be interested in my Kitten experiences.

In 1996, I acquired a green 1976 Kitten Saloon from Mike Webster in the New Forest with an indicated 67,000 miles on the clock. I bought it on impulse because I like small simple cars with rear drive and leaf spring suspension. There certainly aren't many of those anymore. The final deciders were that it was fibre glass and that there should still be spares because Reliant are still trading. Apparently it had been regularly used until 1994 and then just parked up.

At one point I was going to turn it into a 1930's style roadster, but common sense and my (ex) girlfriend persuaded me otherwise. I put it on the lawn.

It took me two years of occasional work in the garden to do the following :-

Drilled holes in floor to let the water out! All the rubbers were cracked/perished so I was growing fungus and things were living in the two inch deep pools on the floors!

Got a new small battery.

Ran up the engine only to find that it was well down on power . This was due to swapped number two and three plug leads. Changed the leads and got a new distributor cap anyway.

Decoked the head and fitted new hoses.

Replaced all the braking system except one front slave cylinder, and used copper pipes (I had bad trouble with this – it would not give me a firm pedal. In the end a completely new master cylinder from an MBG cured it).

Removed and painted the fuel tank (later I had to redo this and clear paint from the sender mount to earth the sender and make it work).

Tipped the car on its side and cleaned/painted/waxoiled the chassis (luckily the chassis seems good). While on its side, replaced the worn track rod ends and leaking rack gaiters.

Back upright and replaced the worn steering column bushes. Noticed some play in the steering universal joints once I had loosened them off (they were seized!).

After last Christmas, a change of neighbour allowed me to park various cars outside and now I could use my single garage for long periods again. I moved the Kitten into the garage. This let me get it back on the road. In the end this is what I did (never again!?!):

The engine always stalled when the clutch pedal was pushed down. I decided to investigate and change the clutch. A hell of a job because Reliant did not fit a cover plate to access the gearbox prop flange from inside the cabin. I had to split the prop shaft at the splined joint and forgot to mark the alignment.

I couldn't get a separate release bearing and friction plate so had to stump up a lot of money for a full kit.

When doing the clutch job I discovered that the top two large bellhousing studs at engine block were stripped. Refitted the gearbox anyway. I reasoned that the backplate was sturdy enough to hold it all together until or if I can get a new engine.

I had to get a new alternator, the old one suddenly stopped working. Luckily an exchange one was cheap (under £20 all in!).

I had to fit new ex Fiat 126 headlight assemblies as the old sealed beam units were failing and unobtainable.

I had to replace the column stalk and windscreen washer bracket (originals missing).

I had to fit new rear light clusters (very lucky here as I went to the big auto-jumble at the National Motor Museum across the Solent and found a pair for £5.00).

I snapped off one of the anti-roll bar fittings when removing it for sump clearance so I left it off (there is already enough understeer due to the positive camber on the front wheels so its not missed – body roll is not a problem and I get a supple ride now).

The worst job was replacing the windscreen rubbers. Did this and also from the auto-jumble, fitted special shaped rubbers for the rear screen. I managed to get a spare working heated rear screen here on the Isle of Wight.

The drivers door lock and window mechanism failed due to wear/corrosion. I managed to get second-hand ones from a Reliant enthusiast in Southsea.

Another Kitten owner on the Island sold me his original alloys and I fitted those and very smart they are (pity they show up the scuffed and faded bodywork AND they are a pig to keep in balance). The radiator top hose stub had cracked but the tubes were clear, so I had the stub repaired. The guy said that this was a common failure because the top hose puts stress into the radiator when the engine vibrates on its mounts.

I cut away/dumped all rotted carpet and parcel shelf bits, laid down rubber matting and patched a hole in the headlining. Then I tried to remove the mould and dirt from the seats. A collapsed drivers seat was stuffed with foam offcuts and the seats were fit for service.

AND FINALLY! I put it through its first MOT for five years which it passed after the headlights were adjusted and the emission reduced. They advised me about the excessive brake pedal travel (cured by adjustment) and the worn steering universals (cured by new lower steering column from Dennis at Michaels of Selby).

Was it all worth it? Without a doubt YES! Every trip is enjoyable. I like the way it handles and drives, and the fact that it is handy in traffic and for parking. It's not sanitized like modern cars, and you feel much more involved and road aware when driving it. It's so easy to steer on the throttle.

On the down side, it's very noisy with bad vibration at 40 MPH, and one thing I can't get used to is the non linear throttle response which opens suddenly then gradually as the pedal is pushed down. Also the brake and clutch pedals sit lower than the throttle so its dangerously easy to press on the throttle instead of the brake. Maybe these faults are only on my car. It's a devil of a job to manage without stalling until it's warned up as well, but all in all, I think it's great fun!

Yours sincerely, Colin Banister - Newport, Isle of Wight

*Thank you Colin for keeping us up to date. You will note that I did not interrupt, but there are a few comments / observations I would make. The first of which is do you have Mike Webster's address? I have communicated with him in the past, but his is one of the addresses that I lost in my great computer failure back in February. - If my memory serves me correctly, Mick is the man behind the WMC Bug! As far as the 1930's roadster, well of course if that is your real wish, then go and find yourslef a Tempest! (I think John Box is needing some space, and the moulds and Jig are for sale at this time!)*

*On the brake master cylinder front, I know that we have spoken about this before, but as ever my memory is failing me, was the reason for the MGB one just on a cost basis, or were you actually unable to get one from Reliant?*

*The engine stalling on load, from the thrust on the crankshaft on depressing the clutch. I have long suspected that this is an indication of poor lo rev torque, and my theory for what it's worth, is that that is often down to bad alignment of the ports in the head, with those on the manifolds. A breathing problem in other words. Not that I would want you to go rushing to take that head off again, but then again it should come off easily, having been off so recently ( of course you can take the manifolds off without removing the head, but if you need to be removing material from the head, that is best done with the head off) The question here is of course, did you have the manifolds off, and did you check them for alignment when you did the head job?*

*Clutch removal, with the engine in place, well, lets be specific here, gearbox removal, really does separate the men from the boys, not to say those with the right tools, from us amateurs ! I have done that job twice on a Kitten, once in 1980, and again last year (1998) I have also watched others do it in a tenth of the time it took me! My own brother can disconnect the front of the propshaft, indeed the back as well and have the whole thing on the floor in under half an hour!! So it can be done (and this without cutting an access hole in the tunnel!)*

*You mention a lot of money for a clutch, even Reliant have reduced their prices for these in recent years, because I guess they had to come closer into line with market forces, but the 3 piece unit should be about £60, so if anyone reading this is about to do one, talk to me if you can't get one for somewhere in that region. You obviously have the alternator supply under control from that point of view. I think it is still the Lucas LRA 100 that we need here.*

*On the headlight situation, and again my thoughts may be out of date, but I thought that Reliant could supply them ex-stock, albeit at a price. Likewise the rear light clusters.*

*As far as I am aware the anti roll bar fittings are still available, and I have some here if you decide to re-fit it. Reliant increased the diameter of the antiroll bar early on in the Kitten's production, and I am sure that it does serve a useful purpose —perhaps the roads and speeds on the Isle of Wight are not like those around here! (The Rebel does not have an anti roll bar at all, though the Stanpart lower wishbones it uses have a bracket for mounting one as standard!)*

*I have never thought that the Kitten suffered from understeer, quite the opposite in fact! makes me wonder if all is well with yours – any comments people?*

*On the windscreen rubber front, I can happily say that I have never done one of them, but know of various folk who have, a definitive article might be useful, any volunteers ?*

*Yes they are wonderful wee cars to drive, great fun, and the noise might be lower with carpets rather than the rubber mats, though I well understand your reason for fitting the mats. Kitten noise levels, this is a bit like engine performance and characteristics – some are very different from others. The wee red car is as quiet at 70, except if the wind is in whatever direction it needs to be to pull the top of the passengers door out just enough to make a loud whistle, but in normal conditions it is as quiet as our Citroen BX. i.e., you can hold a conversation at 70 without having to raise your voice. With others I have owned you have to shout above 55 or 60 to be heard. (and yes ours has a straight through stainless exhaust fitted!)*

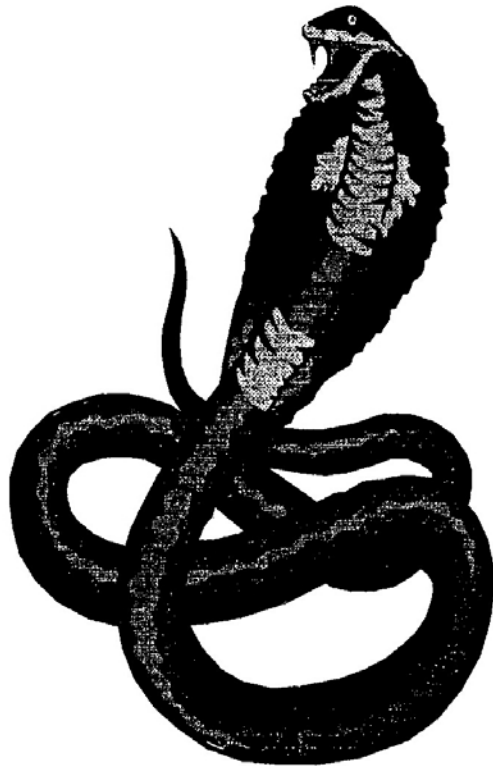
*The throttle action, ah yes, come on you technical people, lets be hearing from you. I know a number of you have rectified this quaint design feature of the Kitten – I even had an engineering friend of mine do an adaptation last year, but when I went to fit it, it did not work! (must talk to John Rowley about that some time!) though in fairness all he got was a spare carb, and linkage to modify, and I could see what he was thinking, but I couldn't understand why it did not work – something to do with the need to pull back rather than up perhaps? I can't really remember*

*The stalling thing is very frustrating, I know we have touched on this in the past, those who have experienced the situation will sympathise, and the rest of you will be wondering what on earth we are talking about, lucky you ! It could of course be timing, or carburation, or a combination of these, or as mentioned earlier this breathing thing whether it be in or out, or both! The fact is they are not all like that, and should not be like that.*

*Right, I've wittered on quite long enough, thank you Colin, please keep us informed of progress.*

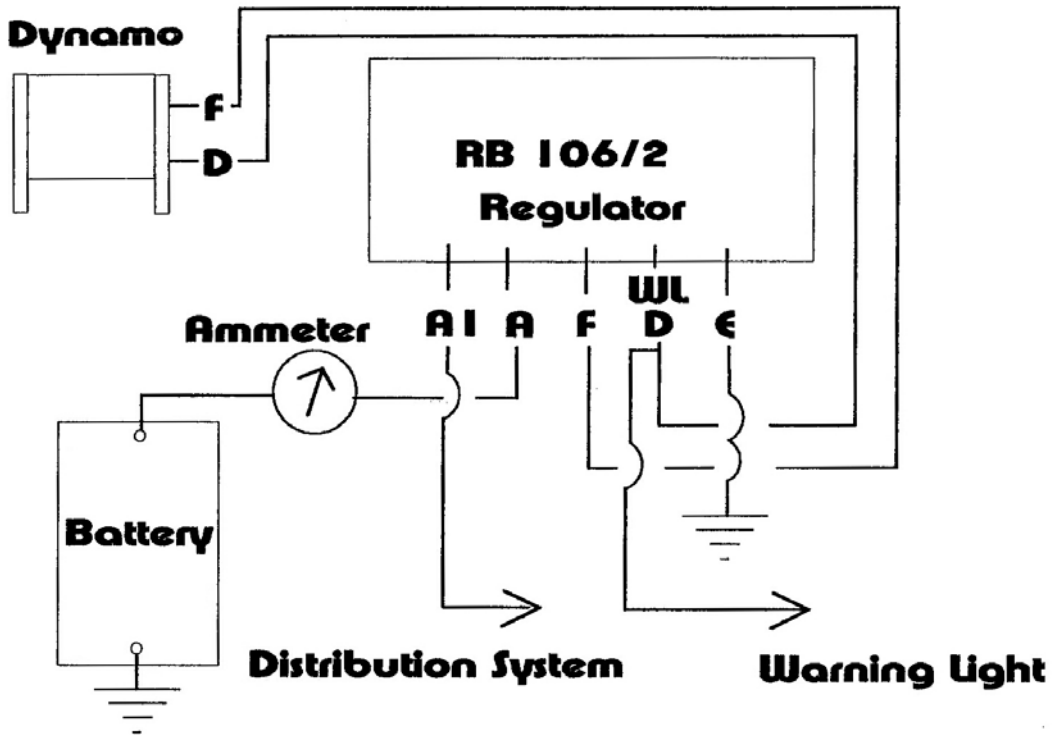
As you will no doubt remember, in the last edition I included the text of an electrical story from John Bowcott, but ran out of space for his excellent drawings. Well, I have decided to include them in this bumper Christmas edition. For once I am particularly poorly organised as regards getting articles, well all articles, I have managed reasonably well in most cases, but right now I want to be at the bottom of this page, and, as you can see, I am quite a bit out. The fact is that life is very busy at the moment, and I really want to get this to the printers this afternoon (I had hoped to be at this this stage 10 days ago, but John told me the covers would be later than hoped, and I had assumed they would not arrive till Friday, but they arrived an hour ago – Thursday 9th Dec.) So I will need to get a move on if you are going to get this before Christmas. Tomorrow does not count as I will be out all day, and so it has to be today or next week!!!

# Snake Charming

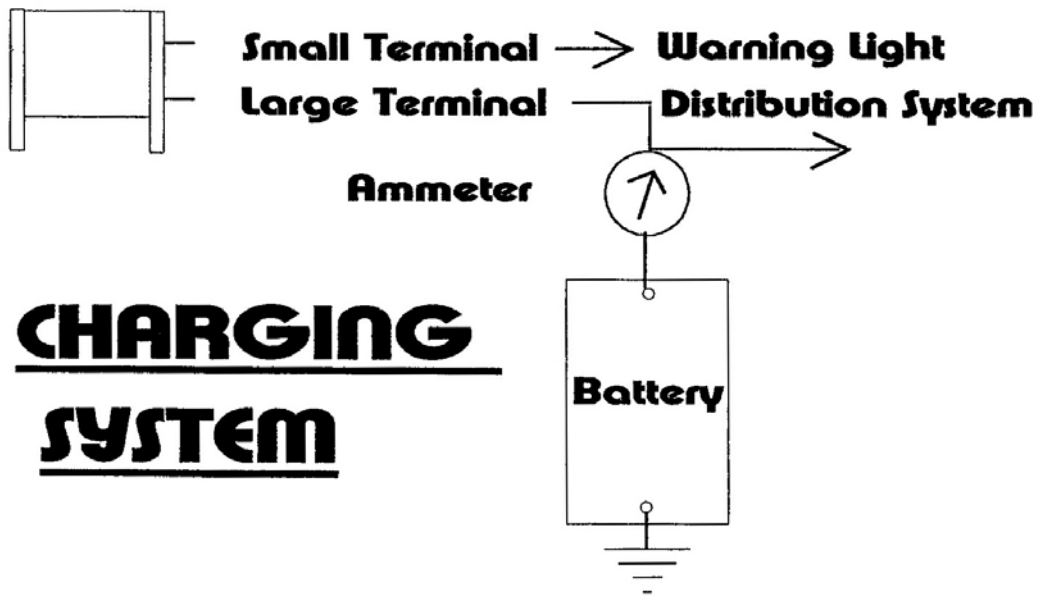


or  
How not to get your  
wires crossed



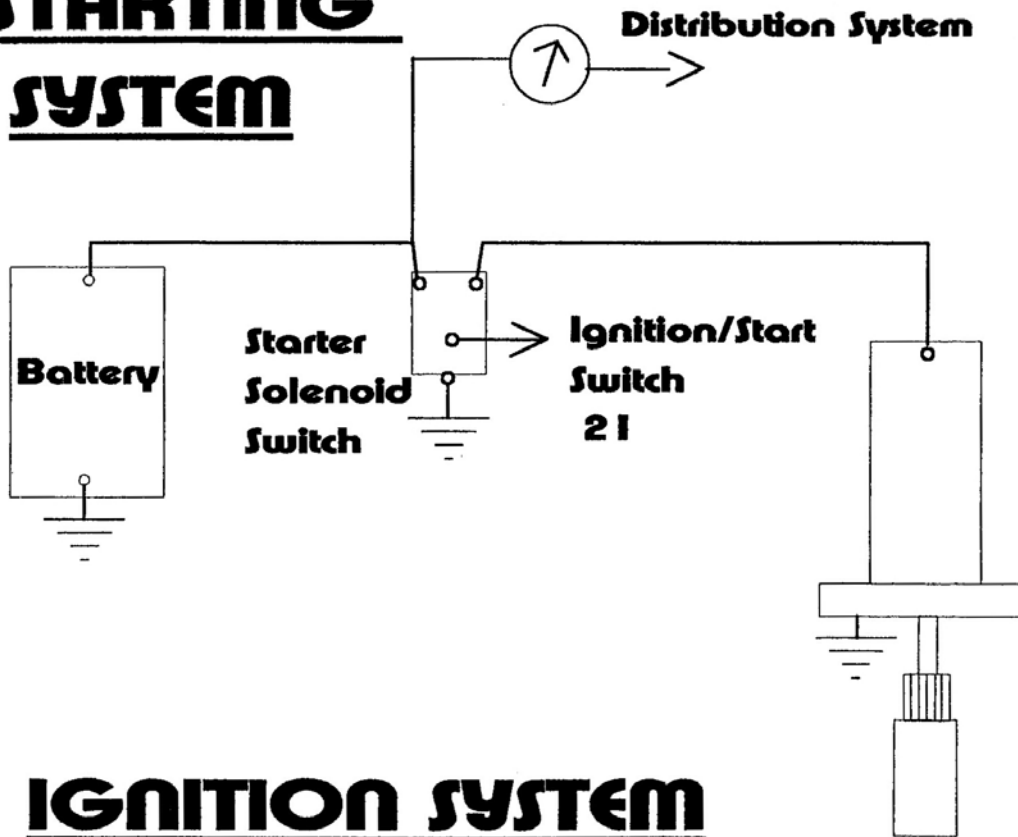


**Alternator**

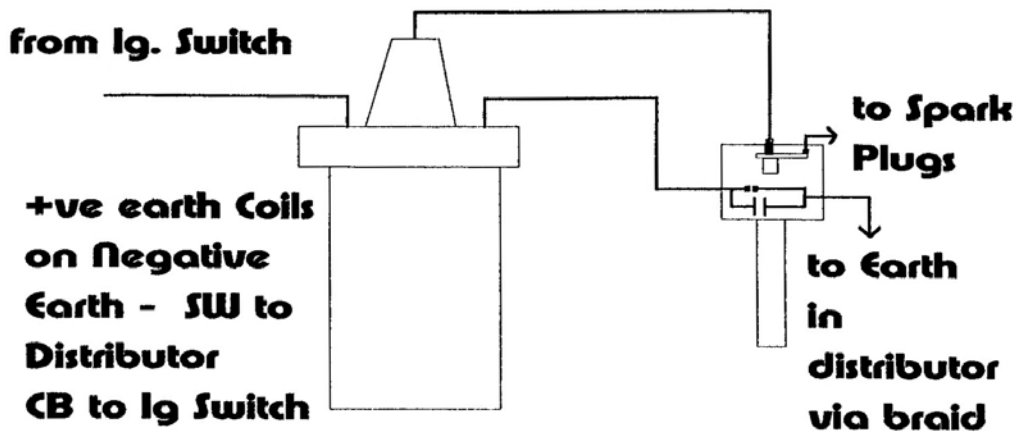


**CHARGING**  
**SYSTEM**

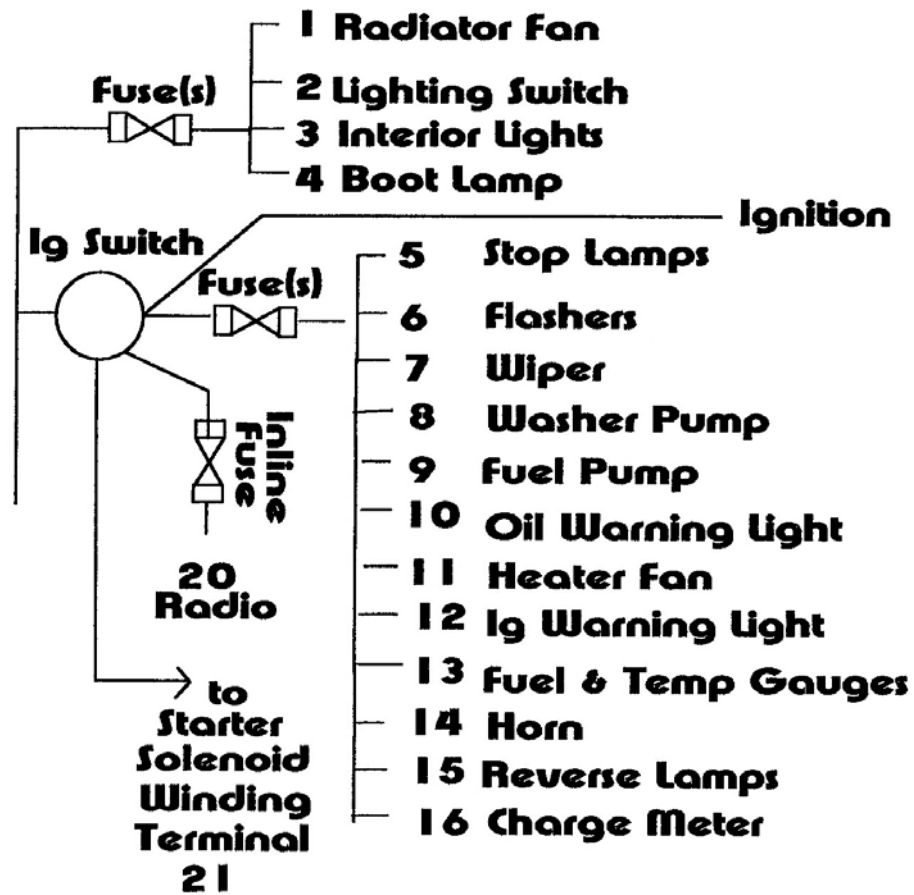
# STARTING SYSTEM



# IGNITION SYSTEM

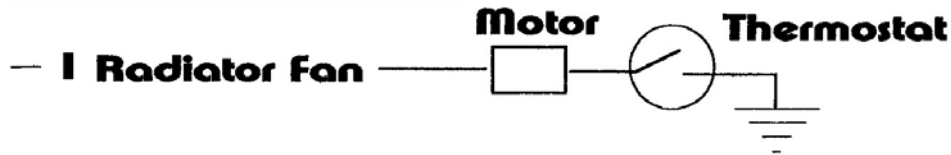


# ELECTRICAL DISTRIBUTION SYSTEM

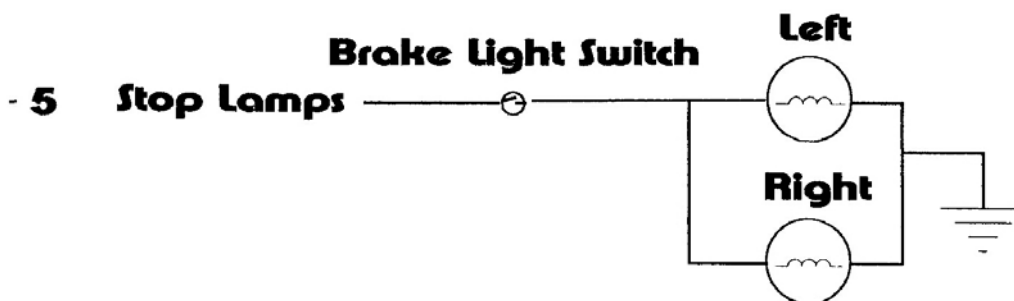
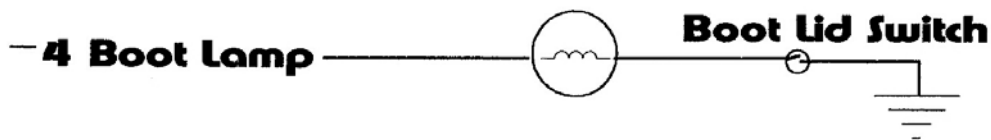
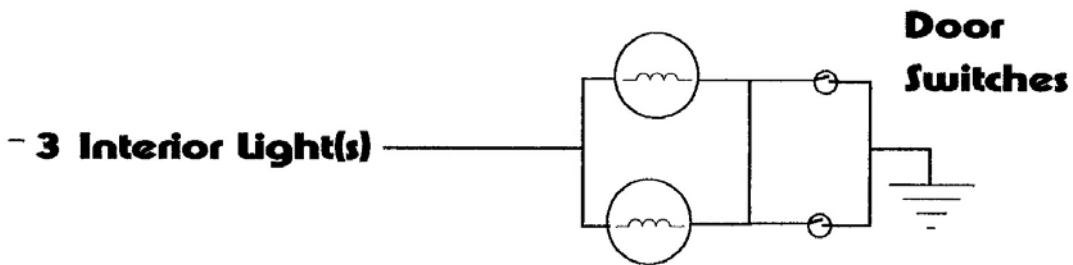


# INDIVIDUAL CIRCUIT

## DETAILS I

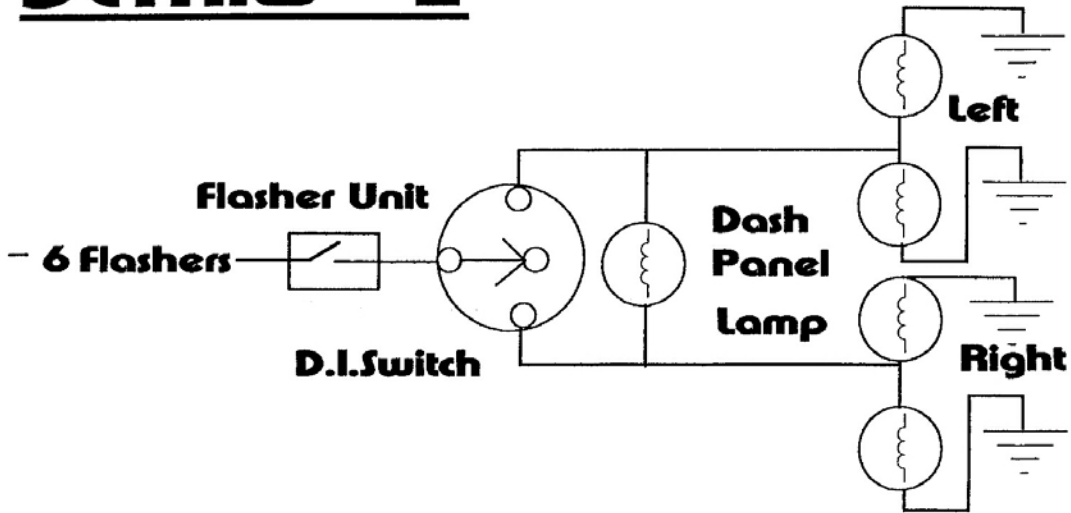


- 2 Lighting Switch —→ See Lighting Page

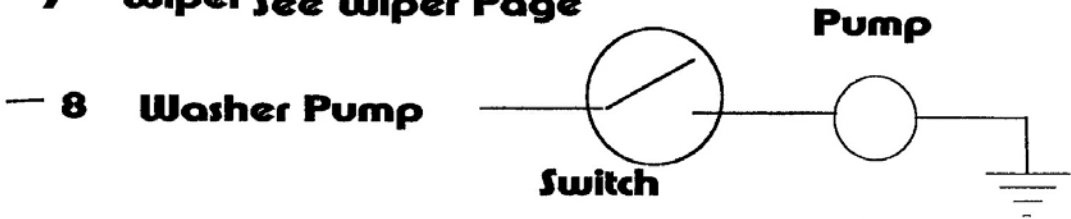


# INDIVIDUAL CIRCUIT

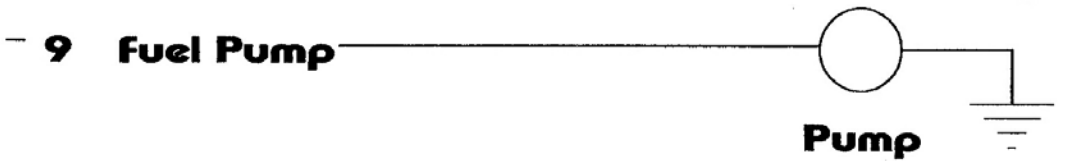
## DETAILS 2



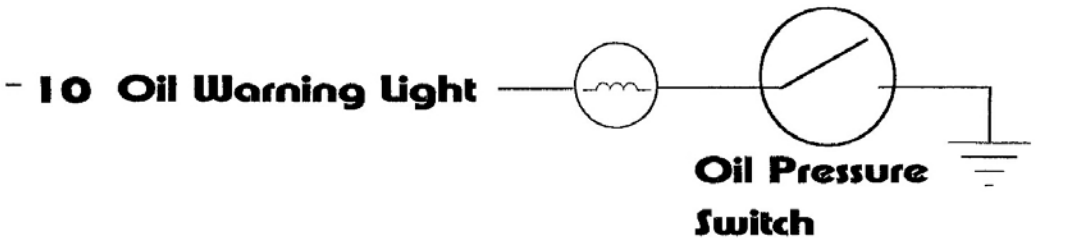
- 7 Wiper See Wiper Page



- 9 Fuel Pump

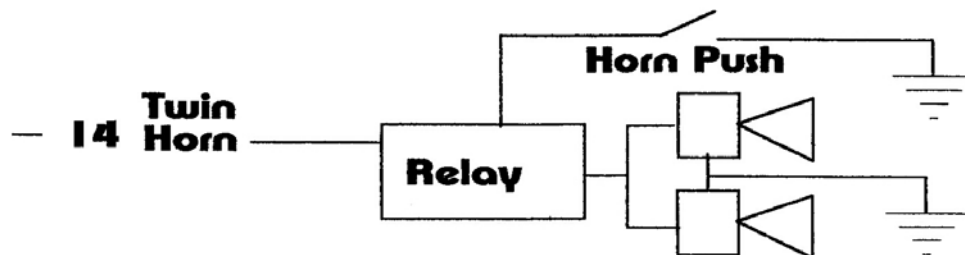
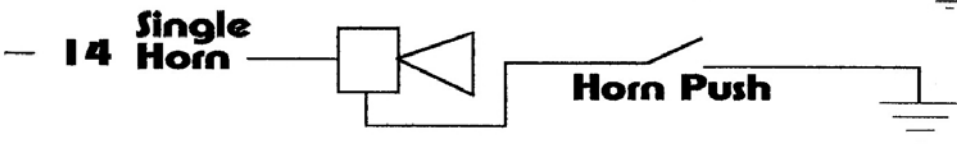
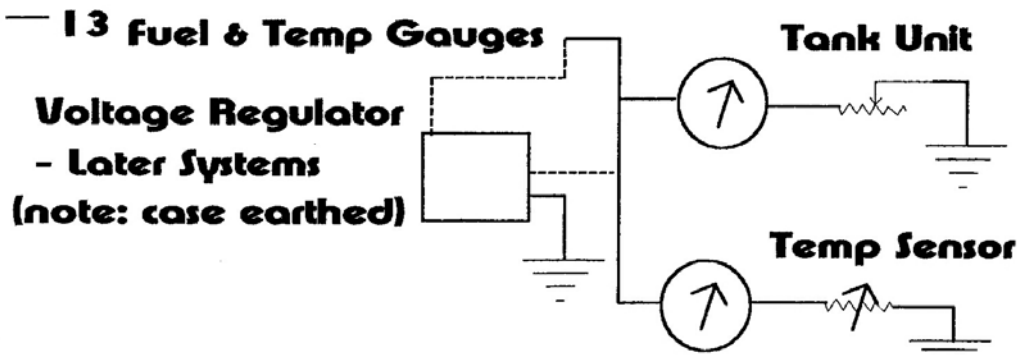
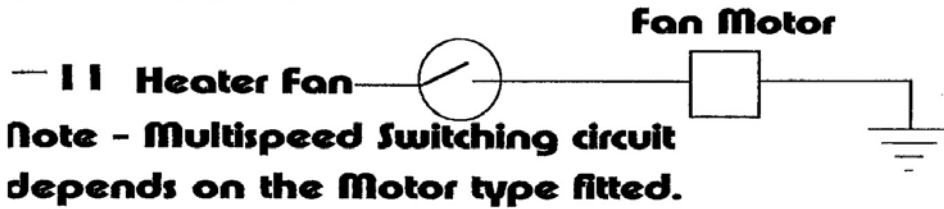


- 10 Oil Warning Light



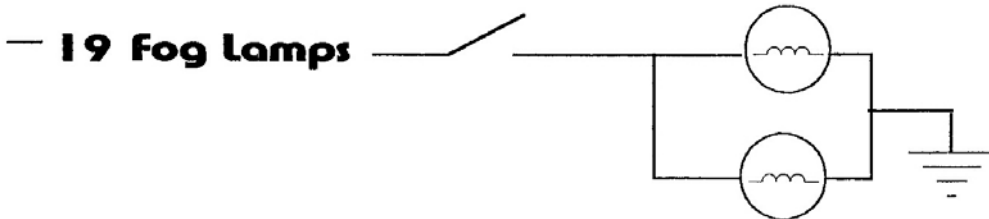
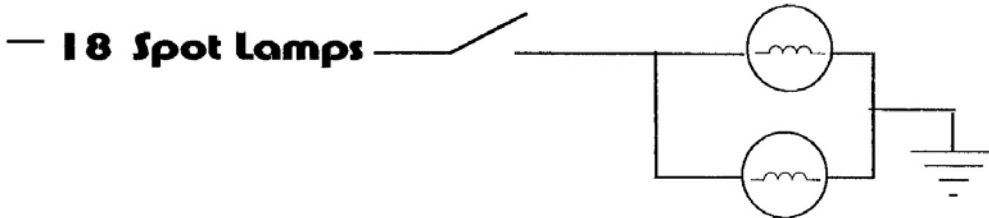
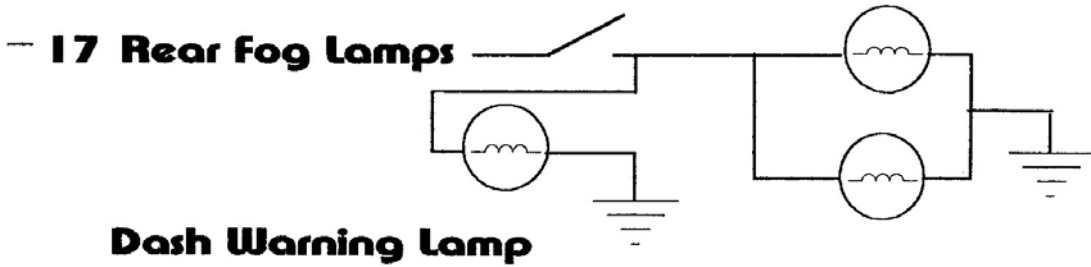
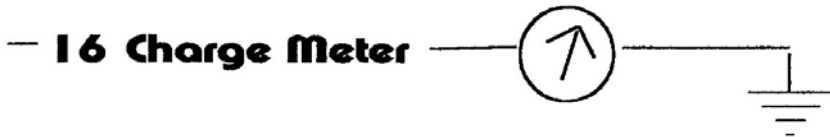
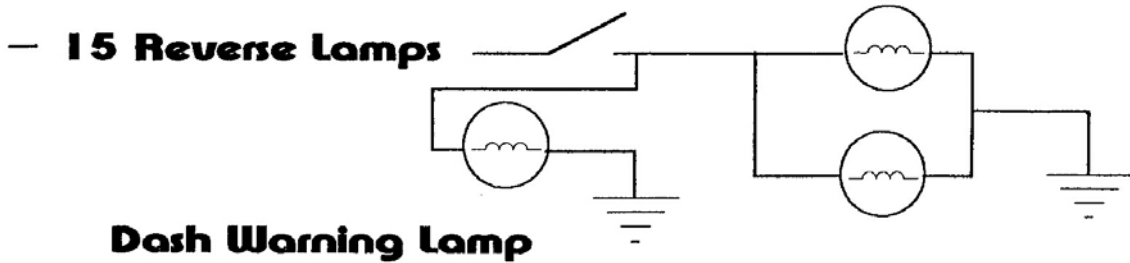
# INDIVIDUAL CIRCUIT

## DETAILS 3



# INDIVIDUAL CIRCUIT

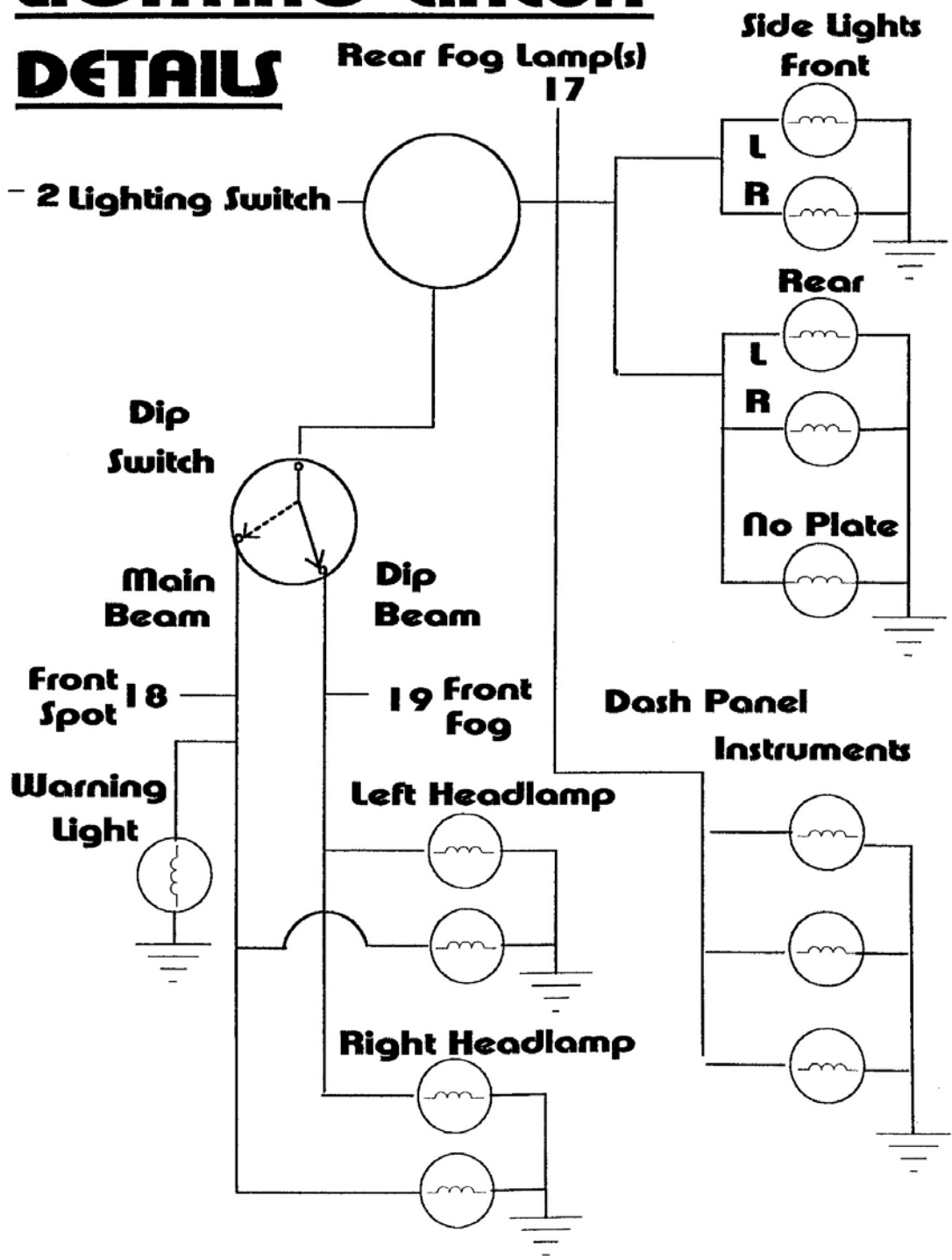
## DETAILS 4





# LIGHTING CIRCUIT

## DETAILS



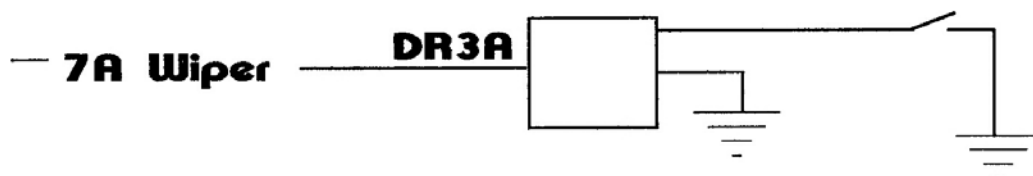
# **WIPER MOTORS**

**The early vehicles were fitted with DR3A wipers - these had wound field motors.**

**Later vehicles used the 14Wiper - a permanent magnet unit which was much more efficient and powerful.**

**The DR3A had a shunt field and each time it was switched OFF the field provided dynamic braking so that the motor stopped quickly and gave precise arm and blade positioning on the screen.**

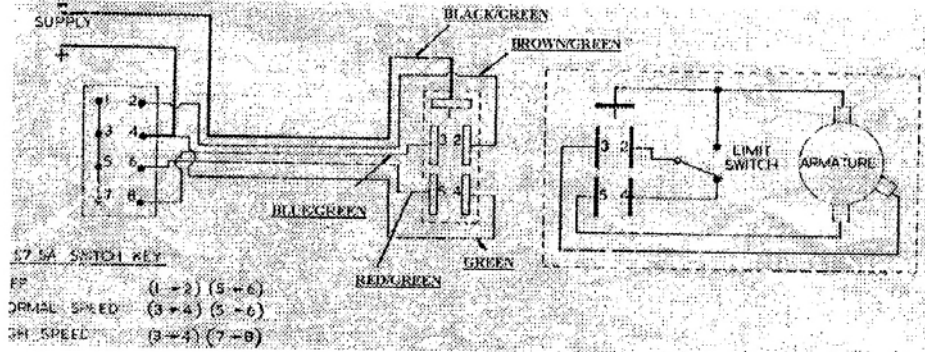
**The 14W would freewheel when switched OFF so a means of shorting out the armature was needed to achieve precise parking.**



## **- 7B Wiper**

**There was a single speed version of the 14W Wiper - it is identical to the 2 speed version except that it did not have a third brush and the harness did not include the BLUE/GREEN Wire, It was used on the Regals and Rebels and superceeded the DR3A before the 2 speed came in.**

## W WIPER CIRCUIT INCLUDING SWITCH DETAILS



Note:- Part of the drawing is missing.

O(OFF)  
N(NORMAL SPEED)  
HI(HI SPEED)

Note also that the motor is not earthed and that the supply polarity must be as shown regardless of whether the system is Positive or Negative Earth.

If you trace the circuit you will see that the limit (Parking Switch) provides a Positive supply to the brushes to enable the wiper to continue to its parking position when the wiper is switched off using the dash panel (57SA) switch and, when that has been achieved, it shorts the brushes to provide the dynamic braking and instant stopping of the armature.

## GETTING MORE TECHNICAL

These front suspension struts are causing me – well, there must be an adjective, if I think of a suitable one I'll put it in before this goes to print! The lower wishbones are in fact as much a problem at the moment. They can be even more difficult to remove than the 'strut'. Indeed my recent comments about the Kitten ones not being handed caused me much frustration, not to say worry and confusion the other week. One of our new subscribers, welcome aboard Janice, had her Kitten fail the annual test on a seized upper ball joint, and a corroded and split lower wishbone. John Blagburn was able to inspect the car, which has had the same owner, and been serviced and M.O.T.'d by the same garage for the past 11 years.

The seized upper ball joint suggests to me that the garage servicing the car has never put a grease gun near it, which is a pretty poor show. Worse yet that they told her the car was scrap as parts were not available! Fortunately someone, I think from the Newcastle branch of the R.O.C. gave her my number, indeed he telephoned me as well, and my apologies for being unable to remember who it was and give credit where it is due. The potential difficulty in changing the upper ball joint prompted John to ask if I had an upper wishbone with a good or new ball joint, as changing the whole thing is a lot quicker and easier than trying to change the ball joint alone. So, quite by chance I had acquired a front chassis section with a set of 4 new ball joints recently, and set about dismantling the bits with Kenny Lamont's help. I really can't crouch or bend down for more than a few minutes at a time these days, and after two 15 minute stints with a break in between when Kenny did his best, I decided additional help was needed, and after a quick 'phone call to Phil Hallam, Kenny and I loaded the lump of chassis (having by this time managed to remove one drum / hub assembly,) into the back of the wee red car. Off to Phil's, by way of Mike Black, to whom I delegated the task of reproducing the sketch for Alan Osborn's article (of a strut as it happens!) and Phil in his usual efficient manner had the whole lot stripped bare in an hour – wishbones, including removing the bushes from the lower ones, anti roll bar, struts and steering rack, flexible brake hoses, new with brass ends – pity one of them had been done up cross threaded! Copper brake pipes with brass ends. Oh it's so sad when a project like that gets abandoned, but at least we salvaged the useful bits from this one. (Must take the drums off and see if there are new shoes in there!)

Anyway, the thing was the lower wishbones. After saying that they were not handed, (in the last edition I think) I realised that the mounting for the anti roll bar is at the top, and at an angle, and that the two mounting holes for the lower ball joint are also offset towards the top of the arm, I suddenly thought, oh blast, they are handed after all – but of course they are not, though it took me an hour or so to realise that if you simply turn it round, and not over, then it is the same. So I was right after all, the part is the same on both sides, it is just not symmetrical, and so has to be fitted the right way up!

I had really thought that I was going to have to apologise for misleading everyone, and then eventually realised that I had been right after all – reminded me of that story of the guys on which ever of those small islands near the Falklands (South Georgia perhaps?) at the start of the conflict who fired I think it was an anti tank missile at the small Argentinian boat that was attacking them, and the shell fell short – much dismay, moments later became elation when it exploded against the hull of the boat below the water line – well in my case the realisation that I was right after all took an hour or so, and a chat with Kenny, Phil and John before the truth finally sank in. Kitten lower wishbones are not handed! (Just as I said before!) But! Fox ones are, well, the later Fox ones at any rate. (owing to the reinforcing plate which is spot welded to the leading top and bottom flange where the strut attaches to it).

### Cylinder Heads.....

Well, engines actually, but cylinder heads in particular. I was talking to Tom Wardley yesterday, and he believes that we do face a hidden threat from unleaded fuel ! He has been told that it can adversely affect the bottom end of the engine, as well as being a potential risk to the top end ! It did dawn on me that part of the conversion to unleaded process usually involves facing the head, a procedure which

removes material from the face. This is done to ensure that the head is flat, smooth, and generally in a tidy condition for re-assembly. The amount of material removed is normally minimal, somewhere between about 10 and 20 thou as those of us who remember feet and inches would say, or about a quarter to a half of a millimetre to you metric lot. I do not know how much any given refurbishing company might remove, ( it probably depends on the condition of the head ) nor do I know if perhaps they are well informed and actually make the head a specific thickness rather than remove a specific amount. What we do know thanks to John Box, is the thickness of a head in relation to the engine's compression ratio. It is the very fact that we will have increased the compression ratio that I immediately thought of as putting more strain on the bottom end of the engine, and hence, in the case of an already worn engine, may hasten its demise. However this was not Tom's main concern. His fear is that, owing to the more volatile nature of unleaded fuel, ( compared to leaded ) the engine is at risk from the burning of any oil that might creep past the rings, and the oil, because of the nature of the unleaded fuel, may itself ignite and eventually cause the exhaust valves to burn out.

Now all of this will be proved in time, but, as I have said before, I have been running Moira's wee red car on unleaded for more than 6 months by the time you read this, and I know of others who have been running on it for several years, both with and without using additives, and I have yet to hear of any problems. So while there may be trouble ahead – forget all about moonlight and romance for the moment - yes I know, I slipped that song title in neatly what! We have nothing to fear in the short term (unless your engine is on its last legs anyway!)

Now, as I was saying, heads – are you sitting comfortably? Good, then I shall begin. Once upon a time there was a man who lived in Tamworth, O.K., we'll skip the history lesson, pity really, I was looking forward to that, but you hear quite enough from me as it is. John Box, let's be putting the blame – sorry John, credit, firmly where it belongs. I was admiring the last Vantique yesterday (12/11/99) and I even managed to find the will power to politely refuse the invitation to have a wee test drive, tempting though it was, I had the strangest feeling that if I drove it, I would have to have it, and there is no budget for a change of vehicle in the Marshall household for several years, so why tease myself I thought? but thanks for the offer John. Anyway, we got to talking about heads, the knowledge that John keeps in his would be of great interest to a wider audience – I have not forgotten about that biographic idea yet John! But the relevant story is, that for many years, decades actually, Reliant cylinder heads were produced by Birmal, (The Birmingham Aluminum Company) who thoughtfully cast their name into the head – and made them till Beans took over in 1990/91. They had them made by Barton, and all of the Barton heads were unleaded (as were a few of the very late Birmal ones) their name was also cast into each and every one, but the unfortunate thing is that, while their heads will all run happily on unleaded fuel, they were the worst for having the ports match the manifolds. The inlet ports we are talking about here, and unfortunately this fault was inherited by the current head manufacturer (who does not cast any identifying name on his heads – is this progress again?) There is probably a more detailed story about the whys, wherefores and solutions to that aspect of things as well, but that will have to wait for another day. It is easy to spot the problem, if it has not been corrected, simply by removing the manifolds, and offering a manifold to head gasket to the ported side of the head, and it will be pretty obvious if all is not as it should be – a job for a rotary file, but you do have to take great care not to get any swarf inside the engine. A job best done with the head off methinks! I would be wanting to check the exhausts while I was in there, which used to be the greater problem in Kitten production times, though I am in fact talking about the manifold casting now, rather than the head casting.

With so many Reliant engines being used to power many machines other than cars, it is important to check the compression ratio, see John Box's words of wisdom earlier in this edition as regards head thickness and its relationship to compression ratios.

We thought it important to record the head history at some point, and here seemed as good a place as any.

Dear Brian,

10th Oct. '99

## TRACK CONTROL ARMS

Strut 24800; Having got the T-shirt, twice on this failure, here is what I find. The strut / track control arm whatever, fails at the front, just behind the number plate. The channel breaks away from the steel tube that holds the rubber bush ( both broke here ) *Oddly enough I have just examined a Kitten chassis for one of our subscribers, and its driver's side one has just started to crack there too ! Ed* This is a typical weak design fault (100,000 miles sees it off) failure, so no amount of preventative maintenance will do any good. Obviously early 'in time' inspection would be helpful. At the same time the 5/16" hole in the other end goes very oval, rust sets in the tube gets loose, etc., all in all naf. Get a good strut and or repair the old one as follows. Remove old bush. Weld a plate that squares the strut at the bush end, and weld to the end of the bush tube.

Secondly enlarge the 5/16" / 8mm hole to 3/8" / 9.5mm and weld inside the strut a suitable spacer. This allows you to drill out the holes in the bottom wishbone to take a 3/8" bolt. (gets round the oval hole problem!) How does this all work in practice - ? Dunno – my modded ones are still in the old spares rack! – ho hum.

Want to know where the chassis rot? While we are on about rusty bits. Where the side members rise up to go over the rear axle. Just needs a small plate, easy access. The square box that holds the top of the front suspension spring/damper unit. The brackets that hold the steering rack on.(right beneath the radiator!) The anti roll cage in the body just behind the driver/passenger, this is about an inch square tube that bolts to the chassis (if you are lucky) they rot away just above this bolt on point, you don't find it until you take the body off! Ho Hum.

Duncan B. Radiator without an overflow bottle-disgraceful so easy to do. If you really can't get it done properly here's what I done on my Robin. Between the radiator and the body was enough space to squash in an old washing up liquid (I like these gs!) bottle, then run a piece of washer type thin plastic pipe from the radiator overflow pipe right to the bottom of the bottle. Radiator gets hot, throws out water into bottle. When radiator cools again it has to suck on the overflow pipe, if that is below water level it must get its water back! It's only a partial answer but done while you brew a cup of T.

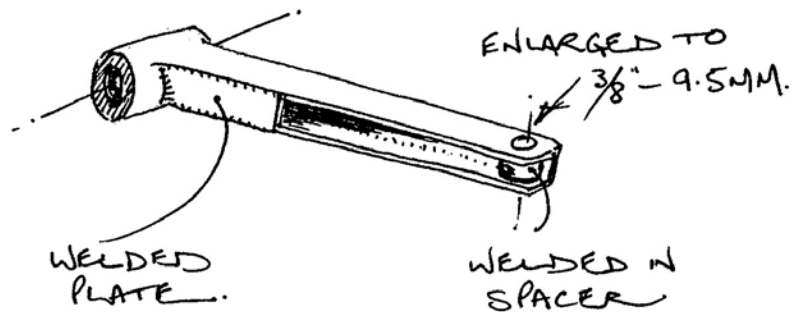
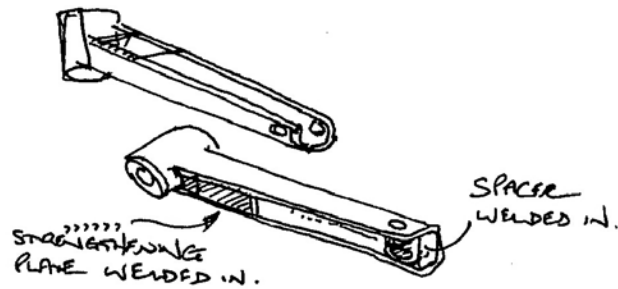
Unleaded- valve seats etc. What a load of overrated.....I know of one engine run on unleaded for nearly 90,000 miles- no we don't know what its like inside it's still going ! It has a slightly fancy camshaft balanced bottom end and fancy ignition, electric fan. Doesn't hang around and up to 60 mpg! On a recent head gasket job on mine, the thick gasket is the Rialto one (standard cam). I found the valves were in more trouble than the seats. The engine was going fine this was just a "While it's off we will..." (I was using 4 star) The exhaust valves had a groove burnt into them by the seats. All valves the same, and the valves needed much more grinding in than the head seats,(done separate on the lathe!) I am told that this can be considered quite normal but it seemed rather deep to me. Anyone any clues? Talking of valves I've seen just one set of "peeny on a stick" valves in a Reliant head. These are the ones to have. Part number 23273EC(on the valve) Any clues?

What was the engine number that they started the unleaded?

I will go now I've asked so many damn questions(more qs!)

Yours Alan. (Osborn)

*Right Alan, to take your last point first, as you will have read elsewhere in this edition, the first unleaded head on a reconditioned engine was OK/95/B00001R and the first production unleaded head was 9L/85/87143*



The following information was kindly provided by Keith Gittus who has been running his Fox on the ball joints mentioned for quite some time now with no problems at all. However the level of technical expertise required to safely adopt these modifications is not inconsiderable, and I would have to advise



*caution before we all rush out and adopt this cheap, but effective, modification of our Kittens and Foxes to make use of parts which are a fraction of the cost of original Reliant ones. Keith has kindly provided me with not only the drawings, but an appropriate range of colour photographs. Copies of these can readily be made available if you would like to have them let me know.*

The ball joint used in a Quinten Hazel QGJ 219S which is produced as a lower ball joint for a Vauxhaull HA & HB Viva. There are a number of engineering matters to be attended to before the new ball joint can be fitted, these include enlarging the spline hole, fitting a spacer, as the retaining circlip is in a different location on the 'new' ball joint, and adapting the morse taper, as the new ball joint pin diameter is smaller than the Reliant one. All of these mods require the removal on the upper wishbone from the car. Just send an s.a.e. if you would like a copy of his original text, pictures, and the drawings.

This time the mod involves manufacturing a fabrication which will hold the ball joint, and enable it to be attached to the wishbone using the same two bolts that the Reliant design used. A small amount of the return fold on the lower wishbone needs to be removed to achieve fitment.

Once the original arrangement has been removed it is necessary to find another way of supporting the bottom end of the damper, this can be achieved by using spacers and a tube, or alternatively, by sawing the relevant part of the original Reliant joint, and using it to secure the bottom of the damper unit.

For Sale :- Tempest 850. Body Jig (Includes new Fox chassis frame) Wing and body moulds (GRP) Parts and assembly drawings. £500 John Box

For Sale :- We now have a number of "RELIANT" and "kitten DL" transfers available £3.50 each or £5.50 for the pair delivered. These are the ones for the back of your Kitten, don't worry if yours is not a DL, a pair of scissors will soon remedy that! Contact Brian on 0141 8866117

For Sale :- Now that Jim Spence has his 1800cc Rebel on the road, - yes, you heard correctly, a fuel injected 1.8 Vauxhaull engine! He is struggling for space in the drive, and is prepared to be parted from the 1600cc Fiat powered Kitten estate, complete with 5 speed gearbox.

For Sale :- Rebel Van, needs work. Must go, will take almost any offer.

For Sale :- A yellow Kitten Estate DL. This car has had many new parts fitted, including a full set of brake slave cylinders, new rear springs, new clutch front wheel bearings, exhaust, tow bar, oil pressure switch, and has had the chassis painted. Mileage from new 48,832. Last M.O.T. expired Oct.'97. The owner died earlier this year, it is important to his widow that we find the car a good home.,

For Sale :- Red Kitten Van in need of T.L.C. contact Brian for details 0141 8866117

For Sale :- 1976 Kitten Saloon seeks new home, unleaded head, new steering rack, set of original alloy wheels, new radiator. M.O.T till June 2000, Tax till May 2000. Ring Greg

For Sale :- Two Kittens, one estate one saloon – contact Roger Chenery, Cornwall - A number for him might be useful Brian !! Yes, so it might, but he is not a subscriber and I can't remember if it was a 'phone call or a letter, and in the latter case I can't find it !!! Give me a ring if you are interested, I might have found it by that time, Ed.

Wanted :- Reliant Rebel Estate. Please contact John Unwin

Wanted :- A Scottish resident road tax exempt Rebel estate car. Contact Roger Brodie,

Wanted :- A good Gearbox for a 1975 Kitten. Perhaps even any good Kitten gearbox will do. ( remember the speedo drive gear mod Nigel ! ) contact Nigel Bateman

Wanted :- A good 850 engine. Contact Paul

Wanted :- A Kitten estate or Van, must have an excellent chassis, and good engine and gearbox, indeed be in excellent all round working order, preferably with long M.O.T. Contact Paul Elmy

Wanted :- Francis Healy, our man in N.I. ( well, one of them ), is hoping to retire next year. He may be looking for a Fox Camper van. So if you have one which might be available, or hear of one, please let him know about it, thank you

Wanted :- Early Rebel front steering parts ! Jim Spence is needing to sort out the steering on his Rebel – the down side of fitting bigger engines! (the sump gets in the way of the drag link) What he needs are the drop arms, from both the steering box, and the idler on the other side of the chassis, from an early Rebel. The one where the drag link passes through, yes inside ! the large diameter front cross tube on the chassis. Only the first 55 or so Rebels were built this way. Mostly 600cc ones as far as I recall. If you can help Jim We are talking about 'B', 'C', 'D'; and possibly some early 'E' registered cars here.

Well, what do you know, I actually have a bit of spare space!! What I should put in here is the list of parts that the Register has in stock, but I have this enduring memory problem as far as fine details go. Very briefly, we have alloy rocker covers available again – they have still to be bead blasted which is why you have not yet heard from me if you ordered one. I still have one of the ETi 2000 electronic ignition kits in stock, also Rebel brake adjuster kits, and handbrake cables. My man still has about a dozen of the bearings that we can use in the steering racks, so we can still recon a few of them O.K. Kitten rear springs, I still have three pairs in stock, and steering column bushes. Give me a ring on 0141 8866117 if you would like to know more.

### **Some Sad news**

I have always managed in the past to avoid publishing any obituaries within these pages, preferring to express any appropriate feelings in a personal letter or telephone call. However I was saddened to learn of the passing of our technical expert John Bowcott, who had been generous in the past with his time to write us a number of excellent articles, including the wiring details in this edition. John died on the 13th of October, just a week after getting home from what was believed to have been a straight forward operation. Tragically I learned today, 17th November, that my good friend Kenny Lamont, who you will have heard of within these pages, died of a heart attack behind the wheel of his Rialto. Kenny was well ahead with his Kitten van rebuild project, and they will both be sorely missed. Kenny was younger than me, and some 35 years junior to John Bowcott. Our thoughts must be with both families at this normally happy time of year. I hesitated about including this information in this publication, but thought it appropriate to share the knowledge with you.

### **NOTES**

Brian Millar is still waiting to hear from those of us who would like high quality top radiator hoses for our wee cars. So if this idea has some appeal, give Brian a ring

One of our newer subscribers, Keith Gittus, had a couple of good suggestions, one of which was that I ought to put out with the magazine a list of all the parts I have in stock. I know that I mention some of them from time to time, but I am really not trying to run a business, simply to help keep these fine wee cars

on the road. However, the fact remains that I do have an apparently ever increasing stock of things from manuals and parts books, as well as some copy owners handbooks, through other slow moving things like Rebel handbrake cables, and replacement brake adjuster kits. To bigger things like Kitten rear springs. Which reminds me, I have the new batch of alloy rocker covers in stock, so if you wanted one, and have not been in touch, or have been in touch and have not heard from me yet – now would be a good time to remind me about it !

To get back to Keith's idea, if I have the time, I will compile a comprehensive list, and enclose it. It really would suit me just fine not to have any parts at all, but I guess that is a forlorn hope – after all I want to keep the wee red car on the road for at least as long as I am able to drive, and while, sadly, she would be horrified at the idea, my daughter Arleen might need it one day !

Speaking of new subscribers, the infrequency of the whole thing was brought home to me this week (20/11/99) I had not signed up any new folk in November up till then, then in the space of two days, 4 folk join up! Better yet, one of them had only enquired this week, one last month, one the month before, and the other one I had been after for several years! Welcome aboard Mr. Divers, Aye, it certainly keeps you on your toes does this!

Anyway, take care, have a really good time over the festive season, and have a great new millennium whenever you think it starts ! I was present at the collection of the Wroth Silver this year, and the Duke of Buccleugh's representative told those assembled over breakfast, that his compromise – with the confusion of whether the year 2000, or 2001 was the first of the new millennium, was to have a huge party on the 21st of June, and at least be assured the maximum possible amount of daylight for the celebration. I just managed to refrain from interrupting him to say that that just happens to be our silver wedding anniversary ! Yes, we have heard that it is also the shortest night thank you!!

Still on the 21st of June, I was at the S.W.T.V.C.'s A.G.M the other evening, and one of their directors was proposing that we hire the Sir Walter Scott (a steam triple expansion powered ship which plys Loch Katrine in the Trossachs during the summer months, built in 1901 and still in active service to this day) I immediately interrupted proceedings this time, to point out that it was our silver anniversary, and we had been considering a cruise – though I rather suspect that Moira did not have Loch Katrine in mind when she first mooted the idea of a cruise !! (I did get the best laugh of the meeting for suggesting it mind you)

Right, still a bit of space, please be not forgetting those subscription renewals – our future depends upon them!

**Brian**

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