

# Reliant Kitten Register

***NEWSLETTER Forty-Five***

***March/April 2002***



**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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# **The Reliant Kitten Register**

## **MEWSLETTER No. 45**

I am eternally grateful to the following individuals:-

**Rebel alternative parts**

**Kitten alternative parts**

**Fox alternative parts**

**Our Mutual Aid Spares scheme**

**Mewsletter pictures**

Our electric kitten man is Chris Lowe

This time our front cover features one of the Rebels I mentioned in the last edition. Remember the one I told you I had been sent a small picture of, well, Dave & Sue Brown were good enough to send the full size version to John Pearce. Looks pretty good don't you think?

The Register has a, now fairly old, web page at:- <http://www.uk-classic-cars.com/kitten.htm> which I hope to update this year. Meantime you might care to have a look at <http://www.reliantkitten.co.uk>

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It should be noted that opinions and ideas printed in this publication are as recommended by our readers, and do not necessarily have the approval of the Reliant Kitten Register. Owners must satisfy themselves as to the suitability of any suggestions made within these pages, as no responsibility can be accepted.

While I remember - don't forget about:-

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Hello there, welcome once again. I will begin this edition by answering a question which I asked in here last time, and that was what was the Shetland van. Well, Shetland was in fact the name that Asquith gave to their Fox derived vans, so I was quite correct when I suggested that I knew the answer, but had forgotten!

My thanks to J.S.B. for reminding me. Thanks also to Dave Gardiner who was good enough to send me a clipping from a Dec. 2000 copy of Kit car magazine, which had an advert for an Asquith Shetland, complete with a colour picture, a bit too small to do for a front cover, but the van was signwritten on yellow on a green background for 'Plantworld' with the banner on top reading "Plants for all seasons" thanks Dave. By the way Dave, if I have not sent on the information you asked for by the time you read this, give me a ring and remind me please.

After all the great plans and aspirations, I find myself struggling to keep both the wee Reliants on the road, feel free to try and persuade me to part with one of them. They both have galvanised chassis, stainless exhausts, and run well. I warn you now that it would take a lot of ££££s to persuade me, but I am finding it difficult to justify keeping them both.

One feature of the Register which differs from a number of Car Clubs, is that I do not publish the addresses and telephone numbers of subscribers as a matter of course. Many Car Clubs do provide both details of new members in their magazines, and often an annual membership list which gives those details.

I know that a small number of individuals (possibly a large number, I really don't know ) would like me to publish such a list, but I have resisted such pressures because, firstly it would involve me in more work, and secondly, because a larger number (larger than the number who have suggested that we should publish details) of you have expressed a desire that I NOT publish your details. So I would need to check again with those individuals – yet more work! With between 250 and 300 of us, depending on when in the year I produced the list, it would, even given the use of small print, take up a few sheets of paper, however, I will consider it, let me know what you think please. Ed. No, no, don't get excited, I am not hinting at democracy, but I will take expressed views into consideration before I tell you what is going to happen!

Spare. I did remark that I have produced more editions of the Mewsletter than they have had years in business, but I don't think they were terribly impressed!

.....

Well, this episode was to be called “In Out, In Out, Shake It All About”, however that story has only just reached the end, two years after it started! So this time around it’s:

Those that have seen the Red Devil, SRF340L, will know that it is, 'erm, red. Bright red, as red as a baboons, well, you know...! Even the nuts on the cylinder head are red. So how a cement truck driver can bump into it, in broad daylight is anyone's guess. All I can say is that he was either a damned good driver or just plain stupid. Good, because all he did was rip off the fuel filler cap and crack a bit of the surrounding bodywork. Stupid, well, what can happen over four days in the life of a cement truck driver?

Day 4 - Hand over a substantial sum to the owners of the car he hit on day one.

All this happened in a place some call God's Country. Where we lived, over the border near Chester, He was welcome to it. Living next to an industrial estate on top of a swamp never appealed and when the opportunity arose to relocate at the beginning of this year (now last year!), it was snatched with both hands. Then came the logistical nightmare. How do you get two cars and a caravan 305 miles up the M6 and beyond to the Kingdom of Fife when one of the two available drivers won't tow, nor drive that far? You've guessed it, do it yourself.

Never having taken the Rebel any further than 120 miles, I was naturally apprehensive about the run, even though Gordon Jackson had taken it down to Holland a couple of years previously. The plan was to travel overnight up the M6/M74 and over to Leuchars to be there by 9 in the morning, so I could inspect and take over our new quarters. Excluding traffic jams, the daytime bumper to bumper average speed on the M6 regularly seems to exceed 80mph, along with an inordinate amount of cement wagons too. So an overnight trip was planned, as it was deemed safer to travel then, rather than to risk the run during the day. To save the removal men having a whinge about shifting paint and stuff, literally everything in the lockup went into the back of the car. Ramps, jack, tools, oil, spare gearbox, brakes shoes etc. Basically, I had more tools



and spares than your average AA man, all I needed now was a flashing yellow light and I could start my own breakdown business.

One thing Maureen always complained about was that the radio never worked. It was one of those 'to do' things that I never got round to doing. Funny how it was working by the time I left!

So off I went, at 10 at night, with a full car, full tank and a full flask of coffee. With the speedo sitting at a steady 55, I clocked the car at 60 against the motorway marker posts. It was over 20 miles before I came across another vehicle on my side of the road and it was actually going slower than me!

The weather, fortunately, was in my favour. A light white dusting over Shap and the intense cold (it was late January) were the only concern. Regular stops at the Forton, Gretna, Hamilton and Kinross services, helped to stabilise the shaking bones, and top-up the much needed injection of caffeine. Vehicle checks found nothing amiss – no oil or water loss, tyre pressures and lights ok, fuel consumption around 50 to 55 mpg – surely something must go wrong? Shap and Beattock were stormed over without any hesitation – the only problem was with me – matchsticks anyone? Sleeping in any car is difficult at the best of times, just try it in a Rebel. In the cold. In motorway services. No chance.

Taking account of stopovers, the running time from Chester to Leuchars was just over 6 hours – try that in a modern car – arriving there by quarter to 9. The new house (for the Forces, rather nice it is too – with a garage that has lighting and electricity!) was signed for and taken over. With time to kill before getting the train back, I decided to pop round to my new workplace. Bad move. Right outside the Guardroom, in front of the guards. Yep, you guessed it - would it start? Of course not. The thought of John Cleese with a branch quickly shot into my head. Why me? Why there? Why now? It did eventually get going, but the kangaroo court had already been in session and judgement passed. Sentenced to 8 months solitary confinement in the afore mentioned garage, after which there would be an engine and gearbox rebuild, brake overhaul and new radiator. Which also meant the chapter 'In out, in out, shake it all about' would eventually get finished. But then, that's another story...

Mark Hayton

Next time: (hopefully) Part IV - In out, in out, shake it all about

*Well I can tell you that Mark has in fact already supplied the relevant text, and you will indeed be able to read Part IV, or should that be Part IIII? Whatever, it will be in the next edition. Thank you Mark for keeping us up to date. Ed.*

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## **FOXES' DEN**

Brian, please find enclosed the latest figures from SMMT. Kitten numbers do seem to have dropped pretty alarmingly - mind you they have further to fall than those for the Fox! I now have seven firm orders for Fox window frames, thanks for publishing my plea in the mag. You really do

do a sterling job, although geographically more Stirling... [Sorry, been laid up with fluey cold and brain stirring (NOT Stirling) in strange directions, which is nice cos it means I'm back to normal].

The Kitten/Fox message board [thought I'd leave that typo in] is doing well with 7 signed-up members, none of whom I'd met before, so one way & another I must know of about 10% of Fox members. You can contact, make a page, see pictures of things, lots of great ideas. Look at this message board by logging on to :- [groups.yahoo.com/group/foxandkitten](http://groups.yahoo.com/group/foxandkitten) to e-mail them the address is [foxandkitten@yahooohgroups.com](mailto:foxandkitten@yahooohgroups.com)

All for now, Duncan Bradford - Norwich

*Thanks for that Duncan, here is the breakdown of the figures. I have simplified them for publication, the total number of vehicles 'on the road' at the end of 2000 was as follows :-*

Rebels	84	Compared with 75 in 1997, and 81 in 1998
Kittens	567	Compared with 905 in 1997, and 740 in 1998
Foxes	211	Compared with 310 in 1997, and 262 in 1998

In addition to the above, there are also a total of 59 "Unspecified Reliants", there is a breakdown of that figure into no less than 5 separate categories which Duncan suspects might include SE4's and possibly 2.5 litre Scimitars, and I suspect might also include most if not all of the John Box built Reliant based vehicles, which could account for about three dozen of them, Ed.

Whatever, the fact is that our wee cars are fast becoming an endangered species, and while it is heartening to see that not only have Rebel numbers stopped declining, but have actually increased slightly, Kitten numbers are down by a third, and Foxes almost the same, in just three years. One can't help but wonder if the increase in Rebel numbers on the road might be reflected in Kittens, if they too enjoyed road fund license exemption on the basis of age, that most Rebels do!

The situation is confused, as, for example, no one has yet, to my knowledge, completed any of the Steve Campbell Tempests, and so some Foxes, and even the odd Kitten, have vanished, yet to re-appear as far as cars on the road are concerned. That said, many of them will have disappeared after the end of 2000 when the above snapshot was taken. On the other hand, not all Tempest donor vehicles were runners, and so would not have been included in the above figures anyway.

So, while we should not lose heart, there has been a substantial reduction in the number of Kittens and Foxes on the road over the period 1997 to 2000, and, sadly, I am in no doubt that the situation has further deteriorated since then.

Quite what this means, and whether it will lead to an increase in values as they become scarcer, who can tell.

On a positive note, the number of subscribers to this Register has remained fairly constant over the past three years, if anything increasing slightly, so we are doing something right.





To be fair to Partsworld, who supplied the head, they did refund my money, and I am now back running on a 'leaded head' with no short term problems.

The moral of this story must be that you should ask about pressure tests if you are getting a replacement head, so that you don't waste time and energy on repeat fittings.

With best wishes, Paul Stevenston - Hethersett

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*Often I have an odd corner to fill, but equally well I sometimes have information to share, and no room to do so – stop wittering Marshall. The thing is that it has come to my attention that a number of Foxes, previously believed to be as high as 40, in fact I am told just 6, were indeed acquired by the Swedish electricity company intended to be powered electrically. For some strange reason I had thought / believed / assumed that they were involved with hydro electric power, in fact not, it was a nuclear power station, and all six Foxes have since been buried, as they had become radio active – never mind atomic Kittens !*

*My thanks to J.S.B. and his contact in Sweden for the above.*

## **Liege Page**

O.K. listen up folks, I am in no way trying to hush up your efforts, but my most recent communication on this front mentions a Tempest, so this time I just thought I'd include the story in our Competition Corner. Meantime, if any of you Liege people would care to contribute something specifically for this page, feel free to do so.

## **Tempest update**

Steve is still keeping busy, still on the lookout for homeless Foxes, and still tells me that 2002 will see the completion of at least 1 of the S.C. Tempests.

## **Competition Corner**

Just an update on the Liege competition front this time, you will know that Peter Davis has organised another of his long distance events, the "Targa - Liege" this time to Florence in September - see [targaliegen.com](http://targaliegen.com) for more details - so there is a team entered for the MCC's Lands End Trial at Easter, Peter Hall (driving PD's Red one) Gari Jones and Simon Robson.

Simon & son Matt have also been "out to play" with Tempest boys Jack Williams, Dave Smith and Ian Lawson on the Falcon Motor Club's "Eddlesborough" PCT in January, and will be competing in Falcon's "March Hare" mini-classic on 10th March, also attending the MCC's 100th birthday celebration at Brooklands on Sunday 5th May.

Best regards, Simon

## READERS LETTERS

Dear Brian,

02/02/02

A memorable date 02/02/02. Today we sold the Kitten to a car enthusiast Brian Mulholland who has promised to give it a good home. He owned a Robin in the past, and has a Porsche 911 along with various other machines.

Brian went away with your mags, so you will probably hear from him in the near future.

We wish in 2002 to continue our membership, as both of us really enjoy your mags, and the nice letters with all the crac.

We cannot thank you enough for all your help and advice over the years, without which the Kitten would have gone long ago.

It has been in daily use since 1976, not off the road for more than 2 weeks at any time except when the complete refurbished chassis was fitted. I did write to you at the time that you put me in touch with Mike Cowie, who sold us the chassis that I believe your brother Alan had refurbished some years ago, before he sold his Kitten. I guess that letter went astray.

A chapter in our lives has now ended as we listen to the wee car with its distinctive exhaust note disappearing into a new adventure.

Wishing you and all the family all the best in the coming year.

Frank & Viola Morgan - Seaforde, Co. Down

*Well, what can I say? Isn't it – nice seems too frivolous a word somehow, and yet it does seem appropriate in the circumstances, to receive such a letter. I used to get a bit embarrassed about such flattering comments, which is probably why Frank's letter about the 'new' chassis never made into print. I really do not publish all the correspondence I get – so why this one you might ask? Well, it's not every day that a one owner Kitten goes to a new home these days, nor is it every day that one I have been involved in the supplying of a major component like a chassis for changes hands, nor is it that often that we hear from our friends over the water – so there's three reasons, never mind the flattery! Where is the car now? Well, Frank did mention a furniture van coming over the water to Scotland with a stowaway ship's cat, or was that a Kitten?*

*Thanks for keeping us up to date Frank & Viola, I look forward to hearing from Brian Mullholland.*

Dear Brian,

Wednesday 6th February 2002

Late renewal seems to be an unbreakable habit – sorry! Many thanks for last year's "Mewsletters", greatly appreciated and much enjoyed - thanks.

Not much to report really on the car front. Dad's old Kitten keeps me mobile. The engine I 'rebuilt' (just a block swap, but then it ran the mains due to an oil feed problem) is still running (I

wish in view of the crank regrind and new bearings, that I'd just replaced the rings at the same time – as always : “If only” !!)

Took the old girl over to Ireland in October with Sam(antha). Covered 1,900 miles (Home – Ireland – touring – home) and averaged 42 MPG (driving hard as usual) So I must be doing something right! The only problems were :-

1/ Leaking rear quarterlight – ongoing for some years now (wet back seat) Hadn't traced origin (perished rubber seal) cured with silicone.

2/ Axle end oil leak onto shoes, and I'd just replaced the seals and had the bits on which the seals sit reground! My fault of course – found the breather blocked when I got home!

*Right, apologies to Tom Wardley, and everyone, I have mis-placed the letter, and am out of time. Thanks for keeping us up to date Tom, I'll be better organized in future – just too much going on at the moment. Ed.*

Dear Brian,

05/02/2002

Sorry if Hazel's renewal is a bit 'tardy', so to say, but please find enclosed a cheque for £15. I can't remember from the last 'Mews' how much it was. The mag is around somewhere, but not immediately locateable. “chaos has descended upon us!”. If £15 is too much put the difference in your spares 'kitty', (sorry), if it's not enough I daresay you'll scream, meanwhile the little red 'beastie' is behaving itself.

You will no doubt be sorry to hear that one of our two old motors, sorry, classics, will have to go as yours truly is getting no younger and no fitter, so crawling around on the floor is no longer the attraction it used to be, and is becoming a pain.

What's more, I definitely do not trust the local branches of “messers Bodgint, Fixit & Co.” so one old banger – sorry, classic is enough for me to 'cherish', being somewhat of an old wreck myself, but you personally know the score on that one! Eh, just a minute here, wreck certainly, but less of the old if you don't mind, I'm not even half a century on the planet - yet! Ed.

However, you will be pleased to hear that in the choice between the 'little feline' and the 'mightier feline', our Jaguar XJ12m so far, the wee car has drawn the longer straw. Which says a heck of a lot for the little horror, sorry, classic.

We assure you that it is only in front on merit, albeit by it's little whiskers, but one motor has to go so that we can replace it with a more modern “newer” car, sorry, tupperware box. Friends who do not know us well think we are mad thinking of getting rid of a Jaguar and keeping “that” but those who really know us well have always known that we are a little “potty” from the word go!

So there you have it, I would ideally love to keep both of them, the idea of a big cat and a little cat does appeal to our weird sense of humour, but that Jag is a monster of a thing to maintain, and you just cannot let anyone do it. The main agents wanted nigh on £1,000 to supply and fit a new water pump!

Two mechanics, two days, £65 an hour, blah, blah, blah, all the front end off, etc et. I got a re-con pump via the Jaguar Enthusiasts Club, and with three new kevlar hoses did the job myself, un-assisted in less than 3 days, total cost under £100, and the front end didn't come off! The next one will only take me a day!

Mind you, the club's technical wizard was a constant source of encouragement and advice, especially when the pump wouldn't budge after I had un-done all 9 bolts, do you know that there are no less than 16 bolts hold a V12 water pump on? Muggins didn't, but he does now! Some of them are well hidden.

It really pays to join a club, of that there is no doubt. Whatever you want to do, some other barmpot has done it all before, take me and Reliant gearboxes for example "Shut up Bill!". (Shouts a voice over my shoulder) Right, I'm off before Hazel loses the rag completely. All the best to you and yours.

Bill & Hazel Starkey - Hyde

Dear Brian,

20/02/2002

Thank you for your very prompt reply to my letter. My name is also Brian. I am glad to know, firstly that the club is informal, and secondly that there are so many like-minded people about.

As you will see from the details on my application form I am also a member of the Bug Club. Lurking somewhere under the pile of stuff in my lock-up is one of those little orange wedges. Unfortunately it is not in such good condition as Kitty (are they all called that?) No Brian, they are not, I seem to remember "George the Resin Rocket – amongst others, Ed. But one of these days my slow progress will bring rewards.

I have Kitty's original handbook and service guide, she has just 46,000 miles on the clock, and apart from the paintwork, is in good condition. I purchased her locally after seeing her for sale on the roadside. I am the third owner in her twenty-one years. The obvious initial attraction was the shared bits with the Bug. I am pleasantly surprised at how well she performs and handles.

I enclose the application form you sent me with a cheque for my subscription. Thanks again, yours truly - Brian Martin - Norwich

*Thanks for that Brian, and here was me thinking it was only Foxes that lived in Norwich! Anyway, welcome to the fold – another convert by the sounds of it – Ed.*

## **Where are they now ?**

Since Michael motivated me to have this section I seem to have a space problem. To follow up on the Monte Carlo Kitten featured last time, Bob Neal was reminding me that it was owned by Mike Webster of WMC Bug fame about 1995.

## **Still looking for a Partner !**

As you will recall, Michael Kerr was looking for someone in the south east with a place to work in. Was his request successful? Well, it might have helped just a little bit, if I had given you a telephone number to contact him at! Still, you could have used your initiative and given me a ring to ask for his number, couldn't you? So I will try to excuse my shortcoming in this instance by sharing the blame with you! Oh how I wish I could learn how to produce one of those wartime fingers pointing out of the page at you here!

With humblest apologies to Michael Kerr of Somerset, Brian

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Dear Brian,

Feb. 21st 2002

I thought I'd better commit to paper the tale of two men, the scruffiest tricycle capable of moving under its own steam (of which more later), a jigsaw, a bottle of wine and several pairs of rubber gloves. Still with me? Good, then I shall begin. It started innocently enough, the Robin advertised in the yellow paper, had, claimed its vendor, an excellent engine and gearbox. The asking price was reasonable, allowing some room for an offer to be made. I called to enquire; oh joy unconfined! it's still for sale. What next? I know, I'll call Brian. Well, it turned out that our brave and fearless leader would quite like a decent 850cc engine for his Rebel. OK, I'll go over to Stanhope (anyone seeking the true definition of "the back of beyond" ought to go there) and assess this vehicle, then worry about how to bring it home, what to do with it once it's there, etc.

Well, after driving over one of the highest parts of the Pennine Way, I arrived to be greeted by a Robin which, frankly, looked horrible in its blue Dulux paint scheme. I use the term "paint scheme" only in its loosest sense - and anyway, the engine is what counts. Not expecting too much, I jam myself into the seat and up and down the road we go. Sorry Robin fans, I am aware that a good one of these is actually a perfectly worthy form of transport, but I'm over six feet tall with a thirty five inch inside leg and the seat doesn't want to move back. Still, the thing pulls in a manner which suggests that none of those forty horses has escaped. There's a tiny amount of noise from the timing chain but not enough to cause concern. I make the vendor an offer which is eventually accepted and, climbing back into the kitten, make good my exit. (Wow, these Kittens have loads of space for the Blagburn size (11) feet and they're so quiet...) This leaves only the matter of how to get the tricycle home. Which is where Brian enters the equation.

I had reported to Brian after seeing the Robin, so a cunning plan takes shape. This involves Brian, a long drive in a Rebel with no spare oil on board, and by the time it reaches England, not a lot in the sump either! A return trip, by kitten, over the Pennines, and a Robin which, it transpires, has a severe front wheel bearing problem. Oh, and the brakes don't have any appreciable effect. It's alright though, I shall be in the Kitten leading the way, that has brakes. Sorted!!

So, back to the cunning plan. Brian hasn't been to my place for some time, and his memory isn't what it once was. Directions are issued and we (our editor & self) meet in Halfords' car park, where the Rebel receives an overdue drink of oil. Brian informs me that the oil pressure warning light has been on at the car's maximum speed, due to heavy traffic, of 35mph in top gear.



The warning light goes out now, as there's now enough oil to reach the pump, (and he tells me that it is also cooler now that he has added the fresh stuff!) So we park the Rebel at my place, and head off to Stanhope to capture our tripoidal prey.

Kitten Blagburn behaves himself perfectly as we climb out of Tyne & Wear into the southernmost tip of Northumberland, then over the A68 and through a piece of County Durham. The sun is doing what it does, so we stop for a breather prior to dropping into our final destination by means of a road whose average gradient feels like 25%. Great fun Brian, but remember, the tricycle will be required to climb this same hill on the way back.

I need not have worried as, once the paperwork is done and we head for Shields, WNW 955X manages perfectly well to keep up with my Kitten. The engine is indeed a good one, and the vendor has even put petrol in the tank! I drive my new Robin for a distance of at least fifty yards on the way, but by now the brakes have left for their holiday and I still cannot move that driving seat, and besides, Brian has more tricycle experience than I.

I promised steam earlier in this tale, so it came to pass. After forty odd miles and no engine related worries, the fan chewed its way through the radiator as Brian reversed over the ramp into my back yard! What happens next involves brutality of an unparalleled nature...

So, there are Brian and I stood standing looking at the tripod. What to do? For that was the dilemma. Whether to cut it up! Several seconds pass and I find a couple of extension leads which enable the use of.... an ELECTRIC JIGSAW!! A further hour or three passes, and the Robin is stripped of all bodywork back as far as the door shut faces. Brian passes a comment about all Tricycle owners should consider this, makes doing the tappets easy! Next morning we remove several bags full of Robin bodyshell to the tip. Another hour later, the 850cc engine sits in the back of the Rebel, though I usually find these things more effective when placed in the engine bay, and connected to other technical bits!

The bottle of wine? Brian brought that with him, so not to drink it would amount to an insult, and never let it be said that I am rude to my visitors. Blagburn and Marshall, the latterday Burke & Hare, demonstrate their Reliant-destroying prowess by drinking the wine that evening, and still completing "Operation justifiable homicide" within just over a day.

That, fellow enthusiasts, is how it happened, back to the real world now. I shall soon have a trailer utilising the rear half of the Robin's shell. The chassis is pretty rotten, but I can sort that or turn it into a shed. Now "hang on lads, I've got an idea..." As a result of the aforementioned act of savagery, I have a variety of spare parts including a good passenger door, dashboard, gearbox, instruments and a windscreen, to mention but a few of the many useful things, most of which are compatible with three and four wheelers. Must go, I have a trailer or maybe a shed to design. World's smallest caravan anybody?

Yours, John Blagburn - North Shields.

## **Tales From Tore**

After my rather futile attempts at clearing Dick's letters from my pending tray in the last edition – I barely got a third of them summarised! I thought I'd try again, but space is still a

problem. Tell you what, I'll use Dick's most recent letter :- Thanks Dick, continued apologies for the delay / editing.

Dear Brian,

3rd March 2002

Please Release me, let me Go! (apologies to Tom Jones) A strange Kitten fault occurred, I suddenly could not open the driver's door by either the inner or outer handles, and I was stuck inside. Help! After wriggling myself free, removal of the inner door panel proved just possible with the door shut. Eventually I found that the locking rod from the inner door handle back to the lock was under compression and holding the lock fixed in the locked position. It is a month since I put 'The Ghost' on the road and how this happened I know not. Removing the rod from the wee front lever and pulling it forward unlocked the door. Yes, I should have adjusted the rod length, but the weather turned from drizzle to downpour so I had to reassemble things quickly and go inside. Drip, Drip. Does the tap need a new washer? In wet weather there is an annoying drip onto my right leg just above the ankle, perhaps from the perished and split rubber under the O/S wiper spindle? But 1/2" heater hose proved too wee to make a replacement, the 3/4" size might work, but I have none. So as a temporary measure (how long will this one have to last?) I replaced the split rubber and held it together with a cable tie fastened round it, then replaced the nut. Now Wait & See.

Kitten Fan belts, radiators, and bottom hoses. Some cars need a 700 length fan belt to avoid the alternator pulley fouling the bottom hose. But 'The Ghost' does not, and close inspection today showed that the bottom spout on the radiator comes out and bends sharply up and out towards the nearside. The bottom hose itself has only one bend, at the top, unlike both Orlando's and the replacement hose I have in stock. Interesting. However although the hose is nowhere near the fan belt, it rubs on the body! Can one win?

All Gas and Gaiters. The dodge of securing the gear lever gaiter to the lever by tape to stop it riding up didn't last. What now? Idea. Take a broom handle, drill a 3/8" diameter hole into one end to a depth of about 1 1/2". Make a sawcut from the same end about 1" along the handle then cut off a 1" long piece, so making a wooden cylinder split along its length. Replace the gaiter and fit the wood onto the gear lever hard up to the top of the gaiter, place and tighten a hose clip round the wood to make a fixed stop collar for the gaiter. Heath Robinson rules?

Hoping this finds you all well. Best Wishes, Dick Goodall - Tore

### **Another Observation**

It has come to my attention that I need to have some more of the alloy rocker covers made. I know about yours thanks Dave Price, and your special ones John Metcalfe, I can get ahead and organise things if anyone else who wants one lets me know! Just pick up the telephone and dial 0141 8866117.

**Brian**

## **From the In Tray**

Events we are invited to this time include :-

The Spring Pit Stop for car enthusiasts at Donnington Park, Derbyshire on May the 1st. If you are interested contact Leanne Barber on 01208 251462

The Derby Daily Telegraph's "Derby Motorshow" on Sunday 7th July. Contact Liz Bolton for details on 01332 253014. They claim it is one of the largest events in the East Midlands, and entry is free.

Also on the weekend of July 6/7 is the Stafford Footman James vehicle restoration show and Autojumble. There were various club options available, Mike Powell is the man to talk to if you are interested ring him on 01790 752501

Adrian's Great Eastern Rally, with the D.L.O.C. (Daimler and Lanchester Owners Club) will take place on Sunday the 21st of July 2002, This is the one where Bruce's Rebel won an interesting award last year ! Ring Adrian for further details on 01277 227708

The Woodvale Rally, sounds like fun this, model aircraft, Vintage & classic cars and motorcycles, military transport near Southport on the A5653rd & 4th August, they have bus rides, helicopter flights, radio controlled car racing, vintage agricultural machinery, model ships and railways, stationery engines, Country market, Auto Jumble, roadshow, Morris dancers, car boot sale, funfair refreshments, bars etc. Anyway the number to call if you are interested is 01704 876283 or look at [www.woodvale-rally.org.uk](http://www.woodvale-rally.org.uk) On the other hand the rest of us mere mortals could just write to them at :- Woodvale rally, P.O. Box 30 Southport PR8 3GL

Woking & District Chamber of Trade and Commerce tell me that their Woking Classic Car Show, is the biggest Town Centre Classic Car Show in Britain! If you are interested in this event on the holiday weekend at the end of August – 26th Sue Granville is the one you want, and you can contact her on 01483 729922

## **GETTING TECHNICAL**

Well, after my talk about steering rack mounting rubbers in here last time, I was eventually duly chastised because that information is well documented on the Kitten Alternative Parts list! So here I was, trying to gather information that was already well documented, not only that, but documented in the appropriate place! Thank you once again Brian Millar for doing that job for us, and to everyone else out there who is looking for a Kitten part that Reliant can no longer supply – and as we have said before that situation is fluid – they keep finding 'new' parts they have in stock - contact Brian Millar, and get yourself a copy of the alternative parts list. None the less, my thanks to those individuals who got in touch with the relevant details

## Kitten / (Fox) anti Roll bars

Alan Shaw, our engineering friend from Glossop, writes as follows :-

Dear Brian,

January 2002

Reliant's approximation for anti-roll bar position on the kitten has been annoying me for 21 years. Having finally replaced the damaged bits, might as well do something about it.

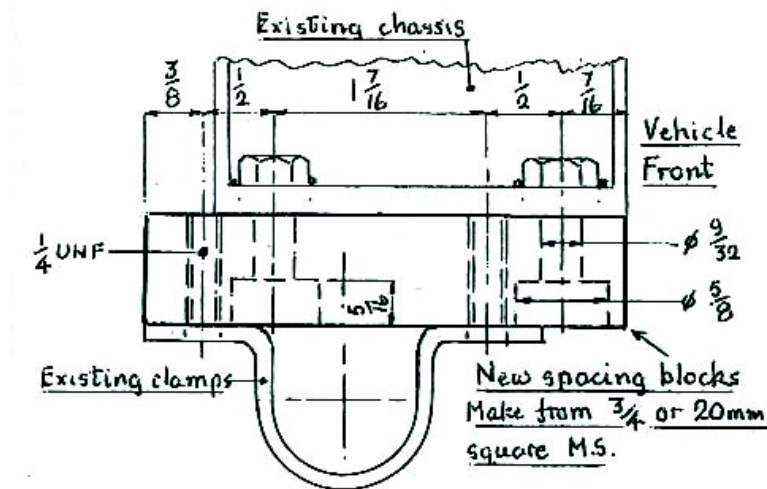
Ref. Reliant "kitten" workshop manual PP 3,4 Haynes, PP 144,149.

The pivot points for the anti roll bar are in the wrong place. As a result, in the normal load position, there is a severe metallic side contact between the bottom cup washers and their well in the wishbone, and between the link studs and their wishbone holes.

The modification shown below, centralises the link studs and cup washers in their normal working positions, i.e. average load. The link studs then appear vertical when viewed from the side.

In the extreme position – vehicle jacked up and road wheels suspended – the bottom cup washer barely touches the side of its well.

A. Shaw – Glossop



*Thanks for that Alan, I am all too well aware of the ovality of the holes in the lower wishbones of most, if not all, of the Kittens out there, this sounds like a really effective solution to me. I would caution however, anyone who is considering such work should be prepared for more than the above article suggests. After all, you will surely want to at least shot blast and prime and paint the wishbone, and the strut while you are in there anyway, won't you? and since you are going to be in there anyway, why not just renew the bushes while you are at it, and suddenly the job becomes bigger / more expensive, and a lot more time consuming than you thought it would be, but at the end of the day the car will be the better for it. The lower wishbones will almost certainly require repair, involving a bit of welding, to make the oval holes round again, though it*

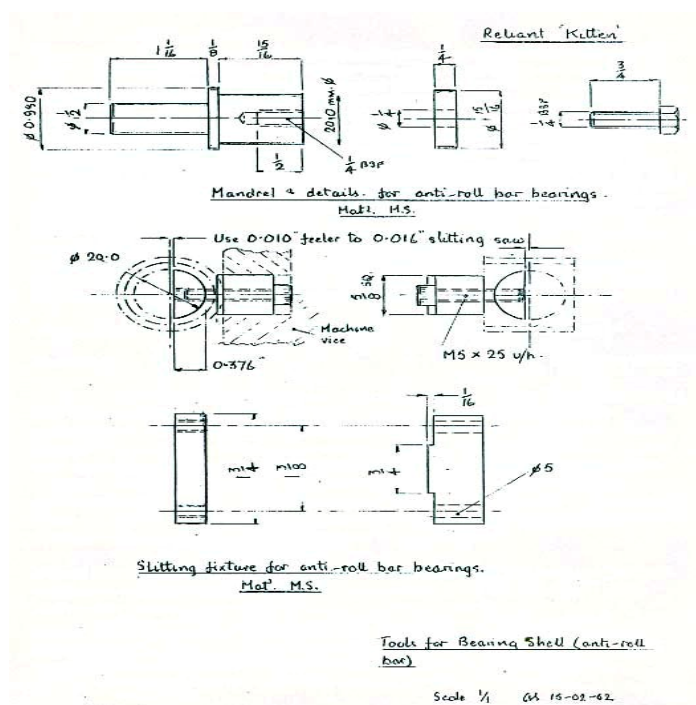
*Following on from the above, Alan wrote to me again as follows :-*

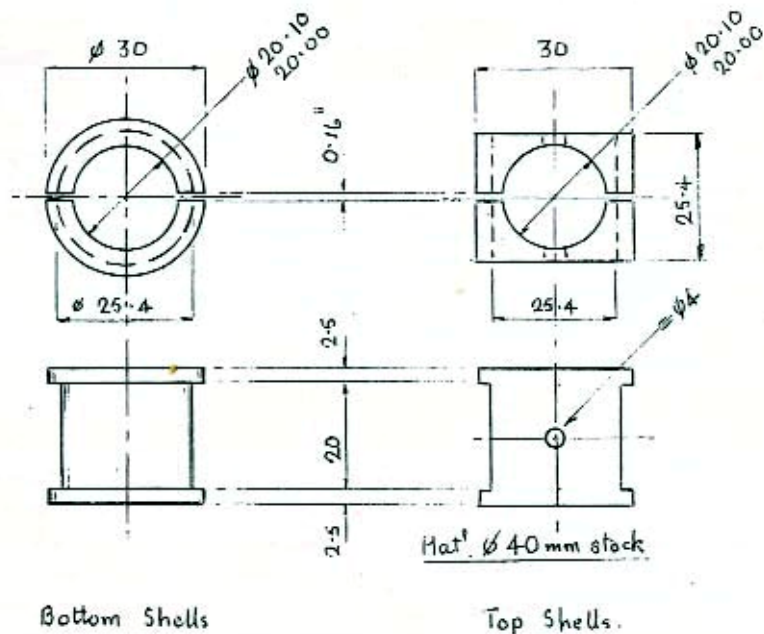
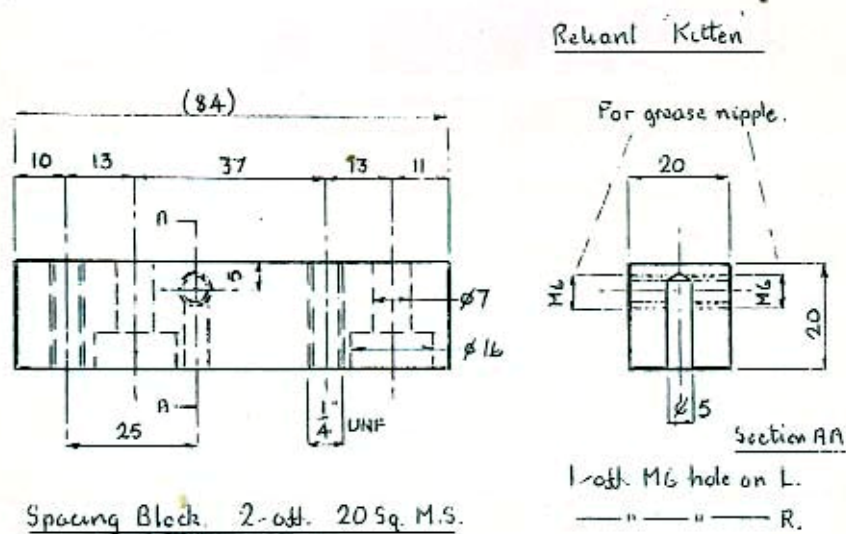
February 2002

When the spacing block (see previous article) is fitted, the bend of the anti-roll bar is nearly horizontal under average load. This configuration gives maximum travel of the vertical link for minimum bar rotation.

(Just now, newsletter 44 arrived. Re. P.20, wiper - rubber washers, always exposed to U.V., and who knows how much to tighten the nut anyway? Replaced mine with Nylon and a dibble of gasket jointing compound about 7 years ago, and had no trouble there since.)

Alan





Bearing Shells. Mat. Nylon. or similar bearing plastic.

Anti-roll bar Block & Bearings  
Scale 1/1

## Technical Tweaks from Thetford

35 Griston Rd. Watton, Thetford, IP25 6DN

Dear Brian,

19th Feb. 02

A point from the last Mewsletter was the fitting of 12" wheels, I did this once just to see if they fitted, and they did! Yes the front ones did want to foul on the fibreglass at anything more than a modest steering turn, the hacksaw was needed! But as far as wheel studs where



concerned the standard ones were ok. although the stud hole in the wheel was bigger than the stud in diameter, but this centralising problem was taken up by the chamfer on the nuts. In fact I have had a set of 5" (wide that is!) mini wheel on my 'wizzer' for many miles, and they have the larger stud holes, no problem. The 12" wheels I tried were off of a Hillman Imp (well Husky actually, but not a lot of you will know what that was!) So it would seem that fitting of 12" wheels would depend on where they came from.

Foxes Den;- Yes we can (just) beat that, two of us without intending to rush took out the Kitten engine in 20 mins. We had just done 80 miles in convoy so that the car less engine got moved, the engine then being taken out to be 'permanently' installed in another car. As the engine had only just been fitted, and we knew it was going to come out again 'very soon' and we both knew what we were doing, bingo! In fact the engine was still warm but not quite throbbing when it was shoved into the back of Kitten No 2 to be taken back 80 miles to London for its proper reinsertion. Brian, it's a pity you don't publish addresses or phone numbers more fully, then we could communicate direct.

Clutches;- When we look through the Mews letters and especially through Dick's excellent Index, we do NOT see any reference to Clutches! Are these things so reliable? But when purchasing a Kit the other week, and supplying the information 'Clutch for Kitten and/or Robin' they are all the same! One supplier has two options for the plate. At this point my information becomes 'hearsay' but the best guess was that some/all Rialtos had a different spline into the gearbox. Can anyone tell us?

I think that is all 4 now, Brian, if I come up with any more Pearls I'll let you know.

Alan.

## **Sales and Wants**

For Sale :- Fox, engine and gearbox removed, but available,

For Sale :- P reg. black Kitten estate, electronic ignition, drivers door lock needs attention. Yours for £250,.

For Sale :- Salamander, Kitten based Ford engined automatic, yours for just £200. Runs well.

For Sale :- Rebel exhaust manifold in mint condition.

For Sale :- Reliant Kitten Pick-up, converted from van with extended chassis and wooden buck with tailboard. 1981 model, maroon. No tax or test, needs tidying and bottom ball joints (supplied) as featured on the cover of Mewsletter Workshop manual and parts list included, plus many spares. Photo available. Fixed price of £400, no offers for this unique vehicle

For Sale :- Reliant Kitten van derived estate car. No tax or test. Tidy example, needs work for M.O.T. Ring Brian on 0141 8866117

For Sale :- Reliant Kitten saloon. 1 owner from new, regularly Waxoiled, and well maintained. Laid up this past 5 years. Engine last run Dec 2001. This well looked after family friend is looking for a good home. Contact Martin

For Sale :- Bond Bug, M reg, in need of restoration, most parts included plus recon engine, secondhand gearbox & axle,

For Sale :- 1964 'B' Reliant Rebel – factory development car No. 3. (John Bowcott's old car) Full history file and truckload of spares, many new. Huge potential, ring for the full story

For Sale :- Reliant Kitten workshop manual and parts list , and Fox parts list, all genuine in blue binders £ 10 each plus pp

For Sale : A pair of new Kitten gas filled front dampers. £ 75. Contact Mr. Mellor

For Sale :- Well free to a good home in fact, a yellow Rebel saloon. No tax or test on road till 2001. This car is a runner, with new brake cylinders and will be scrapped in May if a new home cannot be found ! Contact D. Ostler

For Sale :- From a 1977 kitten, 1 reclining passenger seat. 1 rear seat back, plus rear seat base material. Tan trim with fawn velour facing. Good condition £5 the lot to anyone who collects. Contact Simon

Wanted :- Foxes, M.O.T. not needed. Contact Steve Campbell

Wanted :- Kitten estate in good condition. Contact Terry

Wanted :- For a Fox :- front bumper / grille, and the two rear quarter bumpers. Contact Andrew Hudson

Wanted :- Left hand drive Kitten estate, contact Mike

Wanted :- A Speedo for a Kitten, must be 940 – that is the small number printed on the front of the bottom of the face. John Blagburn

## **NOTES**

I know that I am often going on about spare parts, particularly the difficult bits like steering racks. Over the past few years, I have nearly always had a reconditioned one in stock, as indeed I do at the time of writing, but another company who used to recondition them for me, has asked me not to involve them again. They simply cannot get the bits any longer. Now I do have a small stock of the bearings, and, over the past few years sufficient Kittens have been scrapped as to provide an adequate supply of racks for reconditioning – given that we can sometimes only build one good rack from two, or even three old units. The point of the story is that we must take all possible steps to ensure that any Kitten that is broken, has, at very least, its steering rack preserved for possible future use.

One frustration that you can help me with, is the matter of our 'From the In Tray' page. The Register receives an increasing number of invitations to participate in events, by the event organizers. Now I have no wish whatever to deprive you of such information, nor do I wish to have the magazine taken over by such information / adverts, which is really what they are. Now

don't get me wrong, some of the events sound fascinating, and believe me some of the programs are very well presented, some in colour, very well put together. But it takes time, effort, decisions, and space in our wonderful Mewsletter to pass the information on. I don't mind for a moment, if some of you actually take advantage of such information. As I have mentioned, I know that some of you go to Adrian's D.L.O.C. Great Eastern Rally. Anyway, I have decided, after taking advice, that one way to proceed, is to ask you for some feedback. So, let me know if you have attended any of the events advertised in here, I don't need a report on the event, though feel free to do so if you feel so inclined – just to know that you used the information in a positive way is enough. I will watch the mail closely over the coming months, and then review the situation of giving so much space to such matters.

Right, would Scottish resident Kitten owners please note that Brian Radford is coming up from Cornwall in his Kitten, complete with trailer tent, and basing himself at the top of Glencoe for 10 days, and would like to see as many Kittens as possible between the 12th and 22nd of May. Give me a ring if you can come along, or perhaps we can arrange to meet him on the way? Ed.

It only remains for me to wish you happy motoring, and of course to ask – when did you last grease those ball joints!

Brian

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