

Reliant Kitten Register

NEWSLETTER 55

November ~ December 2003



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 55

I am 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 Peter Lingard,

The Register is a member of the FBHVC, which monitors UK & EU legislation and lobbies on our behalf to protect our freedom to use vehicles of all ages on the roads. Readers are invited to show their own support of this worthy cause by becoming members in their own right. Contact the editor for details.

Our front cover is graced on this occasion a special that I have not shown you before. I present to you the "Flying Bathtub" a Kitten-based special owned by James Butlin from Higham Ferrers in Northants. James, a friend of John Pearce, our front cover man, is not, as yet a subscriber to the Register. The car is pretty much standard Kitten with modified hubs to accept the genuine Austin 7 wheels, and this very pretty Austin 7 replica aluminium body.

web page :- <http://www.uk-classic-cars.com/kitten.htm>

or have a look at <http://www.reliantkitten.co.uk>

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It should be noted that opinions and ideas, information and advice printed in this publication are as recommended by our readers and others, and, while believed to be accurate and correct, such information is given in good faith, and it does not necessarily have the approval of the Reliant Kitten Register, and cannot be guaranteed by either the Editor, or the Reliant Kitten Register. Owners must satisfy themselves as to the suitability of any suggestions made within these pages, as no responsibility can be accepted.

Right, I let you off lightly last time in this page, time to make up for that I think.

2003 once again saw us sign up more new people than I had imagined it would, (not the first time that has happened) about one a week on average, and, as a result, I have run out of most of this years' magazines. An excellent complaint I know, but it reflects poor judgment on my part! I always send out a copy of the magazine as part of the package that goes to those who enquire about the Register, and I suppose I ought to keep a record of just how many of them actually subscribe. The fact is that while many people respond by return of post, others take weeks or months, in one case over two years to respond, so it is potentially complicated, not to say time consuming, to try and keep meaningful records, and there are higher priorities. Gathering statistics is all very interesting, but what does it actually achieve? Certainly does not get this magazine put together!

I used to have 330 copies of the magazine produced, and that has built up steadily this year (2003) to 360, indeed I have had 380 copies of this edition produced. The big decision now is how many of the next edition do I have done? We always lose a few people for one reason or another at the year end, but, given that new subscribers normally receive all of the current year's editions, I would need to know how many new folk we will sign up during 2004 as well as how many of our existing cognoscenti will be staying with us – oh for a crystal ball!

That said, over the past two or three years we have averaged about a new subscriber a week, so I reckon I can make an educated guess.

Omissions from last time were really important matters like P.F.Spare's continued support by way of a free raffle of a year's classic car insurance. I felt that I lent their generous offer rather a lot of coverage within these pages last year, then I go and ignore it completely this year! One day a balance may be achieved. Thankfully Rob is an understanding man, and does not hold a grudge. So the promotion is still on. All those who have taken out or renewed a cherished car insurance agency insurance policy through P. F. Spare in the past year will have their name put in a hat, and the first drawn will be entitled to a years free cherished car insurance. The draw takes place in January, watch this space, and thank you Rob for being so understanding.

My thanks to Al Osborn for keeping us informed about matters at the F.B.H.V.C.'s A.G.M., as you will read elsewhere, they are trying to attract as many individual members as possible, I should have enclosed the relevant flyer / form. If not, and you would like to know more, contact Al or myself.

Kitten / Fox lower steering columns are becoming difficult to obtain, I sold our last one in October and can't as yet, find a replacement supply, so keep the old units, because there is a possibility that we can get the universal joints replaced on your old shaft. Watch this space.

Another important omission from my tale of our day at the Callander Classic weekend back in August, was to make mention of Eric Satterley who came not only in his Rebel estate from Sheffield, but towed his folding caravan behind the Rebel.

No, this Rebel does not have its original engine, not even an 850, but is the second Rebel I have seen powered by a Talbot Sunbeam 1.0 litre engine (like a Hillman Imp, but driving through a conventional (Sunbeam or Avenger) gearbox and propshaft to the Reliant back axle.) Eric, it was good to see you, well done, I hope that you enjoyed the rest of your visit.

It's that time of year again (well it will be by the time you read this – right now it is still October, and I have in fact only processed about a quarter of the renewal notices for 2003, yes, the one you sent to me 10 or 11 months ago! Yes I recorded who had renewed at the time, but I didn't, in most cases, update the vehicle record information which you were good enough to provide at that time. So I must get that task completed before I print the enclosed renewal notices, or you will still have vehicles you used to own shown as still being yours! "Must work harder" has to be a New Year's Resolution for me for 2004!!) That said, the other club I am membership secretary for has a similar renewal date to us, and so my incoming mail in January is quite phenomenal these years, and I need to keep on top of things or chaos ensues. Yes I know, nothing new there. Seriously, the sooner you complete and return the enclosed renewal notice the better, I'd much prefer to work really hard for a few weeks, than have it drag on for months.

Bob Neal was pointing out to me that Egham is not in Essex but in Surrey, I guess I got that wrong, I'll need to look out the letter and see, this was in connection with stainless exhausts.

I went to Edinburgh yesterday to say goodbye to Concorde. You know I am always going on about how bad my memory is, well I have a very clear recollection of an interview with the late Barnes Wallace, (he of bouncing bomb fame) in which he was asked for his views on Concorde, he asked the interviewer for an assurance that the programme would not be broadcast while he was still alive, and on receiving such an guarantee, went on to say his piece. I was sorry not to see that clip amongst all the extensive coverage. That said, it was good to see Raymond Baxter on T.V. again. (He used to drive a Jowett Jupiter you know!) The end of an era. I'm glad our cars last longer than Concorde did!

Human nature never fails to amuse and entertain me, you know the crowd, about 10,000 strong, gave the aircraft a spontaneous round of round of applause as it landed at Edinburgh, as though the plane could hear them!

I (and a few hundred others) were furious with the pilot of an Easy-Jet flight which was the last to land before Concorde, he stopped on the taxiway, right in front of us, to give his passengers a good view of Concorde coming in, and blocked our view in the process, mind you, in his shoes I'd have done exactly the same thing. (I did wonder what the penalty for stopping on a taxiway was?).

Moving on, our friends at Haynes Publishing have finally up-graded their on-line service. It used to be the case that we could not enjoy the benefits of our club member discounts from them if we bought on-line, that has now changed, from November 2003 you will, I am informed, be able to register on-line at www.haynes.co.uk where you will be able after registration, to select our club from a list of clubs, and then, you will be able to use our unique password or membership code as it will be called, that will be "REER".

You will not be asked for your membership number but they will check with me from time to time to ensure the system is not being abused. Again I would ask those who put the Mewsletter 'out there' on the net for us, to please ensure that the code is not put on the internet, thank you.

O.K., that's enough for the moment. I hope that 2004 is kind to us all, and to our beloved wee cars, and I look forward to hearing from you soon. All the best,

Brian

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Oh, my thanks to my brother Alan for the colour centre spread in this edition, just do not be expecting this treatment on a regular basis, sorry you have seen one of those pictures before, we printed it almost 6 months ago!

Rebel Round up

Dear Brian,

October 2003

Thanks for the reply to my e-mail to Mark Hayton about my Rebel. I live in North West Cumbria but the car is in Liverpool. The registration is ORJ 179M It's a long story but basically, it was originally a white 1973 (I think) Rebel van (700cc). It was one of three bought by (again, I think) an alarm fitting company but was only used for a couple of years before it was scrapped. As far as I know all three were scrapped at the same time. My dad worked for Bob Sergeant's in Bootle. They were the main North West distributors for Reliant parts in the 70s and early 80s. My dad was told about these three cars by one of the mechanics who worked there and he decided to buy it as a runabout. This would have been (I guess) about 1977 - maybe earlier. As my dad got there last, he got the roughest one (the engine was in the back in several cardboard boxes). We re-built it and fitted proper factory sliding side windows and a folding seat to turn it into an estate car. Over the years it earned its keep being my mum's car and then the car that my two sisters and I learned to drive in. Not long after passing my test in 1983, an uninsured driver failed to spot it and hit the offside front corner, buckling the chassis where the bottom wishbone attaches. He was decent enough to "cough up" for repairs and that's how we got the post-production chassis. This obviously gave the car a new lease of life and we fitted an 850cc engine. I then toured France and Spain with three (very close!) friends in the summer of '83 after my A levels. We did about 5000 miles and averaged 48 MPG!

When I finished my university course I was, apparently "insufferable" whilst awaiting my results and, as the final drive was completely "knackered" and we couldn't find a diff with a ratio low enough for the 850 engine to pull a trailer, I was given the job of finding a bigger engine - that's how the 1600cc Ford Crossflow came into the story. It was completely standard as the only intention was to give the car a bit more torque but it did cause a few smiles at the traffic lights! Until your e-mail, we did believe it was probably the fastest Rebel in captivity but in the light of Jim Spence's 1.8 litre Carlton-engined car, we might have to revise that claim!

It has spent the last ten years as my dad's "work" car. He's a mobile mechanic so you can imagine what the inside is like! You'll notice it's twin brother ORJ 178M in a few of the attached photos. He bought that in (I guess) about 1984 to use for work. Although we didn't know it, the car turned out to be one of the original three (having changed hands several times since we'd last seen it). ORJ 178M was finally scrapped when the chassis turned itself into a number of smaller "subframes" and the MOT inspector wasn't feeling kindly disposed towards the theory that the body was "structural" - which of course, it WAS by then!

The clutch (I think) will be OK to run the car round for a while but slips quite a bit. If someone wanted the complete car, I'm sure we could find a battery to throw in - but please don't expect to be able to salvage much of the body! The chassis is the only really valuable bit. Last time my dad spent any time under it he still couldn't find any rust. The mountings for the Ford engine were carefully done so that the chassis could be returned to "standard" spec without any major surgery (i.e. I'm pretty certain I didn't cut anything out - just added a few bits and these should be easy enough to grind off.)

Many thanks for your kind offer of an advert. If we can find somewhere to store it for a few months we'd be glad to take you up on it. I'll copy this to my dad and he will send you the details for the Register.

Thanks again, Roy Hopely.

Well, can we help the man out, and more to the point, can we save at least the chassis for the future ? Ring the man on 0151 9313985

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Foxes Den

Stainless or . . . grief!

There is from time to time a lot of information exchanged on Duncan Bradford's web group, and I enclose some of that here – just to prove that I do read it sometimes, and to share with those who are not 'on line' the sort of discussions that occur within this particular group now and again.

James Freer wrote as follows :-

I've had a good quality 304 stainless system on my Scimitar which is now 20 years old (Falcon Exhausts). It sounds much better than a mild steel one and worth every penny (well . . . it came with the car but I'd spend three times the price of a mild steel one). I've always found an exhaust goes when snow arrives! - lots of grief getting the old one off and putting a new one on in freezing conditions.

When it came to my Rebel I couldn't find silencer boxes or piping of good quality. I eventually bought a Tiger UV1 seamless & polished stainless one intending to do the piping myself. To me £50-60 is not a vast amount to pay for a box which should last the car's lifetime. Some exhaust folk will happily quote you £300/400 for a 'stainless system' which is poor quality and wouldn't last much longer than mild steel. I found Stafford Tyres do custom systems and Phil charged me £70 for the piping with 304 and fair thickness. He did an excellent job with the shaping and when asked about the quality of the silencer I'd bought - 'the very best'.

I now have a system that is better than most specialists would provide and recommend anyone to go down the route I did - Fox or Rebel. 'The very best' can be fitted at a fair price and it's once only. Stainless silencer boxes often have mild steel plates and internal mesh and are not of lasting quality. You can buy off the shelf ready to fit systems [spending twice what I spent] and then find it doesn't fit as well as it should do.

Yours, James Freer

Richard Plaxton at rich@plaxtons.fsnet.co.uk wrote in reply to the above :

Who would be making them? And why not mild steel so you can ditch them when they clog up with carbon?

Duncan Bradford took up the gauntlet then :-

Hi Richard, a company recommended on the Scimi group, or a local company I've found but not visited yet [they aren't stupid, they want to see what they're letting themselves in for!]

Why stainless?

My original Fox exhaust lasted 1 year & 1 month. It was cheaper to replace it with a s/s Kitten exhaust. This was in 1985, and I've only just replaced it, due to the flange breaking off [missing gearbox bracket]. Inside it was still fine after 80,000 miles plus, and certainly no sign of choking up with anything. Most Scimis have stainless exhausts on that have done far longer, and they cost little more than mild steel, if you can find someone to make in mild steel, that is. I've heard people say that exhausts get full of carbon, but never met anyone with first-hand experience of it. I'd think you'd have to have a very lenient MOT tester and a full pocket to drive an engine that let through enough unburnt fuel to cause problems.

To my mind mild steel is just what manufacturers use as a hopeful money-spinner. I don't think I've ever used it for replacement on any car 'cos I hate crawling about taking them off & on!

Duncan

So, there you are. Did you learn anything new? I don't know where these guys get the time for all that kind of thing, I don't often offer comment simply because I am too busy putting the magazine together, attending one event or another, or am just too tired ! Keep up the good work chaps.

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Membership Matters

As I said last year, and then didn't manage to get it done, it is the intention is to publish a membership list during the coming year, IF YOU DO NOT WISH YOUR DETAILS TO APPEAR ON SUCH A LIST, PLEASE COMPLETE THE ENCLOSED RENEWAL NOTICE ACCORDINGLY - NOW!

Membership cards :- These have already been printed for 2004, thank you Brian Radford, and while I have some further work to do on that front as regards those who have joined us since mid October, the rest of you will receive yours with the first magazine after you renew your subscription. I will apologise now for any quality problems, blame Bill Gates, the cards were originally created in the 1997 version of his companies software, then I messed Brian Millar about by up-grading to the 2000 version, and we could not print the logo, then Brian Radford volunteered to help, but he uses the 2003 version, and the font seems to get bigger all the time, hence the need to cut very close to the printing in order to make encapsulation possible, and I thought this thing called progress was meant to make our lives simpler ! Thanks Ian Millar, who originally did these for us, for modifying the programme again for me in November, next year I should be able to do them here !

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Plans for the future! Don't forget that Dave Price has kindly offered his services as regards the matter of planning something for the Kitten's 30th anniversary, so, Dave is the man, talk to him.

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The Tempestuous Trials of TEX

TEX 912R Was a 1977 Kitten Estate purchased by me in 1991. The Tempest Kit was built by John Box on a new Fox chassis, and was in fact the second production model built. John used it as a demonstrator, it was to have been the property of one Stewart Halstead the current owner / director of Reliant Partsworld, until 1991, when John urgently needed a Fox chassis and running gear for a Vantique. (Reliant were between owners at the time, and no new chassis, were available).

I bought the complete body kit (all painted, trimmed, wired etc) from John Box, all ready just to drop on to the reconditioned Kitten rolling chassis which I had prepared in anticipation.

Factory approved mods are as follows. Morris Minor rear axle with 5.4 (well 5.375 actually) to 1 ratio. Wheels are 163*13 on the rear and 163*13 on the front.

The Kitten engine was rebuilt with a Holbay cam and type 43F4 distributor with modified springs for the advance control. This was done to improve low rev torque for trials use. The radiator has a Mini Cooper core which helps cooling at low speeds.

TEX has won the class D award in the RAC / MSA National Championship for the last 5 years.

Jack Williams

Dec 2002

Thanks for that Jack, though I suspect that TEX had just a little help in his successful half decade of competition, well done. Ed.

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## Liege Page

Liege – Brake balance Improvement.

Ever since building my Liege I have been concerned that the front wheels tended to lock up too easily under braking. On smooth tarmac the front tyres squealed loudly without much provocation, off road it was worse. Using the brakes at all on mud usually meant locking the front wheels. I have noticed this on other Lieges too. During the Edinburgh Trial I was following another Liege driver when he braked hard. The amount of blue smoke from his front tyres was quite alarming. This is undesirable because if the front wheels do lock, then steering control is lost.

The 40:60 front to rear weight distribution of the Liege favours the rear axle by design, for handling reasons. If the boot is loaded up with luggage this ratio can be quite markedly increased. Some competitor owners carry two spare wheels or fit steel ballast plates to put more weight over the rear wheels to increase off-road traction. Because the cars have a low centre of gravity, the forward weight shift under braking is perhaps not as large as it was on the Reliant donor, causing the front end to be “over braked”. Many production cars, especially front-wheel drive ones, have the opposite problem of excessive forward weight shift causing the rear wheels to lock. Some cars have a compensator valve / pressure limiter fitted at the back to overcome this.

I concluded that the brake balance was incorrect on my car; there wasn't enough braking effort happening on the rear axle. I had a Dutton a few years ago and it had the same problem. I inadvertently overcame it when I changed to a later Ford rear axle type with a 3.09 ratio, in order to reduce the cruising engine revs. With the larger rear brakes this axle had, the car felt better balanced. I understand that the Dutton Owners' Club later recommended this type of modification.

I had previously considered replacing my Liege's front twin leading shoe drum set-up with discs in order to reduce the strong self-servo effect they provide. Disc brakes do not give a self-servo effect at all; this is why most modern cars have a vacuum brake servo to reduce the amount of effort at the pedal. However, a front disc brake conversion would require the sourcing of suitable discs and calipers and the design and manufacture of a type specific back-plate. The discs might need machining to fit the Kitten hubs. Not cheap or simple.

I also considered if I could keep the Bedford Rascal's larger brakes when I changed over to the Reliant rear axle. It's not possible because of the different wheel pitch circle diameter (PCD).

Prior to scrutineering at the Edinburgh trial, a number of us discussed various topics. Someone mentioned brakes and it was quickly obvious that the consensus of opinion was similar to my own. One owner said he was considering fitting a brake balance device. Since then I have been thinking about what else could be done to improve the present set-up.

The Liege uses brakes from a variety of Reliant donor cars, be it Reliant Robin / Rialto at the back and Kitten at the front and it is fairly widely known that the front brakes are the same as early Leyland Mini ones. Although I had no experience of Reliants until I bought my Rialto donor, I had previously owned a Triumph Spitfire Mk3 and worked on the brakes a number of times. I was certain that the Rialto rear brakes looked very familiar. Last week I dug out my old Rimmer Bros Triumph Spitfire parts catalogue and the Haynes manuals for the Kitten / Robin and for the Spitfire. The diagrams indicated that everything on the back-plate appears to be identical.

I mentioned this to well known Liege owner Colin Marshall and we both began to look a little deeper into the subject. I discovered that during the life of the Spitfire, the manufacturer had fitted three different rear wheel cylinder sizes at various times. We researched Reliant part numbers and discovered that the Rialto also had two different sizes used during its time in production. In fact, I had previously wondered how my donor car came to have two different cylinder sizes fitted to the rear brakes! During the rebuild of the brakes for the Liege, I had bought a pair of overhaul kits and found that one of them didn't fit because the cylinder piston was a different size. I reconditioned one side with the repair kit and bought a new matching cylinder to replace the "odd" one.

I now had the following information about the Spitfire wheel cylinder diameters:

Spitfire Mks1, 2, Early Mk3 – ¾ inch.  
Spitfire Late Mk3, Mk4 & early 1500 – 11/16 inch.  
Late Spitfire 1500 - 5/8 inch.

I couldn't find any information why these were changed so I concluded they must have been adjusting the front / rear brake balance! A larger diameter wheel cylinder gives more braking force at the shoe, a smaller one less.

I decided to do the same to my Liege. I took off a wheel cylinder and measured the existing piston size - 11/16ths. This meant my only option was to go for the early ¾ inch ones. A quick phone call to my local friendly motor factor was all that was needed, they had them there the following morning and they only cost £9.48p each including VAT. It took about an hour and a half each side to change the cylinders over; obviously the brakes need bleeding afterwards.

The result? MUCH improved braking, the car is now much more balanced and stable. The rears are now taking more of the braking effort and have reduced the over braking at the front. I therefore thoroughly recommend this modification for the Liege.

Some owners have lengthened the levers that operate the brake shoes by about an inch, to obtain a more powerful handbrake. Changing these requires the wheel cylinders to be disturbed, so both jobs can be done at the same time.

The part number for the ¾ inch wheel cylinders I used is Motaquip VWC328.

Paul Wheatley

24th October 2003

*Paul, thanks as ever for a well written and easily understood article, it was good to see you and little Lucy (both of them) again the other week, Arleen says thanks for the T, keep up the good work, Ed.*

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Dear Brian,

November 2003

My book about the history of Reliant is finally out, and, as we discussed, I can offer it to your readers at £29.50 + £3.70 P&P. People must tell me that they saw the book advertised in the Mewsletter to take advantage of this offer. - Cheques/postal orders payable to D. Lockton, Woodlands, Exeter Road, Dawlish, Devon EX7 0NZ



*Daniel's book "Rebel Without Applause Reliant from Inception to Zenith" is now available after much research by Daniel. This first volume covers the company's history from girder fork vans to the Rebel. With over 250 pages It is, I can tell you from experience, an interesting read – make someone you know a good Christmas present ? Ed.*

## **Mewsletter Christmas Quiz 2003**

Five members of the Reliant Kitten Register each have a different model of Reliant. They are all lined up for a concours group photograph.

The white Reliant is parked to the left of the green Reliant.

The person insured with Norwich Union owns a Fox.

The owner of the yellow Reliant is insured with AON.

Mr. Haydon has a red Reliant.

Mr. Walker drinks tea.

The white Reliant owner drinks coffee.

Mr. Mathews owns the Tandy.

The owner of the Reliant parked in the centre drinks beer.

Mr. Parker is insured with Footman James.

The person insured with the RAC has parked next to the Kitten.

The Rebel is parked next to the person insured with AON.

Mr. Taylor owns the Reliant parked on the far left.

The person who drinks stout is insured with the AA.

The blue Reliant is parked next to Mr. Taylor.

The owner insured with the RAC is next to the wine drinker.

Using the above information and by simple deduction and logic, answer the following question :- Who owns the Liege ?

Tony Plowright November 2003 (Winner of the 2002 Quiz)

*I have to say that I defy anyone to work that out in their head! Many thanks Tony for exercising the grey cells. First correct answer out of the hat on January 20th2004 here at 16 Glendee Gardens, Renfrew PA4 0AL wins a years subscription, Ed.*

## **Readers Letters**

*Right, confession time, I was, finally, processing the rest of the 2003 renewal notices this week, November, ahead of printing the 2004 renewal notices, and I find a number of things that should have been dealt with many months ago, including, this note from Terry Metson :-*

Brian, Please find enclosed cheque for renewal. The rear door on my Kitten estate is not too bright! The glass fibre is a tad frayed! Could you please put a wanted Ad in when you can for a rear door? Preferably from a deluxe model with wiper washer etc. Also, any tips (in back issues perhaps) of getting some heat from the heater. The top hose to the heater is red hot, the bottom one is luke warm. I know it's an air lock and have tried all the usual dodges for getting rid of it. Please help, Pam says her feet are freezing!!

Since restoring PRU I have covered around 10,000 miles and the clock is just about to return to zero! I get at least 50 MPG on LRP. I went to a Classic Car show in October and PRU created a great deal of interest.

My other everyday car a MK3 Cortina GT, is getting quite annoyed as she is rooted to the spot most of the time now. I also have two Rileys and a Peerless, but I find driving the Kitten really refreshing, apart from the heater saga.

Keep up the good work, Terry

*Well, that was written in December 2002, and I only responded in an apologetic telephone call in November 2003. It was Pam who answered the 'phone, and she didn't sound as though her feet were frozen, no thanks to me! Terry told me that he usually runs the 'other' cars during the summer, with the Kitten taking over for the winter stint. The back door is no longer a pressing problem, nor is the heater, it being somewhat improved, but he does have an annoying problem with the window in the passengers door, it keeps falling off the runner. I told him that Phil Hallam can fix that in less than half an hour, but that was not a lot of help due to the 300 or so miles that separate them. Anyway, I am forgiven, which is a relief, and Terry told me that on his recent check of MPG, the Kitten did 51, which can't be too bad.*

*Still on the subject of renewal notices and my failings, Mr R. P. Hull of Leyland was good enough to advise me of the MUTT, which was to have been a Kitten based American Jeep look alike (another Jimp?) anyway, I did follow it up, the company, Total Design Services of Wigan, does still exist, but the lad whose plan it was, one Ian Davis, is no longer with them, and his dad, who is, didn't want to talk about it.*

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One Wally, two kittens and a useful old man!!

Brian, I wonder if you'd include this or my fathers letter, or both! In the Mewsletter. Oct.'03.

Meet the wally, James Clapham (kitten DUY 666S), the kittens, YLE 240S and DUY 666S and the useful old man - Tony Clapham (dad!). 18 months ago my dad found the first kitten DUY... in our village growing moss and lichen. She had been sat unused for some seven years but the owner had drained the oil and she wasn't in too terrible a condition. Dad suggested this as a project for us, me to learn and get a reliable economic car and for him to ridicule me as I know (knew!) nothing! First kitten bought but a slight problem... the passenger door had been fibre-glassed over after it was broken into many moons ago. After considering many ways of rectifying this we concentrated on the running gear and after some toil she was made to growl - no nice purring I'm afraid!

I returned to university at the end of the summer and the project was shelved until.... Dad finds a kitten (YLE.) in Teddington, London. No running gear but body intact, the idea was sprung. How many bolts hold a kitten together? Second kitten purchased and plans to switch the bodies hatched. A while after this dad was at a show looking for a kit car. After browsing and deciding the Morgan wasn't for him he spies the Liege stand. Need I say more? YLE is now destined to be Liege 54!

Come our second summer and with assistance of my younger brother (a tractor fiend) the first kitten YLE, was stripped naked to the chassis - poor kitten! The process repeated, chassis painted and bodies swapped with assistance of a few friends to lift the body on to the running gear of DUY. With a little time the brake lines, flexible hoses and cylinders were replaced as they had all seized. The master cylinder was overhauled and oh joy! She had brakes. On her first test the core plug blew, a major setback.

Why remove the head? Core plugs purchased, fascia and heater removed (4 bolts-takes a little persuasion!) and a 2 inch hole cut in the bulkhead. Quick application of socket as a punch and we're back in business. Full replacement just over an hour-is that a record?!! My kitten, christened Katy, flew through her M.O.T., and had a successful run down to Lands End from Exeter, but a slight lack of charging was noticed. This solved by pinching dad's alternator from YLE. Katy is happily ready to go back to uni. with me and has become a firm favourite with my friends - a bunch of 21 year old lads!!

Beware DUY 666S, orange kitten running between Berkshire and Devon and next year Liege YLE 240S shooting around the lanes on Dartmoor!!

P.S., I have cycled John O' Groats to Lands End and waved towards Renfrew as I cycled through Paisley!! Thanks a lot, James Clapham.

*Well, how could I resist? I mean he waved as he passed! Two sides of a coin, I have to say, and no disrespect whatever to Peter Davis, whom I greatly admire (the Liege Motor Company). Peter is very good in that he never promises a date when things will be ready, he is well aware of the other commitments and interests he has, and of how they keep getting in the way of what many of his Liege customers wish he would do with his time, but I will be amazed if your dad's Liege is running about anywhere before 2005 or even 6 ! Ed. Moving on then without further delay to the other point of view:-*

*Brian, you may like to include this in the mag, I think of it as:-*

A Tail of Two Kitties.

At Easter last year, (2002) James, my No 2 son purchased a Kitten that had been lying idle for about 7 years. It had suffered an engine failure when a core plug blew, the owner had fitted a secondhand engine but never completed the job to get it running. James also got the blown engine, a spare gearbox, and various other bits and pieces.

During the long summer vacation from University the engine was checked over, assembly finished and it was persuaded to start, but minor problems with installing the fascia meant that 1st and 3rd gears could not be selected, however progress was being made. An idiosyncrasy of Katy, as he has christened her, was that a previous owner had fibreglassed the passenger door closed, removed the locking mechanism and also the nearside seat.

It was planned that at Christmas we would attempt to open up the door, sort out the gears and generally finish the job. Life always introduces strange twists I find, last Autumn I went to the Kit Car show at Exeter with the intention of buying a Robin Hood Kit, found that it was not quite what I wanted as I approach retirement, so I wandered about the exhibition hall uncertain of my next step, when I discovered the Liege stand. Found that the car was more suited to my needs than the R.H. and surprise surprise, was powered by a Kitten (Reliant).

Sourced a donor Kitten via the internet, arranged a test drive at Peter's factory at Fladbury, and was hooked. Travelled to London in December to view and purchase the donor car, when James saw it he claimed the body as being perfect for transplanting onto his running gear, and so his project took a new turn.

During the Easter vacation we removed the bodies from both cars, this summer with easy access to everything, James checked each and every part of running gear, replaced all wheel cylinders and master cylinder seals, together with the flexible brake pipes, and painted the chassis. The next step was to fit the body from YLE 240S onto the Chassis etc of DUY

666S which proved easier than we feared, so far so good! Things really looked promising, Katy fired up and was driven around the farmyard where she had been worked on and back into the barn.

A couple of days later, when James went to finish fitting seat belts etc he discovered that the core plug had blown as he had put the car away, disaster, despondency and many 4 letter words accompanied his telling of the tale. Not fancying the idea of removing the cylinder head on a time x difficulty basis we approached the problem from another angle. The heater is held by only 4 bolts, with a bit of wiggling it was extracted, careful measurements facilitated the cutting of a 2" diameter hole in line with the missing core plug through the bulkhead and a new core plug fitted by means of an extension bar from a socket set. The said hole was sealed by bolting two 3" diameter aluminium discs together one each side of the bulkhead and the heater re-fitted, time taken less than 2 hours.

Katy subsequently passed her MOT with flying colours, and has just returned from a trip to Lands End and back, only problem encountered is a charging, or more correctly a lack of charging, so when that is fixed, Katy is off to Reading University.

Regards, Tony Clapham No. 653

PS Chronologically I think my version is more accurate! Also I NEVER seriously considered buying a Morgan, Westfield or a Robin Hood, yes YLE 240S was sought and purchased after visiting the Kit Car show!

*Tony*

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*And the latest word from Stable Cottage is :-*

Dear Brian,

24.10.03

I feel sure that you told me you had difficulty getting a picture of the Bobcat, well here it is.

As an avid reader of the Mewsletter small print, I notice mention of performance figures obtained by the Liege which sound about right to me.

Taking into account the infinitely variable performance delivered by the standard Reliant engines we felt that a Tempest would do almost 80, with a decent engine, on 12" wheels. Possibly a Tempest may be a little more slippery than a Liege.

All open cars are faster with the hood up. According to the rev counter, the Bobcat reached 102 on a downhill piece of the M6 running on 12" rear wheels and a 50 BHP engine. And the Bobcat doesn't have a hood, it's open all the time ! Ed.

Regarding the max revs. On a standard engine, factory folklore suggested that the big end caps detached at 8,500 RPM. However, a bog standard engine will revolve at remarkable speeds. Whilst running tests at an independent test house more familiar with Ford DV engines, we had a situation where an engine stopped whilst running free. The tester was sure it had seized. It had not, it had tripped the rev limiter on the dynamometer – which automatically shuts the engine under test down at the pre-set speed, in this case 7,300 RPM, he was impressed.



This letter was written during Concorde's last flight. I was not on it.

My best regards,

John

*John, thank you as ever, and your point about font size has been addressed (you were not alone in letting me know that I had reached the limit of acceptability).*

*While you were writing that letter, I was at Edinburgh to see Concorde arrive there for the last time. As regards bearing cap detachment at 8,500 RPM, I guess that is why the 750 racing boys strap them !*

*As regards Liege performance, I take your point regarding Reliant engine build quality, but very few of the Lieges use standard engines, many have fast cams and twin carbs together with balancing, porting etc., and I can't wait to get the chance to try one fitted with a blower – well one can dream !*

*I seem to remember that Roger Swan took a Dick Harvey engine out of his Tempest and fitted it to his Liege – Ho ho ho – surely not a migration pattern we want to encourage – by the way, I understand from the man himself that Steve Campbell has sold the Tempest project recently (October 2003) to Mike Phillips from Cranham. Good luck with it Mike, please keep us informed.*

*Thanks for the picture John, I am hoping that one of the other John's will use it as our front cover picture, the colourful bush in the background would seem to me to make an ideal Christmas cover.*

Brian

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Dear Brian,

24.10.03

In reply to your Dalbeattie correspondent 627 (Thomas Davidson), if the 1 pint usage was accurately measured (how?) and the test made at the end of a run long enough to get everything up to working temperature, the course not too hilly and no leaks in the fuel system, there's something very wrong with the engine, or the brakes are binding.

My own experience confirms the "Autocar" figure of 60 mpg at 50 mph, which means I get about 4 miles out of $\frac{1}{2}$ a pint of petrol.

If the test was conducted starting from cold, and it took a whole pint to travel 4 miles, it means that the extra $\frac{1}{2}$ pint went to get everything up to temperature. Considering the masses of metal, coolant and oil involved, $\frac{1}{2}$ a pint is not too much.

On a lighter note, my Kitten recently gave a lift to a 15 year old boy. He chatted away for a mile or two, and then asked the purpose of the knob marked "CHOKE" (Did you ever feel old and out of touch with today's world?).

Later in the afternoon he was heard inviting his friend (also 15) to "come and have a look at this COOL car." In touch again?

A. Shaw - Staleybridge

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Dear Brian,

30.10.03

Thomas Davidson's error in his 850cc Kitten fuel consumption check is as follows:-

Given 5 1/2 yards = 1 pole, Thomas states he already travelled 5 yards, but says he further travelled 1 foot 7 inches which is 1 inch more than half a yard, so Thomas has travelled just over 4 poles, just over 10 chains, just over 8 furlongs, and just over 4 miles. The proportions are as follows :-

Miles	3	3.00000000
Furlongs	7/8	0.87500000
Chains	9/80 (8*10)	0.11250000
Poles	3/320 (3*10*4)	0.00937500
Yards	5/1760 (8*10*4*5 1/2)	..	0.00284000
Feet	1/5280 (8*10*4*5 1/2*3)		0.00018930
Inches	7/63360 (8*10*4*5 1/2*3*12)		0.00011047
Giving a total distance of			4.00000977 Miles
Therefore m.p.g. = 4.00000977*8/1 pint =			32.000078 m.p.g.

Ask me another, Derek Argyle - Camberley

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Dear Brian,

28th Oct. 03

As you know I'm new to the Kitten Reg. I've always had a soft spot for these cars and have been near buying one once or twice when they were newish. I have however Reliant experience as my mother bought a new Regal 3/25 in 1964-BMA 17B if it's still out there, which I very much doubt, - I got to wash it!

Anyway, I have just got my recently acquired Kitten Estate through the Motty with just a warning about slight play in the top ball joints. What's the current situation with these Brian, regarding price/availability/exchange? (No problem with top ball joints, as far as I know all the usual suppliers have them in stock, and the Register has a stock also, they are so prolific that we have no need to be reconditioning them, though one has been done to establish the principal, but the cost exceeds that of a new one by a substantial margin. From memory they come in at about £25 a time, Ed.) I have been running round locally to find its weak spots prior to serious use-stand in transport whilst my Herald Estate gets some attention. Incidentally it makes the Herald (1300) seem big, lazy and torquey by comparison-like getting out of a Hillman Imp and driving off in a Humber Super Snipe. I by now, already understand the term-Pocket Rocket. (When entering competitive events some of us call the team the Resin Rockets, Ed.) I've had to sort out a fuel starvation problem and fix things like locks and the heater etc. (it's been standing 8 years and it always surprises me how inactivity renders serviceable things inoperable). Before I could move it I had to spend a happy hour or so with a hacksaw Rambo-ing my way through dozens of brambles that were busily growing out of the wheel arches and engine bay.

The engine was sitting on the passenger's seat which did wonders for the upholstery.

Back to the main plot, I was driving along the other day thinking it was running quite well at last, apart from not wanting (yet) to rev enthusiastically into the upper reaches of 4500

and beyond, which unfortunately for most of my engines is where I think things get entertaining, when there was an ominous heavy "thump" from up front. I stopped and got out into an ever larger pool of water and discovered that the fan had somehow come into violent contact with the rad. Don't ask - I've no idea, yet. (all the mountings are new). So for now it's another unscheduled pit-stop!

I want to say my bit about snail cams. Mine were seized solid until I got at them with WD and the mole-grips, after which they spun like propellers. What a crummy way of adjusting the brakes. But I have a mate with a lathe. So we got out the angle grinder and removed (carefully) the external adjusting post so the cams fell off the back plates, which were fortunately O.K.

So now we had 4 snail cams minus square posts. Onto the lathe. Drill a 5/16 hole into the cam where the post was, noting the fact that they are eccentric not central, to a depth of about ½ an inch, and tap the hole with a 3/8 (whit in my case) tap. We then found some 1 inch x 3/8 whit alien headed grub screws, my mate has oodles of this sort of stuff. These grub screws were wound in and then cross drilled and roll-pinned in place.

They now went back onto the back-plates with a plain washer and a lock nut. The brakes re-assembled and the adjustment provided now by turning the snail cams with an Allen key, and then anchored with the lock nut. Easy, and they stay exactly where you put them. The Kitten brakes are noticeably better than the Herald's, which has (non servo) front discs. But then the Kitten only weighs half as much as the Herald.

Just thought I'd pass on these ramblings from a new member by way of a contribution.

Mike Barcroft - Memb. No. 669 - Manchester

Thanks for that Mike, good to hear of another Kitten returning to active service after a rest, please keep us informed, Ed.

Scan sketch of snail cam mod in here please

Aaaarrrrggghhh, the Editor mislaid the sketch – fire him, that's what I say!!

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Dear Brian,

November 2003

Thanks or the speedy response. I particularly enjoyed the "Mewsletter"

What a pleasure to read a car club publication written by someone who can actually spell and punctuate! It is good to know there still exists someone who does not need "spell check" to figure the difference between to, too and two !

Looking forward to the December issue, I will try to provide a contribution for a future edition.

Henry Wheeler - Cheshire

Such flattery, if only it were true ! Still it is good to feel appreciated. The facts are that I do use a spell checker, have each edition proof read, (thank you dear) and still I always find mistakes when I get the finished article back from the printers! I do however do my best, and

while it is far from perfect, it probably is just about good enough. It certainly is good to be appreciated, thank you Henry, and welcome. Ed.

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A Purfick Kitten Run – almost!

I thought I would write a little something about Pat and I, and our holiday in the lowlands of Scotland, seeing as we did it in her Kitten. Well to start with some Reliant people thought we were mad. We would never get there, and as for going on the motorway, our brains must be missing. But we ardent Kitten owning R.O.C. members know different. The one thing I did think about, is that when Pat and I went on long trips before, it's been on the R.A.T. (Reliant Annual Tour) runs. Pat and I did Ireland together and Pat did the Three Moors Grockel Run with her grandson, then of course we had the other R.O.C. members with us, which made us feel safe.

Pat had so wanted to do the R.A.T. run 2003, because she had never been to Scotland, but the schools up North closed sooner than ours, and as we both look after our grandchildren in term time, it was impossible for us to do it, so that is why we ended up going to Scotland for a weeks holiday in October 2003.

We started off from Devon; as we are in the Exeter branch of the R.O.C., at around 15:00hrs, to go to stay with a friend of mine who lives just outside Liverpool. We decided to stop on the way up before we hit Glasgow. We arrived near my friend's house at 20:00hrs and that was with two stops, good going. Now those of you who know Ian and I will realise right away, I said near my friend's house, could I find their house? Could I heck. After going up and down the same bit of road, I asked Pat to ring Tony, my friend's husband, to guide us in. That was fun as well, as Pat had trouble understanding Tony's Liverpool accent, but we had made it, and no problems with the car. John, Pat's husband must have really worked hard on the Kitten, it ran beautifully.

Next morning, with a full English in our tums, we started off at 09:00hrs. We stopped at a garage to check the oil, as John had told us to do, and finding it needed some, we went into the garage shop. What oil do we need to put into a Reliant Kitten? we ask the young attendant, he looked at us funny like, and shrugged his shoulders. Well, now this is where buying draw prizes for raffles comes in handy, 15/40 rings a bell with me, anyway oil bought, try and get the cap off, you men do things up so tight, we had to ask the young man to do it for us, he seemed to pick up on our accents and chuckled about us getting so far in a Reliant, when we say we are off to Scotland for the week, he just laughed out loud. So, onwards and upwards we go.

We are meeting my cousin Bill at the end of the motorway (M74), so we have to turn off at the turning for Rutherglen and wait. Bill meets us and we follow him to his house. The run up was very good. The time was 14:00hrs.

Bill and Ella have a caravan near Largs, and they are letting us use it for the week. Pat and I are so glad Bill said we should follow him and Ella down to the caravan. I don't think we would have found it. The journey down is very pretty on the coastal road. We stopped on the way down, I think it was near Port Glasgow to have a meal. The caravan is at Skelmorlie and the views from the caravan windows are breath taking. I don't know how many Bill thought we could fit into a Kitten with the amount of food he left in the caravan - anyway the dear little Kitten had got us there and it didn't cost a lot in petrol, also the weather had been very good to us.

Our first outing, Monday, was to Largs, to find out about the ferry crossing to Cumbrae, and to look around, hey guys, there are great sweet shops in Largs. Tuesday, the wind did blow, so we went to Ayr for some retail therapy, and took photos on the sea front. Wednesday we had a ferry ride from Largs to Cumbrae, the sea was a bit choppy, so thank goodness it was only a 10 min sailing. We went on foot as there is a bus the other side that takes you to the only community on the island at Millport, from Millport you can hire bikes and cycle everywhere. Thursday it is going to be Arran. We caught the ferry from Ardrossan and it is about a one hour sail. Now the wind is still blowing and to add to it there's rain as well, nothing ventured nothing gained as they say. The Kitten was left on the quayside, as once again there is a bus on Arran that will take you all around the island. As we picked up our tickets we were told that the last ferry had been cancelled due to the weather forecast. I must say Arran is marvellous, the weather was not good so we did not see it at its best, at its best it must be A1. You can see why they call it Scotland in miniature. The roads leave a lot to be desired though.

I had rung Brian Marshall of the Reliant Kitten Register and R.O.C. Thistle Branch, to let him know that we had made it up to Scotland. He had said that if we had any trouble to give him a ring. It's great the club spirit is still going strong. Pat and I would like it known we think Brian is an angel. Friday we were going back to my cousin Bill's to stay the night before the journey home. Brian had offered to meet us in Wemyss Bay for lunch, and then guide us back to Glasgow. Pat and I are so grateful as we realised we would not have found it quite so easy without him. We had a nice meal and Brian was such nice company, we were sorry to see him go when we got back to Glasgow. Thanks Brian.

Friday night we stayed at Bill and Ella's, hoping they would not mind us getting up at 05:00hrs on the Saturday morning. As it was they got up to make sure we had breakfast before we left, and for Bill to lead us out to the motorway. 0600hrs on the dot we are in the cars ready to go, Bill starts up and drives off, the Kitten just goes clank and nothing else, oh dear never mind let's call the A.A. man. Ian makes sure I have everything the A.A. have to offer because I do a lot of travelling on my own. After a one hour wait the very nice man comes, he tests the car and tells us the battery is dead and we need a new one, and that it is down to us, but he has no idea where to get a battery like ours. Two women are supposed to sort this out, hundreds of miles away from home and they won't do another call out on the way home, because it was the battery, HELP !!. All I can think off is to ring Brian. Bless him, he came over to Bill's and he knew a place where they made and sold batteries. Of course they did not have the one we wanted in stock, but Brian knew how to modify the car to let a standard one fit. We cannot thank Brian enough for what he did.

It only took us nine hours travelling to get home, all the way down the motorway it ran fine, as soon as we turned off towards Pat's home on the side roads near Tiverton, the amp meter arrow dropped right off, by the time we got to Pat's house in Thorverton the lights had nearly gone out, Still we got home safely.

Funny this thing with the amp meter, it had been happening on and off all week, we had been asking about it, even asked the A.A. man but no one seemed to pay much attention to it, so we didn't, but if you want to know what the cause was, you will have to ask the man that knows, Pat's husband John.

Teresa Gibson.

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Thanks for both the article and the praise Teresa, it really was no bother, and good to see you and Pat. There is absolutely no reason why a Kitten cannot travel the length and breadth of the land (he said having done Lands End to John O'Groats in his a few years ago!) They may not have all the mod cons of modern machinery, and are pressed to maintain 70 MPH on long uphill stretches of motorway, but they do return excellent fuel economy if you can keep the speed down into the 60's. Oh, I think the gauge was a voltmeter, and I did spot it, but given the circumstances and time restrictions, decided to let you get home ! Ed.

A Osborn, 20th October 03

www.AOservices.co.uk

The F.B.H.V.C. A.G.M. and all that

The Federation of British Historic Vehicle Clubs had their 2003 AGM on the 18th Oct at Paulerspury the home of the Rolls Royce Enthusiasts Museum off the A5 (Silverstone Way!) so as we are members, and I am an individual member, then a trot up there seemed the thing to do on a grand Autumn morning. It also gave me the excuse for a decent ride out on the Moto Guzzi (gasp horror shock!!) before winter sets in. (PS Kitty car is pinking to the point of worry and just might need some attention soon).

The AGM details of persons in posts and accounts, all went along swiftly and smoothly, names and details I won't bore you with, except that they seem a very august body with their ear to what's going on in Parliament, DVLA, FIVA, the EU and elsewhere that dares twitch an eyebrow towards anyone who is enjoying his old vehicle.

The AGM over, there was a short conference on the legal / liability side of spares sales / manufacture. If you / we must do this, then at the end of the day someone / body must be responsible, and covered so that should any suing take place then any one person / club does not take the brunt of this. Ensure Limited liability and take out product liability insurance are the first things to do. At this point it comes to mind for us smaller groups that to arrange remanufacture of parts through an existing manufacturer is the way to go, as of course they would already have in place their own insurance / liability cover.

Some other points from the FBHVC that have come from their Newsletter, and comments on the Saturday are that they are working with FIVA to do a survey of the historic vehicle movement in Europe, this will cost. Hence they are asking that as well as being represented through our clubs, we actually join as individual members for a nominal £10-00, for this you get the quarterly news letter as well as the satisfaction of knowing that these people who are doing their best for us, are being supported by you. Details with the Newsletter, or through myself. Their News letter will give you the gist of what is happening on various fronts. There is concern over End of Life Vehicle Regulations, bear in mind some countries have tried to install laws that say automatically 25 year old vehicles are removed from the road! There is concern over the banning of the use of cellulose paints, speed humps, leaded petrol – use it or lose it! SORN and number plate re-issuing have also come under their scrutiny. Did you know that to obtain a new number plate (in England and Wales) these days you have to present your vehicle documents to the registered trader, laws, rules and regulations abound! But the trade in any old plate is still widespread at car boots, the Police can't be bothered to take action!

Now another one that should be viewed with dismay is the attempt by DEFRA to impose new regulations on apparently abandoned vehicles. Good you say, cars dumped

down the by-pass are being vandalised as we speak do need taking away soonest by the council. BUT the present notice period for this is 15 days. Attempts are being made to reduce this to 5 days AND this applies to any "abandoned " vehicle on private land, i.e. your or your neighbour's land. Factors that will contribute to a vehicle being declared "abandoned" are a lack of current road tax, waste inside (an old door or wheel) a slack tyre. So beware, if such rules do get on the table, then your next restoration project in the garden, possibly considered an eyesore by a neighbour, could be missing when you come back from holiday!

By the time you read this I understand that part of this legislation will have gone before Parliament in some form, so be thankful that such as the F.B.H.V.C. is in there with our best interests at heart. DEFRA (Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs) have been questioned why such draconian measures are deemed necessary, there has not to date been any reply of consequence. You might care to check the DEFRA web site in the meantime, or even question your M.P. www.defra.gov.uk/corporate/consult/abvehicle/letter.htm

There is plenty more the FBHVC are looking at on our behalf. If you can't join then in writing letters of protest, then you can support them by becoming an individual member. Such membership costs just £10 and I think is very worthwhile. If Brian is really organised, he might even enclose the appropriate form.

Alan Osborn

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Thanks for that Alan, individual forms enclosed, now get out there and solve the pinking, and let us know how please. Ed.

Tales from Tore

Microwaving water!

I did not know this, did you? More gems from Dick Goodall.

A 26 year old man decided to have a cup of coffee. He took a cup of water and put it in the microwave to heat it up (something that he had done numerous times before). I am not sure how long he set the timer for, but he wanted to bring the water to the boil. When the timer shut the oven off he removed the cup from the oven.

As he looked into the cup he noted that the water was not boiling, but suddenly the water in the cup "blew up" in his face. The cup remained intact until he threw it out of his hand, but all the water had flown into his face due to the build up of energy. His whole face was blistered and he has 1st and 2nd degree burns which may leave scarring. He may also have lost partial sight in one eye.

While at the hospital the doctor who was attending him stated that this was a fairly common occurrence and water (alone) should never be heated in a microwave oven. If water is heated in this manner something should be placed in the cup to diffuse the energy such as a wooden stirring stick, tea bag etc (nothing metal). It is however much safer to boil water in a kettle.

General Electric were contacted and this, we are told, is their response :-

Thank you for contacting us, the information is correct.

Microwaved water and other liquids do not always bubble when they reach boiling point. They can actually get superheated and not bubble at all. The superheated liquid will bubble up and out of the cup when it is moved, or when something like a spoon or a tea bag is put into it.

To prevent this from happening and causing injury, do not heat any liquid for more than two minutes per cup. After heating let the cup stand in the microwave for 30 seconds before moving it or adding anything into it.

The local science teacher said this about the matter:-

Thanks for the warning, I have seen this happen before. It is caused by a phenomenon known as superheating. This can occur anytime water is heated, and will particularly occur if the vessel that the water is heated in is new, or when heating a small amount of water (less than half a cup). What happens is that the water heats faster than the vapour bubbles can form.

If the cup is very new then it is unlikely to have small surface scratches inside it that could provide a place for bubbles to form. As the bubbles cannot form, and release some of the heat that has built up, the liquid does not boil, and continues to heat up well past its boiling point. What then usually happens is that the liquid is bumped or jarred, which is just enough of a shock to cause bubbles to rapidly form and expel the hot liquid from the cup. The rapid formation of bubbles is also why carbonated beverages spews when the container is opened after having been shaken.

If you pass this on you could very well save someone from a lot of pain and suffering.

So now you know, pass the word. Mind you I never use boiling water to make coffee, it burns the beans ! Ed.

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A solution to part of the spares problem?

For some time, I have been intending to write, about what our next of kin will do with our spares, when we pass away.

It is a fact that car spares are the last thing on a grieving widow, or other relative's mind, and that clearing space often has a far greater priority than finding an appropriate home for the spares. My local auction room Proprietor often says that there is a great shortage of Auction items for men, because it is a fact of life, that most house clearances come about after a female dies, and not after a male dies.

What I would like to have suggested, is that we should add a clause to our wills, saying that our vehicle spares should go to the club, but as the club does not have a specific repository to put them in, you would need to be more specific.

I am sure that one of the aims of the club, would be to keep spares available, so that Reliant owners would be able to keep their cars on the road. Ensuring that spares, inherited by the next of kin of deceased members, is an important way of doing this.

When a widow writes in to the Registrar, or Membership Secretary, saying that a member has died, the condolency letter, that is sent in reply, should mention that one of the

aims of the club is to maintain a source of supply of spares and politely ask if the deceased member had any, and request that the spares are not destroyed.

That said, their needs to be a means to move and distribute the parts quickly, perhaps by auction. Members might be willing to lend storage space, or the Reliant club could buy a series of lock up garages (or similar premises) for the purpose. Once the Club has been given spares, we could even use the E-BAY auction web site to dispose of them. An article in the club magazine, listing the acquired stock and stating that the stock will be made available on E-BAY on a certain date, would mean that it would (hopefully) be sold on within a reasonable period of time. We could (of course) share the profit with the widow.

Individual readers should at the very least, add a clause to their wills, saying that your Executor, or next of kin should contact the Club, before disposing of the vehicle spares and tools. An even better arrangement would be to appoint a practically minded friend, as a second executor, whose job it would be, to clear out the garage of the vehicle spares (and perhaps the tools). This would take the strain away from the main executor and give this side of the job, to someone with greater practical experience.

Adrian Hanwell - Brentwood.

Adrian thank you, I too have been meaning for a long time to try and put into words what you have very kindly just done for me. I had recently to scrap a good Rebel saloon body, and watch three skips full of useful stuff being sent for scrap, when an old friend of mine passed away suddenly and unexpectedly. He had no immediate family, a sister-in-law and a nephew being all, and no provision in his will for what should happen to his workshop full of engineering equipment, materials and models, or any of his motoring bits and pieces. I did manage to save the completely dismantled Austin 7 (with no body at all), and most of the Reliant parts, albeit at some cost, but failed to find the steam engine, from a steam car, or the Triumph Gloria engine he had rebuilt, all very sad and frustrating, and all for the want of a bit of forward planning along the lines you suggest. Food for thought? Definitely.

Obviously, and you have touched on this, there is a potential problem of where to keep the parts so bequeathed, and someone would have to sort out the 'junk' from the useful, but the journey of a thousand miles..... and I do believe that you have seen to it that we are facing in the right direction before making that ever important first step.

Ed.

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Getting Technical

Reliant Fox Gearbox Removal and Overhaul Tips

If you've never tackled the above, nor had I, the following may be of assistance. With only a driveway and a slightly extended toolkit, plus the Haynes manual for Robin / Kitten, I managed a fair job, without too much difficulty, learning a lot along the way. The following is an account of how I did it and what I found out that the manual didn't cover, with some hints and tips for anyone else tackling it.

As the gearbox is removed from below, by lowering the rear of the engine, I used lightweight building blocks to support the vehicle. Not ideal, as they are liable to crack / crumble under stress. But they are light and firmer than axle stands. Use a wooden pad under each pile and between the top block and the chassis. Three-high gave enough

clearance: 1 pile across-wise under the front chassis cross-piece [LEAVE AN INCH CLEARANCE IN FRONT OF THE ANTI-ROLL BAR], and a pile supporting the chassis just in front of each rear wheel. At least one of these piles should run fore-and-aft for stability. Build each pile one at a time, putting the wood on top again each time one is added.

It is easier to disconnect things in the engine bay before raising the vehicle, however:-

Disconnect / remove battery.

Undo the top hose [no need to drain.]

Remove heater trunking and air-cleaner.

Disconnect carburettor at the nuts above the heat-exchanger. You can leave the throttle cable on, but remove choke cable, putting the trunnion in a plastic tub in a safe place, together with the other nuts washers etc from the engine bay.

Mark the position of the distributor by scoring around the clamp plate and remove, complete with all leads, for easy access to the starter. Plug the hole with a cloth ball.

Remove the starter top bolt only, for the moment. Wire or tie the starter to a point on the bulkhead so that when you remove the lower bolt it doesn't drop on you.

From inside:

Gear lever in neutral. Remove the console, gear lever surround and lever [prise out the C-shape spring retainer with a flat bladed screwdriver or similar]. Plug the lever hole with a cloth ball. Remove console slowly to see where the choke cable comes through the bulkhead, as it's not always easy to see on refitting. If a reversing lamp is fitted, the cable[s] may come up through the aperture. The feed cable is often wired from the brake lamp pedal switch. If convenient, disconnect the cable now, or later when access is easier.

Handbrake on as firm as possible. Raise the vehicle. The front wheels need to be at least a few inches off the ground.

From under the vehicle:-

Disconnect clutch cable: Remove both nuts, unthread cable, prise trunnion out of operating arm and replace it and both nuts on cable for safekeeping. Cleaning first is a good idea.

Unscrew speedo cable. The fitting is soft alloy, so be careful with the mole wrench!

Propshaft: Mark across the flanges with a hacksaw blade to enable you to replace this in line. Front is best marked on separation. A slight scratch is not enough – there will be several of those by the end...

Remove prop shaft. Rear end first:-

The bolts feed from the front, and need a half-inch open end on the head. The nuts are semi captive and can only turn a little. Another open-end half inch helps them to start though. You will need to release the handbrake and reset after a half turn of the prop shaft to get at all four. Tedious. Slide the shaft forward to disengage if it hasn't already dropped on your head.

The front bolts feed from the rear, and need a slimline half inch socket. Access is restricted by the shoulders of the U/J, but swinging the shaft one way or the other reveals the bolt heads at the 11 o'clock, or 1 o'clock positions. Turn for best access.

Anti-roll bar: This must drop to allow the engine to be lowered. Fixed to the chassis by four setscrews clamping the rubber bushes in a U channel, with a steel spacer. The setscrews originally thread up into the chassis. The whole lot tends to rust and it may be easier to saw or grind off the heads, remove the remains and replace with longer bolts and nuts, drilling out holes as necessary. In spite of the spacer, the anti-roll bar should really be fixed even lower, and further back, to alleviate expensive wear on the lower wishbone attachment point. The anti-roll bar bushes will be worn, and the bar itself will have worn thinner. A solution is to use rear anti-roll bar bushes from a Mondeo, which have a slightly smaller bore and are deeper on top, so lower the bar about 3mm. The space can be packed out with washers between the U-channel and the existing spacer.

Whatever, remove the brackets to allow the bar to be displaced as the engine is lowered. Check again that this will not foul the front pile of blocks.

Remove the nuts from the bottom two bellhousing studs now, before they are obscured by the jack.

Remove the lower starter bolt, retrieving the starter from above.

The rocker cover will almost certainly foul the bulkhead when lowering the engine, so remove it now, covering rockers with a cloth. The heat shield tray beneath the carb should clear, but bend downward slightly at its end lip to make sure.

Check any other cables and pipes can survive the lowering / tilting of the engine.

Position a jack under the rear of the sump, interfaced with wood, extended so it will lower enough for the gearbox to clear. The original scissor jack is ideal. Raise enough to take the weight from the rear gearbox mount.

Undo the gearbox mount nuts & bolts.

Lower jack carefully, until the driveshaft flange is still just level with the chassis bracket. It will probably require some levering forward against the pressure of the front engine flexible mounts with a heavy screwdriver or similar. Stop at this point to check nothing is fouling and to remove from inside the vehicle the two top bellhousing bolts, as access is now at its best. Loosen slightly all other bellhousing nuts while the assembly is wedged firmly.

Proceed to lower the assembly far enough to draw gearbox off, removing remaining nuts. Support in line as you remove it so no undue strain is put on the front shaft. The gearbox is light enough to support on one arm and guide with the other.

Refitting is indeed a reversal of removal. If the gearbox can be in a gear when refitting this makes it easier to line up the splines by turning the rear flange as you slide the box on. Leave the clutch cable until last for best access to other things. Obviously wash all parts, grease all nuts and bolts for easier fitting.

N.B. The gearbox overhaul section of the Haynes Robin / Kitten book is for an earlier gearbox, with the reverse gear on the opposite side. This means that when reassembling, the selector forks must ALL be in position in the box BEFORE fitting the reverse selector shaft,

not as stated in Chapter 6, section 11:13. Apart from that, as a novice I had no problem following the chapter successfully. I gradually learnt that you can use quite a big hammer to separate things like the rear cover from the shaft, and quite a lot of heat is needed to coax some other things apart!

Duncan Bradford, Norfolk, Autumn 2003

Duncan, thanks as ever, I have taken a couple of gearboxes to bits in my life, but never put one back together, all those balls and springs are just too difficult for my clumsy fingers, very intimidating for those of not so brave or so well trained ! Ed.

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Sales & Wants

For Sale : 1976 Kitten estate (orange) Completely rebuilt, unleaded head, S/S exhaust, new lights, new battery, yellow top engine, tow bar, resprayed, 12 months M.O.T., FSH, just been serviced, No tax, £1,500 O.N.O. contact Brian kitten@northmead.freemove.co.uk or see pictures on www.reliantkitten.co.uk Brian also has an impressive stock of new, reconditioned and secondhand spares for the Kitten including new headlights and taillights, upper wishbones complete with ball joints, a steering rack, good front dampers with springs, and a host of other bits.

For Sale :- Kitten saloon blue 1977 6I1/14701460 / 6J/85/102628 Dave Tatham stood for three years in a garage. Has to be rehomed.

For sale :- Kitten Saloon P reg 86.000 miles sweet engine ring Tony

For Sale :- Reliant Rebel 600 saloon, Tax exempt, and M.O.T.'d till Aug 2004. Some spare available. A great wee car, yours for just £200, Tony Pearson

For sale :- Looking for a new home is a one owner turquoise Kitten with 5 original Reliant alloy wheel. This car needs a set of brake pipes and an anti-roll bar bush and bracket to get through an M.O.T.

For Sale :- APRIL 86 Reg Reliant Rialto GLS Estate. 848cc yellow-top engine (6D/85/79070E). Approx 46,000 mileage. One lady owner from new until Jan 03. Reg No. C752 RUF. Colour : Red (recently resprayed to original). Very good condition. For sale at £750 Contact : Nick Peck

For Sale :- Fox chassis galvanised, in Watford has front suspension attached buyer collects, offers to Richard

For Sale :- 1994 Vauxhaull Astra 1.4 automatic. M.O.T. March 2004, Taxed till July 2004. Can deliver. Yours for just £995, contact Brian on 0141 8866117

For Sale :- A huge variety of Rebel and Kitten parts. I really need to clear some space in the lock-ups, so if there is anything in the secondhand line that you might be interested in, give me a ring. Brian 0141 8866117.

My Kitten van is still needing re-homed, and if you do not buy it soon, it may be recycled, so talk to me if you are looking for one of them. It has side windows and a back seat. Brian 0141 8866117.

Nigel Wesocct wants rear wiper arm for Kitten estate

Wanted :- Offside and nearside Kitten doors, must be structurally sound, but paint, glass, trim winder condition immaterial. Bruce Harding

Wanted :- Terry Dixon from Wiltshire is on the lookout for a good kitten estate

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Epilogue

Right, that's about it for now. I still have aspirations about uncovering the mislaid flyers, intend doing something about my failure to include pictures, even if they are black and white reproductions, and generally look forward to improving standards during the coming year. All of which will be quite impossible without your continued support, whether that support be simply by renewing your subscription, or by providing (or continuing to provide) articles for inclusion in this publication. Your help, support and encouragement are not only welcomed and appreciated, but are absolutely essential to the survival of the Register. Thank you one and all.

I do realise that I am blessed, many of the other clubs I belong to are often struggling to acquire material for publication, and while I am not about to name names, we are fortunate indeed to have so many contributors, both regular and occasional, and to have such a high calibre of technical expertise so willing and able to assist me in keeping everything together. (Oh, and my proof reader tells me that she totally concurs).

Now I am from time to time asked about a model Kitten, and in these times most things are possible. There is a model Robin currently available in a pewter / resin mix, which is of good quality, but quite small. (About right for those who have a 00 gauge model railway). The company who make them would do us a Kitten one, I have asked that it be an Estate, but (isn't there almost always one of them?) there is a minimum order quantity of 50, (ideally 100) and costing as they will, about a fiver a time, delivered, I am sure you can do the arithmetic.

O.K., things have moved on since I wrote the above paragraph back in early November. Negotiations have moved along, and basically it is up to you! The model will be commissioned if enough people send me a fiver, payable to The Reliant Kitten Register, you can add it to your renewal cheque if you like, (please make it clear if you are making a spares donation, or paying for a model Kitten), and if enough people do that, we will go ahead. The proposed schedule suggests that if we confirm the order in January, production of the mould will begin in February, and the models should be available in March and delivered in April 2004, always dangerous putting deadlines in print I know, but I'm feeling brave right now !

They will only be available at that price till the end of January, future orders will be £6.00 each, so save a pound and order now!

There should be a few extra bits of paper in the envelope along with this magazine, the Broquet people were prepared to take a chance on us, and have made a donation towards the postage of this edition in return for me including their flyer, don't be shy about mentioning the Register if you use their services, and so enjoy the discount offered. If you do, please let us know how you get on.

Right, listen up all you enthusiasts with a bit of space and a few pounds to spare. I really need to empty out the lock-ups. I sold an engine and gearbox last month, and the

difficulty I had in helping load them onto a trailer brought home to me that I really should not be trying to do such things. John Horth, one of our chaps from down Hull way, was looking for a Rebel Axle, I have several, but they are all at the back of the lock-up, and I simply can't get near them. It is, in my mind at any rate, quite unreasonable for me to always expect the same good people to help me out from time to time, and so I am wanting, nae needing for my own peace of mind, to move the vast bulk of the secondhand parts to a new home, and that means long before the end of 2004.

I will need help to do it obviously, and I really would not want to scrap any of it, but that is what will happen if an alternative solution cannot be found.

Moira has been complaining for weeks, months by the time you read this, about us having four cars at the house, (and only one of them a Reliant as well !) where we only have room for two, and I need to be able to get one of them in the lock-up. So the trailer will have to go too – it is the back half of a Rebel estate, come to think of it, it has a Rebel axle – Hmm, I wonder?

Anyway, you get the jist of it. If there is anything you would like, talk to me, I have 7 Rebel heaters there for example, no, they are not heavy, but they do take up a bit of space.

Still on the tack of my Rebel spares, Adrian Hanwell has kindly offered some of them a home, so perhaps you can help us out here, transport is the problem, how do we move, economically, several hundredweight of Rebel bits from Renfrew (near Glasgow) to Brentwood in Essex? If you can help at all, please get in touch. 0141 8866117 is the number to call.

Just room here for a plug again for our friendly insurance broker, P.F. Spare, who have kindly agreed to carry out the prize draw of a years free cherished car insurance. Those (and only those) who hold such a policy, through Spares, and are current subscribers of the Register. Will be included

Right, please complete the enclosed renewal form, including in particular an answer to the question about your willingness or otherwise to be included in the planned membership list, you would not believe how many folk simply ignored that part of the form last year. Also the current situation as regards your car, if I have it noted on the right hand side of the form, and indeed any omissions or details about vehicles you have sold, broken whatever since last time please.

Keep lubricating things, have a really good Christmas and New Year, and may 2004 bring contentment to us all.

Brian

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