

Reliant Kitten Register



NEWSLETTER 61

November-December 2004



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

Edited and distributed by Brian W Marshall,
16 Glendee Gardens, Renfrew, PA4 0AL

☎ 0141 886 6117

Fax 0141 561 5430

A Very Merry Christmas To All – And Don't Forget To Grease Those Ball Joints

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The Reliant Kitten Register MEWSLETTER 61

Rebel parts stock

Kitten / Fox parts stock

Rebel alternative parts

Kitten alternative parts

Fox alternative parts

Our Mutual Aid Spares scheme

Mewsletter pictures

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.

CD's containig the first 50 editions of the Mewsletter, full index and cross reference guide, and other Relevant information are available from Dick Goodall.

Our front cover picture this time is a surprise! Well, its' Christmas after all. I had to get the text of the magazine to the printers today if there was to be any hope of getting it back in time to post it before Christmas, they are so busy just now. And I do not yet know what the cover picture will be, so, as I said, it's a surprise – Merry Christmas.

web page :- <http://www.uk-classic-cars.com/kitten.htm> or have a look at <http://www.reliantkitten.co.uk>

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Wishing all our readers the compliments of the season, and a happy and peaceful new year in 2005

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.

Hello and welcome to our festive bumper edition. No sooner had I taken the last one to the printers, and was determined to get ahead with this one, than we had no less than 4 new subscribers in two days, and Andy Morgan wanting to re-join our ranks. All very welcome, but a lot of work in a week that was already quite demanding. Given my failings of the past, particularly the frustrating one of stopping part way through an article, and then mis-laying the bit of paper and so not being able to complete it, I am trying not to be so easily distracted. Stan Hodgson kindly sent me an update on the position of his Kittens, advertised in here before, and I was called away after typing up only the first two paragraphs of that story, and discovered on my return that my beloved, in her attempts to keep the rest of the house tidy, had put the mail on my desk, so burying Stan's letter – what is a man to do?

Yesterday's mail brought 7 envelopes, three of them were new subscribers, as mentioned above, so no complaints there, but over 25 bits of paper in all, and I had not finished dealing with them when today's arrived (while I was out at the printers with edition 60). Today's post brought just 5 envelopes, but still over 20 bits of paper, one of them a new subscriber as mentioned, and another wishing to return to the fold, great stuff – but I need to work harder to keep up!

Then there are the Christmas cards to be done, Moira used to start on them after our annual break, which was traditionally in September, so by October, she would have dug out the notebook from the past, lined up half a dozen pages, and begun writing the names in. She is very good, always choosing the right card for the right folk, saves me a lot of heartache, all I have to do is produce the address labels, and address and stamp the envelopes, it works well, but re-decorating has kept us back this month, so things are behind.

What has all this got to do with anything I can hear you thinking, well, just trying to explain any shortcomings on the magazine front – this thing called life keeps getting in the way of what we would really rather be doing.

Then this morning, less than 36 hours after dropping the magazine masters off at the printers, I get a telephone call telling me they will be ready for collection from 08:00 hours tomorrow morning, (they normally take a week to ten days) but the computer is playing up – my fault, held the right shift key down too long, and selected the wrong option – don't even go there, so I could not produce the address labels – talk about frustrating !!!!!!!

Then in October we had a few days away in the Lake District, and enjoyed it so much that we are going back again in November – better rates off Season! So things will no doubt get even further behind! That said, it is now October 26th and this has already passed the 10,000 word mark – should I serialise longer articles, or keep some back for next time- no, I will press on, the Christmas edition is usually a bumper one – enjoy.

Have a great time over the festive period, and a really wonderful time in 2005.

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Rebel Round up

Brian,

4th October 2004

Remember Me? I lived in Cheshire, and was trying – slowly, to rebuild a 1969 Rebel saloon registration number TKC 869G.chassis 100715. I then got a job in the Isle of Man, and could not take the car with me, and so it was then passed on to a friend, the intention being that he would finish it off (*am sure you meant complete the rebuild! Ed!*) Well he started, and never finished.

Between us we got the car to the following stage.

Rebuilt rolling chassis, second hand but good engine, and the bare body shell back on. The body now needs minor GRP repairs, a repaint, and then the windows in, along with the interior and

exterior trim. To get this far we have cannibalised a really rough 1965 Rebel EWH 265C, chassis number 100099.

When my friend decided that he could not realistically finish the car, I decided that we had come too far to give up now. So, soon I will ship a large box of bits to my new home here in Dog Mills on the Isle of Man.

Right, that's the update, now then, can I re-join the Register please? I have actually missed the magazines – back issues needed I think.

To let you know how things have progressed I have attached some chassis photos and also two stories, all true, that describe part of how I became stuck with a Rebel that refused to die.

Andy Morgan - Dog Mills - Isle of Man

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Well, firstly an introduction. In the autumn of 2000 I became the new owner of a 1969 Rebel, having found one languishing on a piece of grassland in Heswall, Merseyside. This car needed a bit of repair and the chassis had to be welded here and there. Having taken stock of the situation I decided that a supply of spare parts could come in handy, and responded to an advert for a Rebel in the Bolton area. This car was advertised basically as "for spares or repair" and sounded ideal.

So I telephoned the vendor, who I shall call 'X', and he described the car to me as follows:- The chassis is in good condition. The body is quite good. It has just been stood a long time. The gearbox is good. There are also alloy wheels, but new tyres are needed. Reg No. EWH 265C, chassis number 100099, but it was fitted with a new chassis immediately before being laid up,. Rear window and one door window smashed. Alloy wheels with perished tyres. Rear lights O.K. one front light smashed, old type dash and instruments.

It sounded even better, and a telephone deal was struck where I would swap an old James Captain motorcycle valued at about £200 for the Rebel, and a new spare gearbox. A spares supply that would take me well into the next millennia.

So, I convince Jill (the wife) of the merits of my latest plan, and on Valentine's day we set off with a hired car trailer with the old bike strapped on, Bolton bound.

Now remember the vendor's description..... Well, when we got there what I saw was a car with a worse body and interior than mine. Bah humbug sprang to mind (I had my son in the car, so more colourful language had to be avoided).

So, the car's condition then. The rear window was smashed, as were both door windows (I had found a Reliant duck pond). Someone had done a DIY job on the dashboard and failed, the tyres weren't worn, they had disintegrated due to age. The bumpers were like sandpaper due to rust. The seats were, well, loose, very loose, why? I chickened out of looking for a reason for that one, and the brake master cylinder was seized firmly in the on position. Then I lifted the bonnet to find the reason for the appalling bodywork, the car had been brush painted, (very badly), to the extent that if you leaned on the body, the paint flaked off. Add to this the fact that the rear valance was made entirely out of body filler, and yes I was getting slightly disheartened. Oh yes, now to the engine? Where is it I ask? "It's in the garage mate! I took it out cos I thought you only wanted the car for bits" Oh dear thought I.

So to the underside, metal, yes lots of it, not quite as described, but still more than I've seen on any Reliant over 10 years old. So we strike a deal where I give him my old bike, he gives me the Rebel plus £50 and he keeps the rather odd Austin Mini alloy wheels. So together the vendor and I attempt to fit my Rebel wheels to the new purchase so we can roll it onto the trailer I had hired.

Mad? Yes I probably was, but I had spent 4 hours to get this far, and hired the trailer, so I felt I kind of needed to take something home. To hell with logic and common sense.

Then he goes and strips a thread on a wheel stud. I warned him three times about this impending disaster, but he continued with gay abandon to really swing the wheel brace. By this point I was getting really upset. Thankfully Jill saw this and approached. We subsequently left without the car.

So that was our Valentines day, 202 miles, one trailer hired. One old motorcycle given an airing on said trailer, and then the motorcycle returned to my garage. Thank goodness Jill saw the funny side, and my mate Bob was a good welder.

Happy days - Andy Morgan - Isle of Man

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Dear Brian,

11th October 2004

At long last is the awaited edition of "The Rebel and the Rebel go travelling."

The sun was beating down in mid August and with a few holidays to take I thought that it would be a great idea to take dear old Eva [Thomas calls the car Eva due to the number plate starting EVA] for a part joint around the coast of Scotland and a bit of an endurance drive. After all she had been recently fitted with a reconditioned 850cc. engine that was running as sweet as honey.

Digging out the old Road Atlas for Britain I spotted Ullapool. My Co-worker Tom does a bit of travelling himself on his bike, and highly recommended it.

Having worked out the itinerary and checked over the car, I prepared myself for the epic journey. This consisted of filling Eva with a sleeping bag, change of clothes, mobile phone, with the number of the breakdown service added, and another copy of the number under the sun-visor just in case. The tent was flung in the boot squeezed in the middle of the toolbox, oilcan and trolley jack.

I left Renfrew, with a full tank of fuel at 4pm, joining the M8. Then travelling along the M80-M9 past the Bridge of Allan onto the A9 passing Perth and Pitlochry. It was then that I felt the need for a stretch of the legs. I stopped off at Killiecrankie famous for "The Battle of Killiecrankie 1689" where you can look in at the visitors centre walk to the pass of Killiecrankie and take a look at Soldiers Leap. The famous leap of 18ft across the gorge were the soldier Donald MacBean was said to be the only one that had made the jump successfully. Killiecrankie is also a R.S.P.B nature reserve and home to some of the best sights in Scotland.

On the road again passing Blair Atholl, Aviemore and Inverness. Then I came to Tore taking the road to the left as I was heading for Dingwall. When I realised that I really needed to get to a petrol station for the first fill up after leaving Renfrew. £15.89 filled the tank, for readers into M.P.G and speed & distance etc. The Speedo on Eva does not work, so I have estimated that she had achieved 40+MPG. By working out the miles covered on the Internet and doing the necessary maths. *Note, the Tore roundabout is less than a mile from Dick Goodall's house! Ed.*

Upon leaving Dingwall it was about 10pm. Continuing along the A835 It was too late to set up the tent, so I slept in the car the first night, a mile before Ullapool, in a lay-by.

To anyone who has slept in a Rebel my thoughts are with you, me being just under 6ft laying in the back seat with my legs over the passengers front seat, certainly made for a restless night. In the morning I pitched up the tent at the Broomfield campsite [www.broomfieldhpc.com](http://www.broomfieldhpc.com)

I was amazed to see the amount of travellers from all over Europe with their campervans, Including a party of Italian motorcyclists.

All the way to Ullapool the car performed fine. However there was a small electrical issue. Every time I indicated the radio would switch off and then come on again. When using the wipers the lights would flicker. In the past I had a similar problem with Eva, where the radio and indicators would

not work, this was traced to a dirty & poor fuse connection. So I was not too concerned and felt a cleaning of the fuse area would suffice to cure the problem. I spent the full day walking around Ullapool with all the tourist shops on the main street selling the usual Scottish paraphernalia.

Ullapool museum is really interesting, it was an old Church of Scotland building where the pulpit is still in place, there you will find all you need to know about Ullapool's fishing village past. For dinner I cheated and, having left the gas camping stove at home, I popped into the local Chinese, yes they do have them here as well. There is also an Indian restaurant at the start of the campsite. A Safeway supermarket is also available. You can even catch the ferry to Stornoway.

The next day I used Ullapool as my base and kept the tent up at the campsite. I headed for a place called Achiltibuie, parked the car and was concerned that I had not passed one car on this single-track road. I got out the car and dipped my feet in the sea it was about 9am. I was over looking the Summer Isles it was hauntingly beautiful. The water was still, the sun low in the sky. It was the most tranquil and remote place I had ever come across.

After an hour I went to drive back to base, and the starter motor just spun and would not engage with the flywheel. It still spun even after hitting it with a boulder. (In a sort of controlled and somewhat relaxed a way as possible) as I was concerned at being eaten alive by a sea monster. Thoughts of panic were arising!

This was a new fault, the Rebel has never shown signs like this before.

I had a vision of spinning string around the crankshaft pulley and pulling fast with the ignition on! 30 minutes passed and yes! The sound of a car was approaching. Within this time I had managed to push Eva into the middle of the road, but could not get up enough momentum to bump start her here. The family of Samaritans came out of their car to give Eva a push, and with a chuckle in their voice asked, "What is it?" "A normally reliable Reliant Rebel" says I, to a blank expression. "You know Reliant" still getting nowhere "3 wheeled Robin" this was the wrong choice of words as the youngest looks at the front of the car with complete disarray. "Reliant Robin 3 wheeler 'Only Fools and Horses' the penny had dropped. When I explained about the Kitten its predecessor the Rebel it all fell in to place.

When I returned to base I thought I would examine things and find out what's wrong I parked on a hill, switched off ignition and she started with the key. Damn those intermittent faults, I checked all electrical components and the fault with the radio and indicator was still there in the background only occasionally. She then performed fine for the rest of the day I filled her up with fuel. In two minds about heading back home, or continuing on the road up north as I had headed this far. I dismantled the tent and was given a few entertaining looks from the tourists who were naturally interested in the car. A couple of German tourists had walked passed "will it fit in the car?" I had to laugh looking at the tent I was taller and wider than Eva!

I had decided at this point to make it to John O'Groats following the A894 to Scourie. Stopping of there to enjoy the scenery and the smell of the sea. I jumped back into Eva and yes she would not start, same problem of the starter spinning and not connecting to the flywheel. Luckily, as a precaution I had parked on a hill. I think from that point on it was a one-track road (this was in August and I can't really recall it now) the next port of call was Sango bay and Smoo cave. In my opinion is one of the wonders of the world, just have a look at [www.walkscotland.com/walk142.htm](http://www.walkscotland.com/walk142.htm)

On the road again and this time Eva started, must have been something to do with the atmosphere.

I stopped off at Tongue, which is a quaint wee place where if you blink you would miss it. The post office and shop is in the same building, which was not far off the total dimensions of a static caravan. I was impressed by the amount of overseas visitors that were there, indicated by their rucksacks, walking boots, and accents.



Driving on, stopping for a cup of tea and a packet of oatmeal biscuits and a soda scone. I was gaining more confidence in Eva, I had forgotten about her electrical issues; and had worked out that on average every 6th car that had passed me, though were not that frequent, was of European descent, Italian, French then the Netherlands came third in that order.

I had been blessed with good weather and was happily listening to my collection of tapes that I had brought along.

As I was making good time, and the extra heat of the mid-day sun radiating from the vinyl seat covers no doubt. I stopped off again at a place called Bettyhill, where they serve cream teas, you can pop upstairs and buy local creative work like paintings and nick knacks.

To save me from going into detail you can have a look at their web address... [www.scotland-index.co.uk/sutherland/bettyhill/Elizabeths/cafe.htm](http://www.scotland-index.co.uk/sutherland/bettyhill/Elizabeths/cafe.htm)

After a delightful tea break I got in the car and the starter had gone again. Damn I had tried turning the square headed bolt coming out of the starter but to no avail.

I could not push the car because she was parked on a gravel car park.

In my humble attempts to push start her a family of foreigners ask, "Do you want a push" yes please. This was all staring to look a bit familiar, I could not help laughing with-in myself. Was this going to be an ongoing event that everywhere I stopped I could only switch the engine off if: 1) there was a hill, or 2) there was a group of tourists that could help me on my way again?

Some people when I tell them the tales from the Rebel, shake their heads, and ask what I was thinking of going all that way in a car of 37 years. Well I have a good relationship with Eva; you see she did not want to stop! She just wanted to keep on running.

My next stopping place was Thurso, which is Britain's most northerly town, to fill the tank again. I drove non-stop to John O'Groats and in between I was behind a MGB Roadster in British Racing Green from Italy, it was RHD with the hood down. It looked in immaculate condition and I could see the old style dashboard and the owners gave me a wave as they had pulled into the side of the road to do a bit of sight seeing. How I would have loved to still have my SS1. Yes folks my first ever car was the Scimitar SS1 (C360 KMW) in metallic blue with both hard/soft tops. I had to sell it on due to corrosion of the chassis. If anyone knows of it's whereabouts, I would be glad to hear from you.

It was not that far to John O'Groats now, and at 6pm I had made it.

I thought that at John O'Groats I could escape the tourist trap, but not even at the ends of Scotland. From tartan teacups to tartan shawls. But it was a good place to go there were people from all over the world, virtually. I took a walk over to the slight cliff edge looking over Pentland Firth it was great that I had made it and felt all the issues that go on in ones life just float away. After an hour there I left and decided to make it an endurance drive home. I was getting to my wits end because of the starter motor situation, plus it was getting dark and I was reliant on the lights and other electrical components working correctly for the drive back. I headed for Wick (A99-A9) and continued driving all the way to Brora for a stretch of the legs. I had travelled across the Dornoch Firth Bridge (I am sure there is a name for this bridge, but looking at the map does not say). I recall it being pretty windy going over that bridge in a fibreglass car my nerves were on edge. As it was making the windscreen wipers wave at me as I gripped the wheel with a wing and a prayer. Still on the A9 and progressing at a dizzy speed of about 60 M.P.H mind the Speedo does not work, I judged it by the sound of the engine humming away. By this time I had been on the road for a long time I seemed to have lost all track of time. I presume that I would have stopped of around Aviemore somewhere. Then I came across Blair Atholl, that would have been about 10:30pm if I recall correctly. I needed to empty my tank of numerous cups of water, tea and Cola, and Eva needed to fill her tank up. There was a tourist sign with a petrol signage on it. Great I thought, as the last time I had filled her was at Thurso. Now don't take my word for that, I just looked at the bank statement, and am going by that. I simply can't remember



sometimes erratic dates for getting the Mewsletter out, he may be contacting those who wish to be involved directly.

So, it's not too late, if you are interested in attending an event to celebrate the Kitten's 30th birthday, Dave is the man, talk to him.

Further details when available, and thanks Dave for taking this on. Yes, the Register will donate a prize for the best car, provided someone will organise a competition to decide which is the best one! Now, a can of worms, do we take originality into account, and who among us can remember what original was anyway? Ed.

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## Liege Page

My thanks to Kevin Leaper of Practical Performance Car magazine for kindly agreeing to let me re-produce Simon Golsdworthy's article on Peter Davis' supercharger for the Reliant 850 engine.

The article in question is part of the second in a series about supercharging, and appeared in the October 2004 edition of their publication. They can be contacted at Ivy House, Mill Lane, Caldecott LE16 8RU, or on 01536 772352.

### Reliant 850 powered Liege

Our final case study in this series on forced induction takes a different slant on supercharging, matching the blower's characteristics to a set of requirements where ultimate power is not the goal. The man behind it is Peter Davis, creator of the Liege Classic Sporting Car, have a look at [www.liegecars.com](http://www.liegecars.com)

Back in the Fifties, most amateurs who went racing at the weekend could only afford to have one car, so that car had to be adaptable enough to enter all types of events, from hill climbs, to trials to sprints.

Peter was inspired to design the Liege from a clean sheet of paper as a car to recreate this kind of affordable and versatile entry into motorsport.. He builds the A-frame chassis himself, and is currently up to number 55, while laying up the fibreglass bodies is contracted out.

The Liege gets its back axle from the Suzuki Carry Van, or Bedford Rascal, but the rest of the running gear is virtually all Reliant. That includes the 850cc all aluminium engine which is reliable, economical, and in the lightweight (460kg) Liege, pretty lively despite putting out just 40bhp. (For comparison a 1979 Mini 850 Super Deluxe made just 34 bhp, and weighed 613kg).

For owners intent on plugging away through muddy fields and up steep hillsides in trials events, much more power would simply have resulted in much more wheel-spinning. What they needed was more torque, enough for the engine to pull from low revs with virtually no chance of stalling.

So that's what Peter went for with his supercharger option. Because he wanted low speed response, there was no question of using the kind of centrifugal supercharger, it had to be either a Roots type, or a twin screw blower. The Roots ones were a bit bulky for his liking, but an Autoroto's screw compressor was ideal. If Peter ordered a batch of 10 superchargers, the Swedish company would cut the alloy extrusion and rotors to a length that suited the Reliant's 850ccs.

This was far better than the original fifties idea of having a two size fits all offering from Shorrocks, a small one for anything up to 1500ccm, and a big one for the rest. The kind of mis-match between blower and engine that this could bring about was largely responsible for the myth that supercharged engines were inherently fragile.

Now that Peter had his supercharger, he set about designing the manifolds and mounting brackets using nothing more hi-tec than a sheet of 8mm MDF. He figured out where the supercharger would have to fit, what shape of plenum chamber would best feed the charge to the intake manifold, and drew this onto the MDF, he then repeated this process several times altering each version slightly, and then glued the whole lot together one on top of the other. With a bit of final filing and a coat of special paint, this became the mould he took to a foundry and asked them to cast it in heat treated LM25 aluminium.

The rough castings were then finished off by a local engineering company, as were the mounting brackets that Peter had designed in the same way. These brackets were designed to hold the supercharger rigidly in place. The period Sharrocks were often pivoted like an alternator to set the drivebelt tension.

On the Liege Peter made a simple bracket to hold an idler wheel with a high speed bearing, and it's this that is moved to adjust the tension of the five row 'V' belt. The final piece in the drivebelt system is a crankshaft pulley from a Rover 800, which bolts onto the front of the Reliant pulley, and turns the supercharger at a modest 2:1 ratio compared to engine speed.

The Autoroto blower requires an oil feed to the bearings. This is taken from a Tee piece inserted between the oil pressure switch and the block. A 30 thou restrictor at the supercharger end meters the flow. It's then returned to the sump via a much larger pipe to keep flow up despite the lack of pressure after the bearings. A third pipe from the bearing chamber is just a breather that's routed to the rocker cover.

To keep the whole system compact, Peter opted to set the carburettor before the supercharger, and to suck through it. Not only does that make for an extremely neat and compact arrangement under the bonnet, but it also means he can use a standard 1 ½" SU without any modifications. The one he first tested came from a Triumph Toledo, and worked just fine.

To lower the compression ratio, Peter adopted the simple expedient of fitting two head gaskets. At first he was wary about this arrangement, considering it a bit amateurish. But he has since been told that Renault did the same thing with some of the engines that they supplied to Volvo, and in practice it has worked perfectly. The trick is to use one regular gasket, and to combine it with one of the thicker ones Reliant produce to fit a head after it has been skimmed.

One of the benefits of going for low down torque rather than top end power is that the original fuel and ignition systems have not needed any modification to cope with the supercharger. The only other modification was the precautionary fitment of a bigger radiator to cope with an engine that ran slightly hotter. And was it worth it? Very definitely. The increase in power from a starting point of just 40bhp is naturally going to be low, but the extra torque from tickover combined with the car's light weight makes it feel like a hand is pushing you up the steepest of trials hills. Mission accomplished – and it makes a wonderful noise too!

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## Tempest Update

Mike tells me that he continues to make progress, and hopes to have the demonstration car ready by the new year, watch this space.

One thing I have been asked to organise is for two Scottish resident folk who are interested in the Tempest (one who is building one, and one who is interested and has his Kitten all stripped down) to actually see a finished one if not in Scotland, in the north of England, and my memory and record keeping are letting me down, (who is the Tempest Registrar these days?) If you can help, please get in touch. 0141 8866117 is the number you require. The plan would be to go down and back in less than 8 hours, including the time to see the car, so it would need to be north of say Manchester, preferably on the M6 side of the country.

# 2004 The Quiz

My thanks to Duncan Bradford, the winner of last years Quiz, for being prepared to continue the tradition of providing us with this years - get those grey cells working. Now I was at a loss for the vast majority of these, so do feel free to return incomplete entries, you never know, other folk might struggle too! -:

## Reliant Kitten Register Christmas Quiz 2004

This year it's simply Riddle-Me-Ree time – the twelve riddles of Christmas if you will, and the hint is that some of the answers may have a Reliant connection... Send in your answers even if you can't get them all, maybe no-one else has such a twisted mind either!

- 1] It's something you may give to all you meet with yet you'll still be left with it.
- 2] The start of a long almost royal lineage leads with one of three as before.
- 3] First with four, though still five in the name, initially the same, but kicking against tradition.
- 4] Not the fastest form of transport, yet it has four wheels and flies.
- 5] Just what's needed to play the game by being one man down for soccer.
- 6] From out of a desert plant this bright young blade emerged, by a change at last.
- 7] Spot the paper with signs of discoloration.
- 8] A hard centre with no centre, from a foreign land.
- 9] Riddled with holes it yet can be used to convey water, even on the hottest of days.
- 10] In America it might be an emmet, but still have only half-hearted contact with the ground.
- 11] It seems not quite free of Reliant, in a sporting way.
- 12] There's not much to this one, yet the more you take away the bigger it gets.

## Readers Letters

Dear Brian,

5th October 2004

Update on Kitten Sales & Wants

This is just to keep you informed of the fate of my two Kittens. Unfortunately they are going to be scrapped, thank you for the advert, and the fax mention in Mewsletter 59. The Jensen picture was in fact just a copy of the very first edition of the Jensen Owners Club's first front cover by the way.

I had hoped the cars would find new owners from "Lanky" Kitten enthusiasts, or even from "Yorkies" across the Pennines. But I only had one tentative enquiry from a member and he was only interested in getting an engine for his Liege.



Although the cars will be scrapped, it is not all bad news. I became aware of Kit Car courses held at Preston College when I was honing my woodwork skills on a Handcrafted Furniture Course a few years ago. This course was to improve my clock building skills and update me on all the health and safety at work aspects. I'm afraid that horological interests really do have to take priority for the foreseeable future.

Having contacted the college, unfortunately the Kit Car course lecturers were unable to offer any help. Logically people going on these courses already have their pet project in mind, and would not be interested in Kittens. How silly people can be! However it was suggested that I get in touch with the project co-ordinate for other car courses held at Preston College. As a result I am donating the cars to the college, and they will be used to train students in the basic skills of car maintenance. At the end of their usefulness to the students, they will unfortunately be scrapped. But who knows, one or more of the students may become a Kitten enthusiast as a result of the "Kitten experience".

I connected a spare battery to the yellow estate a couple of days ago, and poured a drop of unleaded onto the carb. A quick whirr on the starter motor and it leapt into life with its fondly remembered throaty roar. I don't know why it sounds like it does, as I never tuned it, but its engine came from a local scrapyards and I suspect the young chap, who owned a Robin in which the engine was previously fitted, had tuned the engine.

Thank you for the advert, which could have resulted in a better fate for my cars. But being philosophical, they may yet enthuse some future Kitten fanciers and ensure the longer term future for the cars and the Register. Let's hope so.

More power to your efforts Brian, keep up the good work.

Sincere best wishes for the future.

All the very best. Stan Hodgson - Preston

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Dear Brian,

5.10.04

Received anti roll bar bushes, I have already done Alan Shaw's anti-roll bar positioning mod., also repaired wishbone mount points, many thanks for parts and info.

Regarding Alan's steering rack lubricant mod., as Alan says it is very positive in confirming the oil level. Before, I had a grease nipple installed, and just gave it a few pumps of EP90 occasionally, but one never knew the actual oil content of the rack, however with Alan's mod, it is very positive, and gives you a known oil level.

Regards Terry Dixon - Melksham Wiltshire

*Thanks Terry. Terry was the man who was wanted a Kitten bonnet, and I forgot – hence the supplementary slip with the last edition, Ed. He has one now, thanks to all who responded, Ed.*

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Mad, who , Me ???

4th October 2004

Remember the Rebel EWH 265C, Well a mate of mine got wind of my abortive Valentines day trip to Bolton, and he posed the question "Do you still want it?".

Well, being the fool I am, I said yes. Rob duly telephoned the vendor posing as a potential buyer. The vendor gave all the same details even restating the fact that he had owned the car for five

years, and had bought it from an old man who had had to give up driving. Fifty pounds was now the asking price, and a viewing was arranged for Sunday the 25th of February 2001.

I decided to travel with Rob, to show him where the car was. This time I even struck gold with a car trailer, I didn't need to hire one, a friend of a friend had one I could borrow (gratis) How could this possibly go wrong? (Fate tempted?).

So, Saturday came and we set off at ten o'clock. A totally uneventful journey, until we got within a stone's throw of Bolton, when I heard a bang, and turned to see the nearside trailer wheel fling itself towards an innocent pedestrian, who fortunately managed to take the necessary evasive action. Then on went the wheel towards a nice shiny parked car parked at the side of the road. Rob brought the car to a halt and I leapt from my seat to find out what the wheel had merged with. Heart in mouth I was relieved to see the wheel rocking from side to side, having run out of steam inches from the parked car's door.

I picked up the wheel and sheepishly returned to the scene of the crime. Industrious Rob had already got the trailer jacked up. The wheel nuts had sheared off, what was worse was the fact that the holes on the wheels are now the size of ten pence coins, and yes, we had no spare wheel. Much scratching of heads led to us removing two wheel studs from the hub on the other side of the trailer and putting them on the damaged side. The wheel was then attached using a couple of very large washers.

By now I had decided it was an omen, if Brian has printed the story of my first visit to see this car, you will know all about my recent experience with wheel nuts. And here I was 11 days later, struggling with more wheel nuts, or in this case less. So I decided we should cut our losses and go straight home, slowly. Rob however was having none of it, he had a plan.

Get the car, load it on the trailer  
Call the A.A.  
Get them to take the car and the damaged trailer home for us.  
We'd be in the pub for the football at three o'clock.

Sounded dubious, but worth a go.

So we got near to the vendor's house, and I waited in a bus stop (don't forget Rob's buying the car as I've already burnt my bridges with the vendor) Confident that the deal will take 20 minutes at the most, I loiter in the vicinity. Anyway, one hour later and the local constabulary want to know what a bald six foot Scouser is doing hanging around back alleys. I talk my way out of a free ride in their car, and continue to wait. After another 45 minutes, I'm cold (it's February and minus one) And finally Rob appears with the Rebel behind. He had bought it.

Why the delay? I needed to know. Well the trailer wheels were from a Mini, and the vendor had a couple of old Mini wheels and, taking pity on Rob, he had donated one to the cause. He also happened to have an old hub, that just happened to still be fitted with studs and nuts of (yes) the correct size for the trailer. The delay then, a repair job on the trailer using the vendors tools and parts.

And the car? Rob even managed to get the price down. Had I been wrong? Was the vendor actually a really very nice man?

And there you are, it's all true, the question is what should I now do with two dilapidated Rebels? Answers on a postcard please.

Andy Morgan - Now offshore

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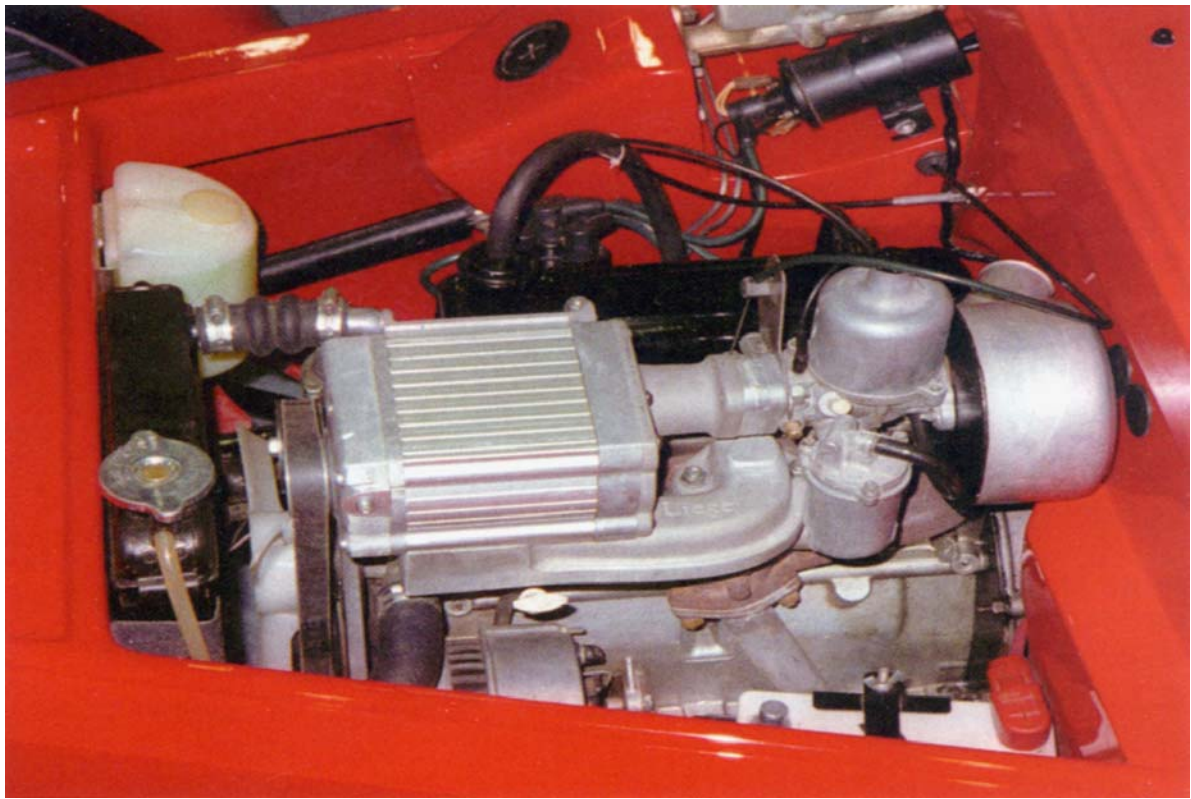












Dear Brian,

20/10/04

I have not been in touch for a wee while, I did my back in and life's been conspiring against me, so I thought I would bring you up to date on the little red fire engine, Hazel's Kitten estate.

Confession time, during the hot summer of 2003 myself and No. 1 son were taking our long haired German Shepherd dog over to the vets in Glossop for his annual MOT.

So up the hills we went on one of the hottest days, me at 16 stone, my lad at about 15 stone, and 'muttley' in the back at over 8 stone, quite a load. Me of course, wanting to miss the traffic jams on Mottram Moor, the Woodhead Road towards Sheffield, I went the back way through Charlesworth, along the Monks Road, read "death defying anti gravitational wall climbing feats of world renown". Of course the "fire engine" brewed up, so we did the usual things like standing round till it cooled, and yes folks, I did check the oil and water before the expedition began.

However, from then on a little oily scum appeared in the radiator, the beast still went like a rocket, started on all four pots etc., made all the right noises, so this spring I decided to fix the little monster. First a reconditioned unleaded head, make a job of it.

I visited the ever friendly Keith at "Oldham Reliants" who supplied me with head gaskets plus some free coffee for me and Hazel, nice man he is.

I removed the head before buying the new one, as Keith had said, woe woe and thrice woe William. Tell you what, he was pretty much right too, the head would not shift – no way – until I got the sledgehammer out, in one of my more lucid moments I had left the manifolds on, after of course removing the two end studs which were pinching the head studs.

Calm down people, what I did was unship the shaft from the sledge hammer, and used the hickory handle as a long drift, jacked the car up, position said wood under the manifold, and wallop it with the redundant sledgehammer head. Then reposition the shaft under the front of the head and give it more persuasion, it shifted, but only just, eventually off she came, it would have been more methodical and less stressful to the appropriate removal tool, but we didn't have one to hand.

From there on the job was straight forward, I did the modification to the inlet manifold, removing the internal webs, this was achieved using a rotary file in the Black and Decker on a beer crate.

No real need for an expensive milling job, you couldn't have removed more with that than I did with old fashioned technology, care has to be exercised, but it is perfectly possible to do the job.

Next I aligned the manifolds to the ports, they were miles out, if someone had set out to mis-engineer them they could not have done a better job especially on the exhaust manifold, which had a stripped thread in the downpipe flange.

This was solved by re-tapping it out to 3/8 BSW and using two spare carb mounting studs, there is sufficient clearance on the standard downpipe, and the holes on the pipe flange did not need opening up either.

So far so good, next I decided to fit the alloy rocker cover that Brian provided a few years back (o.k., so I'm lazy) the new rocker cover on, a wash down, everything checked, fire it up, yipeee!

No folks, nit yippee, here's where it goes pear shaped, it would not start, normally a good starter is the "fire engine" you just look at it and say 'start', and away she purrs!

Eventually she fired up, nice and smooth, she does warm up a lot quicker now than in the past, tickover and carb adjusted, beautiful, she has never ticked over so well in my memory, sounded a treat.

Road tested her, went like a rocket, job well done? Not really, the cold starting was terrible, only firing up on the point of a flat battery after all the cranking, so I checked the points, timing, new plugs, still the same, when she's warm, everything's fine, she fires up first time.

So I made a brew, and peered into the engine bay, twiddling with bits and pieces as they came into eyesight, this that and t'other, the choke was going on O.K., hang on a bit. Upon closer inspection the choke was not going fully on, and why? Do we hear everyone say had the idiot not connected it up correctly? Oh yes he had – Oh no he hadn't – oh yes he had!

The problem was that when I had originally bought the car about 6 years ago, had trouble with fuel vaporisation and flooding when hot, the usual tricks they get up to (poor hot starting). So I had fitted the later thick insulating spacer between the carb flange and the top of the inlet manifold, also a float bowl with an overflow pipe (Ahh, someone does listen to our advice – Ed.) The reason that the choke was not going fully on was that the main jet, when out, was hitting the nice shiny new alloy rocker cover by just enough to prevent full choke being possible, and hence making cold starting a pain.

This was quickly cured by removing the spacer, and where were the old, shorter carb studs? Yep, that's right, holding the exhaust down pipe tight against the manifold weren't they folks!

Anyway, we found two more, and the "wee red beast" is now running like a top. Of course it is difficult to attribute what has caused any improvements in the running as so much was done at the same time, but the fact is that not many people have the time and patience to change one thing at a time, when you have the head off, you have the opportunity to modify and match the manifolds etc.

The car does have more torque than previously, one local hill in particular it goes up in third where before you needed second, and she runs much sweeter.

However I don't think the fuel economy is quite as good as it was before I did the work, perhaps it's my right foot.

One more thing before I leave you in peace Brian, well, two actually, the publishing of a members list (I've no objections), no offence to anyone here, but what exactly are we proposing publishing? Names and addresses? Telephone numbers? Not chassis numbers I hope. There are other people 'out there' who wouldn't think twice of 'ringing' - Shut up Bill, Brian's not stupid!

The ongoing spares situation and what we can do to lessen the load on Brian, what you say about one person holding one item is fair enough, might be interested in doing my bit myself, that way we could sort out who has what based on the space they have available.

If one person was to take the lot it could turn into a business, then there's the case of a 'Spares holder' who might 'pass over', or perish the thought, separate from his Reliant, or for that matter his Mrs.

Having said all that, I've enough rubbish of my own here, so I can well understand the direction you're coming from, what we need is someone with a farm, an eccentric like ourselves, with time on their hands, now where was that lottery ticket?

Right then, I've done my pontificating for now, I'm also, I hope, done with my tinkering for the year, as the winter is upon us.

By the way, we still have the Jaguar V12 (two cats), and we've just bought an Opel Vectra as a shopping trolley, the Kittens' still here though, still in use, and she's not planning on going anywhere either, we'll let you into a secret, if we could keep just one car, it would be her.

Last month she's been put to good use running to the tip with rubbish, 55 full bin liners, three televisions, a cupboard, and an ironing board, plus two old hoovers, and no, they weren't all mine, and we didn't do the lot in one run either.

Finally, do you know why a sledge hammer is so called? It's because in the artic conditions of northern Canada, the runners on the dog sledges freeze to the ice overnight, they use a big lump hammer to free them off, hence the sledge hammer was born. And if you believe that! Mind you it was an old Canadian who told me and I wasn't about to call him a liar, he looked like Grizzly Adams big brother. All the best to you and yours, and if I don't write again this side of 2005 have a nice Christmas, take care.

Hazel and Bill 'pit crew' Starkey - Member No. 0386 Hyde, Greater Manchester.

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*Right, I did, I think, make mention of Frank's visit from Chile, in here somewhere, the fact is that we are pretty full up in this edition,. And the story of Frank's visit will fill a few pages, so Frank, feel free to contribute your side of the story, and we will hear about it next time. You should be home before this arrives, I hope you had a good journey, and that your Kit-ten(s) are not far behind you.*

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Latest Word from Stable Cottage

Dear Brian,

2-11-04

With reference to Paul Wheatley's letter on the use of a Weber 32 ICH carb, I can offer a few comments.

Although they appear to work on the Reliant engine "out of the box", it is unlikely that the jetting is correct. As far as I know no one has done an exercise to ascertain what changes should be made – Editor eagerly awaits comment from Dick Watson, Alan Marshall, Phil Hallam, Harry Darby and Hans Kirrima amongst others!

Tests show an improved torque figure in the 3500 to 4500 rev range, but power falls off above 5000 RPM.

The improved throttle response is due to the accelerator pump in the carb.

The carb is prone to icing in humid conditions, so it is a good idea to improvise a method of drawing warm air through the air cleaner.

Installation is simplified by fitting an early manifold with the east / west studs rather than the current north / south type. This turns the carb through 90 degrees and makes it more easy to get a good run on the throttle cable and fuel line.

It is important to devise a suitable breather system to prevent erratic idling.

Regards John.

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*Ahh, a wee corner, just room to let you know that we have now ordered a batch of Kitten / Fox front dampers, those who expressed an interest should have been contacted directly by now, if not, please get in touch, now would be a good time – 0141 8866117, thanks, Ed.*

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## Tales from Tore

Good evening Brian, Kitten Register Mewsletter

16/10/04

My goodness we're up to Issue 60 already, doesn't time fly when you're enjoying yourself? Well I have certainly enjoyed the trip, and how you have achieved it amazes me. (Me too, Ed!)

My record keeping is not quite what it could be but I think that the first issue I received as a KitReg member was number 17 for July / August 1997. Since when I have enjoyed the company of many like minded folk in its pages. On the way I have been lucky enough to obtain the missing back copies and now have a complete set. There is a treasure trove of information in back issues.

Now I look forward to the Christmas issue with bated breath to see what the hopefully bumper edition will contain. Better than a pressie from Santa?

Best Regards, Dick Goodall. Alias #157

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Hello yet again!

I have been looking through back numbers of the Mewsletter to find just where Al Osborn mentioned a 'fix' for a broken shock absorber attachment bracket on a Kitten rear axle.

Eureka! The location is in Mewsletter 43, November / December 2001 on page 36. I quote - 'I have had the bottom bracket broken off the axle for many years, so I've used a large 'U' clamp with a specially made bar piece. The Mk. II version of this seems to work OK. Saves having to have brackets welded to the back axle.'

I had better add this reference to the Cross Index now! Will Al give us a detailed description of this mod I wonder?

Best Regards, Dick Goodall.

*The answer to the question about Al providing details is yes, they arrived in the post just yesterday, though he has written very close to the edge of the page, and the printer may have bother getting it all in the machine, but we will try, also I hope – this time – to include Alan Shaw's solution to the same problem, Ed.*

*This would probably be a good time to remind everyone, the Editor in particular, that Dick Goodall has put in many hours of time and effort to produce both an index of all the magazine's contents, and a cross reference guide as well. These invaluable documents are available from Dick for a modest fee, in a variety of formats.*

*So do avail yourself of a copy, and thanks Dick for giving up so much time to create such documents for us, it is appreciated. Ed.*

*Hindisight is Indeed a wonderful thing, a good friend of mine, one George Mitchell, who regular readers may remember has the unusual hobby of collecting road fund licences, he has thousands of them in his collection, some going back over half a century. Well, George is a great fan of the 300 series Volvos, and has started a "Friends of the Volvo 300" group, and he chose to number the pages of his quarterly publication numerically – isn't the language wonderful, you will be thinking so what, doesn't everyone, well, not exactly, George's first page in the second edition started one page number above the last page in the first edition and so on – which makes indexing, and indeed referring to past articles, a whole lot simpler – wish I'd thought of that 13 years ago! How many pages would that be we were at now I wonder?*



*While in mentioning other organisations mode, I recently received the latest copy of "Rum Car News", beautifully printed and edited, lots of colour, very cleverly done, by a man who I seem to recall saying he was only doing the job for a year, about three years ago now – I did say at the time that he was delusional, but what a wonderful job he does. It is good to have aspirations, but one must not become depressed by ones own shortcomings – perhaps I'll go to night school and learn how to use some more of this computer's abilities to greater effect. Ed.*

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Good evening Brian.

Yes this is 'write to Brian' evening! Mewsletter 60 - page 6 - car insurance prices

I managed to grease the ball joints properly this week, by jacking the car up first so the grease can penetrate properly. While I was at it I gave the steering rack a few shots of oil too. The result is beautifully light steering again. Marvellous stuff this lubrication!

Once again may I suggest that the CIS (Co-operative Insurance Society Ltd.) insurance is worth a try for a competitive insurance quote. Phone them on 08457 46 46 46, or get on-line at [www.cis.co.uk](http://www.cis.co.uk). To find a local office, look in the Business section of your local BT phone book. I have been with them for several years now and their price for me is always the best I can find.

Of course your powers of persuasion might get an even better deal for Kitten Register members?

Cheers, Dick Goodall.

*Thanks for that Dick. I am not in fact about to go negotiating with the CIS, quite simply because we are well served by P.F. Spare, who give us tremendous support in spite of my failings, Yes they do not always offer the cheapest deals, but they do give an excellent friendly personal service, something that is all too lacking with many bigger firms these days, and for those who use their cherished car polices, an incredible deal of the annual draw, to be entered in which you only have to be a Register subscriber, and to have a Classic policy with them, the prize for which is a years free insurance! Given our numbers, and indeed the number of us who use their services and those of the Classic insurance people, I have to say that the chances of winning this are incredibly good, and for the past three years one of our members or another, have benefited from this generous support. So, in short, I am not about to do anything that might disturb Rob Spare's very generous support of the Register and its subscribers in this way. Ed.*

*Oh, and on the subject of "jacking the car up first" just what are we talking about here? Do you jack at the outer ends of the wishbones, to keep the load on, - and if so, how do you get the grease gun on the nipple of the lower ones? Or do you just jack the chassis, and so release, or is that in fact a case of reversing the load on the ball joints, before you pump the grease in? Ed And, just for the un-initiated, which is the best / correct procedure anyway? Ed.*

*I did fit in a brief visit to see Dick on Friday the 22nd of October, when Frank – our man in Chile - was over in Scotland for a few days as part of his European tour – more on that visit elsewhere, but that visit to Tore gave me the opportunity to ask Dick the above question about greasing methods, and on my return, the following was waiting :-*

## Lubrication of Kitten ball joints.

At the first greasing of a newly acquired car, I usually find that the four ball joint grease nipples are rusty and need replacing. At 50p each that's not going to break the bank? I prefer the 90 degree nipples, but have used both straight and 45 degree ones at need. It depends on what shape and length of tube is fitted to one's grease gun. Perhaps a flexible tube would be best and I must try one before too long.

I have tried three ways of tackling the job.

The first is simply to grease while the car is standing on its wheels, accessing the grease points by turning the steering. I find it difficult, if not impossible, to get grease in.

The second way is to jack up under the wishbone, leave the wheels in place, and then grease. Though more successful, it isn't long before the steering goes stiff again so obviously the grease doesn't penetrate well.

The third and apparently correct method is to jack up the car under the chassis, add an axle stand for safety, and remove the road wheel. The grease points are now most accessible and the grease goes in most easily. With this method I find that the steering stays free for the longest time so the grease must penetrate better than with the other methods.

I find it best to lubricate every month, which for me is about every 600 miles.

As for the best grease to use, I used a normal moly grease last week (stupid problem with the new grease gun) and will have to resume the Moly Benton grease trial later.

Best Regards, Dick Goodall

*During our chat, Dick mentioned pound tins of grease, and I was, as the youngest at the table, quick to point out that while it may have been half a kilo, it was not likely to be a pound – the following arrived the next day.*

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It was indeed a pleasure to see both you and Frank and just a pity these visits are never long enough. We had a good blether with John Dillon here before he departed. I never realised that a 1990 Robin has a bonnet release worked from inside the car. Could I fit one to a Kitten? Another idea for a project. Regarding the size of grease tins, I was looking in the Namrick catalogue and their tins are the 450 gram size. Considering that one pound is 454 grams I think that my description of a tin of grease as a 'one pound size' is not too far off the mark?

Best Regards, Dick

*On the ease or otherwise of getting grease through the ball joints, that is one reason why our reconditioned bottom ones are superior to the originals, because the grease channels have been widened as part of the re-furbishing process, not only can you change the internal damper on the reconditioned bottom ball joints, should you ever need to (it is the part that fails in over 90% of cases, giving rise to 'play' in the joint, play is evident in the vast majority of old units received, but wear is not!) but it is easier to get grease into them as well.*

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## The Spares Situation

Given that my typing of the article in the last edition on this subject was done more than 10 seconds ago, I really can't remember specifically what I was saying, and I have no time to look it up and see at the moment. However, while I did receive a few telephone calls from individuals offering to help, and they were all in favour of the idea, the number of such calls in relation to the number of different types of parts we stock was woefully too few to enable the idea to proceed apace. That said, in view of the logistics of moving parts which in total weigh a few hundred weight, oops, sorry, should that be a few hundred kilos?, perhaps proceeding apace is not the best way, and a gradual transfer would in fact seem to be more appropriate.

I say a few hundred kilos, in fact the total weight is probably only between about 100 and 200 kilos, but some things, headlights for example, are light, but fragile, well more so than things like ball joints, which while small, are heavy in relation to their size. No, I know a ball joint is not that heavy, but when last did you try to pick up a box with 30 of them in it? I dread to think what the postage would be on them.

So, in case I did not make it clear last time, we are looking for individuals who have secure dry storage for our stock of parts, or perhaps that should be part, to be kept on the Register's behalf in future. I envisage a situation where one individual becomes the custodian of one part, but on reflection it may be more sensible to double up, things like ball joints for instance, it would seem a little silly to have the top ones in a different custodian's care from the bottom ones, likewise wishbones, why keep the top ones in a different location from the bottom ones, or the struts come to that? I can just hear myself thinking why bother to do anything? We only have three wishbones and two Kitten struts in stock anyway!?! Then what about the bushes – oh where does one stop?!? The fact is that I need to simplify my life, and I cannot easily get to some of these parts anyway, so they need to be moved to new custodians. Volunteers patiently awaited, along with an inexpensive answer as to how they are going to be "A" located, or rather dug out, (from my attic and lock-ups respectively) and "B" transported to their new location.

There you have it then, a New Years resolution, made before Christmas! It is my intention to have the spares farmed out to a number of appropriate custodians during 2005. That is your cue to get in touch with your offer of assistance.

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### **P.F. Spare - Insurance intermediary**

I have rather neglected Rob Spare and his generous support of the Register in recent editions of the magazine, though Rob must share some of the responsibility for missing the odd magazine article deadline, that said, my deadlines can change at short notice, here is some of what he has to say:-

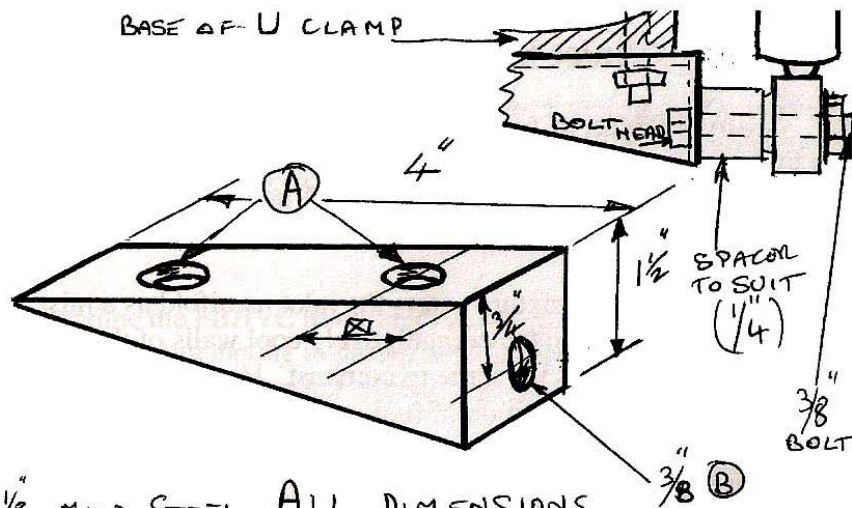
Ahh well, perhaps not, Rob did send me two articles, and some other information relating to vehicle security, but space is now at a premium, indeed some of the font sizes have already been reduced below minimum levels. Next time Rob, honest, and thanks.

Rob, as regular readers will be aware, generously supports the Register by offering, in conjunction with the Cherished Car Underwriting Agency, a prize of a years free classic car insurance, (vehicles over ten years old can qualify) and all you need do to win that, is to have a Cherished Car Underwriting Agency policy through P..F. Spare, be a current subscriber to the Register, and be lucky enough to have your name (well membership number in fact) to be the first out of the hat, and believe me, the chances of winning the prize are better than 100 to one amongst our subscribers, pretty good odds, and all for just being a subscriber and having an appropriate policy through P.F. Spare. Thanks again Rob for your support. It is greatly appreciated.

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## Getting Technical

Missing from the last edition due to your Editor's incompetence and general lack of forward planning, here at last is Alan Shaw's solution to the Kitten rear damper mounting bracket situation :- Thank you Alan.



MATERIAL  $\frac{1}{8}$ " MILD STEEL ALL DIMENSIONS NOMINAL & SUBJECT TO CONFIRMATION IN MANUFACTURE

(A) HOLES TO SUIT U CLAMP

(B) POSITION OF HOLE AND DIMENSION  $\boxtimes$  ARE BEST DETERMINED IN MANUFACTURE, BEARING IN MIND THE NEARNESS OF NUTS AND BOLT HEADS INSIDE THE ASSEMBLY

FIRST OBTAIN LARGE U CLAMP THAT FITS THE AXLE 2" BRACKET BOLTS TO BOTTOM OF SAME AND SNUGGLES TO ORIGINAL BRACKET (REMAINS OF)

BOLTING OF ASSEMBLY TO AXLE NEEDS A LITTLE THOUGHT IE HAS TO BE DONE IN ORDER AS BOLT/NUT ACCESSABILITY IS 'TIGHT'

I HAVE DONE MANY MILES WITH 2 OFF THESE AND DESPITE THE BOTTOM OF DAMPER EYE BENDING NO MOT QUESTIONS OR FURTHER BREAKAGES.

13-10-04

A. OSBORN

REAR SUSPENSION BRACKET

01053 884 681

## Technical Tweaks - 20th October '04

Not a lot of technical bits in the last issue, but there was a throw away line from Brian (not Marshall nor Millar, but Martin) who was concerned about a loss of water, thus overheating, then a worry about oil in the water. Sure this could be an early sign of the head gasket failing, but there are several other possibilities, as detailed in Dick Harvey's book "750 Racer". These are all block failures or corrosion allowing the oil under pressure to get into the water.

I had one block do this some time back. The corrosion point in that instance was where the centre main bearing / camshaft oilway passes through the middle of the block. The water got very mucky with a brown sludge at the radiator cap, as of course the oil will go to the highest spot.

This state of affairs went on for many miles (while I mantled the next engine) without any obvious problems. The block was going to be scrapped anyway. All the moving bits, in effect anything that was screwed or pressed in would be removed to a new block eventually.

I did hope that when this engine was removed and the radiator thoroughly scrubbed in the sink (I live on my own!) with caustic and detergent, that I would see no more dirty radiator water, but not quite, as I forgot the heater matrix, and what little oil got into the heater seems to keep turning up in the radiator from time to time.

So, oily water isn't necessarily really the end for an engine, I get the impression that only a little makes a lot of mess in the overflow bottle and the radiator cap, but it doesn't seem to halt the normal flow of events, on its own, certainly if all other head gasket symptoms are absent – carry on for a while, while you prepare another engine.

Regards, Al Osborn

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## Inlet Manifold Atomiser Gauze

I am indebted to Alan Dean (Mr. Molyslip) of Scimitar and Sabre Club fame for the idea of using stainless steel gauze to increase fuel atomisation – and indeed for supplying the gauze, writes Duncan Bradford, our man in Norfolk.

Principle :- Fuel / air mixture enters the inlet manifold as a mist, some of the fuel droplets condense on the comparatively cool walls of the manifold, and enter the engine as drops too large to combust. Hence the need for a choke mechanism to up the proportion of fuel in cold conditions. Even when warm however, some of the droplets are still too large for correct combustion, hence the unburnt fuel in the exhaust gases. Wasted money and power. Passing the mixture through a gauze greatly increases the surface area for evaporation, and the micro-turbulence effect further improves efficiency. I guess this is not a good time to tell you that a properly maintained Reliant engine gives only between 50 and 100 parts per million of unburnt hydrocarbons (you are allowed up to 1,200 in an MOT) Ed.

Effect :- An initial run after fitting proved the engine only needed a little choke to fire. After a few seconds it pulled away without choke, and drove as if fully warm almost straight away. On a test route which I know well, the engine seemed to pull better up hills. The idling speed was slightly higher too. On flooring the throttle at 20 MPH in top a faint pinking is normally heard. This was gone, it took 2 – 3 degrees advancing of the timing for the slightest pinking to return. It may well prove possible to weaken the running mixture on further experiment. Hopefully at MOT time the exhaust should be a lot cleaner.

Overall a worthwhile improvement for a couple of hours work,

Method :- Stainless steel mesh can be formed into a tube with a flange around the top. The tube sits in the manifold immediately below the heat exchanger, under the carb. The flange is sandwiched between 2 paper gaskets using blue Hylomar or similar jointing compound.

There followed explanatory notes, but they are only really of benefit if I could reproduce the accompanying pictures, which at this time I cannot ! Sorry, Ed. That said, if it is indeed the case that the idling speed increased, even very slightly, surely the thing to do to save fuel, is to turn the idling speed down?

F.B.H.V.C A.G.M.

The Federation of Historic British Vehicle Clubs had their AGM as usual at Paulsbury (near Towcaster on the A5) on the 16th of October 2004. Finances were confirmed, officers were re-elected, all the official stuff went off well. After dinner there was a short conference with regard to health and safety in Event Planning. More anon.

In the meantime the FBHVC have flagged up a very worrying proposal by the DVLA in that they are attempting to introduce a new fee. The "Annual registration Charge" this would be on top of your vehicle excise duty, it would be a charge to supply your free historic vehicle tax disc! It would also cover vehicles declared SORN, so every year you would be taxed on every vehicle that you own, a possession tax in fact. Effectively continuous licensing as they tried to introduce in the past.

My thanks to those who wrote to make me aware of this and the F.H.B.V.C's petition, I didn't include it because it had to be back in November, but they are on top of it, we will report more as and when, Ed.

Supposedly these charges are to offset the costs of initial vehicle registration, . Ha, another anomaly, why should those who run around in "old bangers" worth £1,000 or less, have to subsidise those who can afford £10,000 plus for a new car?

There are several more fine points of disjointed thinking in the proposals, such that the FBHVC has organised a petition, sadly it has to be returned by the end of November, and so not enough time for Brian to include a copy with this magazine.

Another worry looming on the horizon is that some areas of Italy are attempting to introduce a non catalytic vehicle ban in certain times and areas, hopefully this will get squashed. The ramifications if it isn't are just too bad to muse on.

One small light in our darkness is regarding the proposals for the removal of 'abandoned' vehicles. It had been proposed that the notice time to the owner be reduced significantly, but they have now realised that while abandonment in public places needs prompt action, removal from private land need not be so pressing. Guide lines to the effect are being issued to all Councils responsible for such removals.

### **Health and Safety with regard to Event Planning**

The types of events that vehicle clubs organise can be varied, from Autojumbles , through road trials, to steam fairs and beyond, so general guide lines only could be offered to those organising such events. A list of parties that should or might be approached before the event could be useful as follows.

:-

The Health and Safety Executive  
Local Council (Environmental health)  
Fire Brigade  
Police  
Insurance Companies (Public Liability)  
Motor Sports Association  
Lawyers



Always remember that the road traffic act could well still apply to your event. There is a small HSE pamphlet ISBN 0717615650 which is well worth studying and it incorporates some basic forms to fill in, even if you aren't going to pass them to anyone, they help you to see what you could be asked, and help you to 'do your best'.

Al Osborn October 2004

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Well, it is now the 15th of November, Moira and I are just back from our second break in the Lake district in a month, and I am sinking faster than usual in a sea of paperwork and outstanding telephone calls. I really wonder if it is worth going away! We did have a great time however.

Anyway, I now find that I have more material than I have room for, but I have to make decisions and progress, however slowly, must be made or this will not get out in time. So with apologies to those whose articles are missing, I really do need to get this off to the printers this week, I do not doubt that Mike Philips and others will be in touch long before this falls through your letterbox, but I can't wait any longer, sorry.

Have a good time over the festive season,. And a healthy and prosperous 2005.

**Brian.**

## **Sales & Wants**

For Sale :- A Ciper, yes, you heard me correctly, probably the only Ciper on the road in the U.K. Frank Heil has decided to part with it. Very rare in fair condition full M.O.T. with a lot of history and a spare set of wheels and tyres.

For Sale :- A Jensen Healy in very good condition complete with toneau cover and hard top

For Sale :- A rare Kitten van, yes it is still a van. Offers about £550 for this excellent condition example, MOT. For full details ring Stewart Ward

For Sale :- I have just half of the first 26 A4 editions of the Mewsletter left, and you can have all 12 of them for just £10 delivered. Why not make someone's Christmas – if you're really quick! Ring Brian on 0141 8866117

For Sale :- I have just the one brand new brown , or is that beige? Could be caramel I suppose (well it certainly is not black!) Spare wheel cover for a Kitten, yours for just £10 delivered. 0141 8866117

For Sale :- Rebel, free to a good home. It is a van but fitted with side windows. The chassis is believed to be good but there is no engine or fuel tank. I may have a spare tank somewhere! It is almost complete, a few bits have been robbed to keep my other Rebel on the road. I now need the space for another project.

For Sale :- Reliant Kitten Van (white) registered 1977 been off the road for 2 years, offers. Also Reliant Kitten parts :- engine, gearbox, propshaft, rear axle and many other parts including a brand new Kitten exhaust.

For Sale :- Rebel window frames in good condition, two sets, one set still attached to the doors.

For Sale :- A set of 4 Kitten wheels, blasted and painted, with new (never used) tyres. Yours for £100 plus carriage, or buyer collects.

For Sale :- Salamander - Contact Robin He also has a Robin looking for a home.

For Sale :- A new Fox chassis, complete with new engine, rebuilt gearbox, new suspension (disc brakes at the front), new radiator, new 4.1 axle, new Fox wiring loom, pedal box, many other bits and 5 second hand Fox wheels. £1,750 the lot. Contact John Box

For Sale :- Mewsletters 1 – 50 in plastic wallets in a binder A1 condition. Service literature pack. H. Maslin parts info. Photos of unusual Jimps, Kittens etc.. I will be coming back to England from Portugal soon, if anyone wants to make me a reasonable offer I will bring them with me. Mike Copland – ring Brian with your offer.

For Sale :- Reliant Rialto. Mot till September '04 contact John Stork for details

A rare opportunity to acquire a Salamander, Mr. Faulkner

Free to a good home : two Kitten estates, one has a stainless exhaust and recent ball joints. Contact John Stork. The cars are at Glenelg on the west coast of Scotland near the Isle of Skye.

Rebel estate free to good home good chassis with new outriggers and spring hangers fitted, no engine or gearbox (well, there is a Morris Minor gearbox!) also an electric truck which would provide a motor suitable for a Reliant. The truck is 3 feet wide and you would need to take the whole thing. Contact Rod Sterry

Wanted :- Austin Allegro windscreen wiper assembly, complete. If you can help please get in touch with John Dillon – he needs one for his Liege!

Wanted :- Pair of Rebel seat belts, ring John Denis

Russel from Worcester looking for a seat for his Kitten ? 28/10/04

Wanted :- Fox rear panel at the back of the cab, contact Bruce

Wanted :- A windscreen for a Salamander, ring John

Wanted :- I would like to obtain a 3.23 ratio rear axle that I believe was fitted to the Kitten and Robin in the 1980's. I am unsure of the axle ration fitted to the later Rialto, can anyone advise? David Beal Doncaster

## Epilogue

Ahh, thank goodness for that, a quick ring round the people advertising cars for sale revealed that several had moved on to new custodians, The Tempest Mr. Watling from Hull had for sale is a good example of how effective it is to advertise in here, he had paid good money to advertise it in a number of seemingly appropriate publications, but it was one of our readers who bought it! Anyway, as I was saying, I have saved half a page or so, which gives me time and space to tell you that Dick Goodall said something the other day that, again, made me realise that one does, in spite of efforts to avoid doing so, assume things – never a good idea, especially in relation to Reliants in general, and the wee 4 wheelers in particular. This was brought home to me when I let Dick have a preview of a picture that I hope you will see in the middle of this edition, the one of the supercharger in the engine bay of the Liege, Dick noticed the dual circuit brake master cylinder, and his comments led me to realise that he did not know that all the later Kittens, and I assume all the Foxes, had dual circuit brakes. Now Dick of all people should have been aware of that (as the man who has devoted many hours to producing an index of all the magazines for us), because Phil Hallam thought long and hard before fitting them to his Kitten during its extensive body off rebuild a decade ago, and that was well documented in these pages at the time. So, the moral is, assume nothing, and repeat things regularly – jings this might need to become monthly after all - NO! absolutely not. (I am 8 pages into the Jan / Feb edition already – 21/11/04!), but I do not need the pressure and extra work, nor do you need the substantial increase in subs that would accompany such a move.

Right, time to remind you about renewing your subscription. I have altered the application form (not the renewal notice) to the new rate that will apply to everyone from 2006, (see, always thinking ahead) and for those who join us during 2005, but, just for you, I have kept it at the same level for another year. We did in fact almost run out of money in the bank in November, but we still have almost a thousand second class stamps in stock, so it's true, money really isn't everything! Yes I realise that a £2 jump in subs seems a lot, but we have absorbed not one but two postage increases since our last increase in subs, and I really could not imagine the figure being £13! Besides that's the joy of being a dictator – one can do as one pleases, and if one's supporters don't like it, well, I will soon know about it, (not till 2006 in fact), but know about it I surely will!

I know that I am about to preach to the converted, because I know that the vast majority of you will just do it, but there are always those who are slow about sending back the form, with the payment of course, and it really does create a lot of extra work, keeps you out of Rob Spare's generous insurance prize draw for example, but we have to check to see, all hassle I can do without, so please, just do it now. Renewals received after January 2005 will be charged at the new £14 rate. So just save yourself a couple of quid and do it now please.

Till next time take care, happy motoring and have a wonderful time in 2005 – can you believe that it was three decades ago that the Kitten was first on the market? Not only that, but over 4 decades since the Rebel first made an appearance. I do hope that is not too depressing a thought for those amongst us who have owned their Kittens from new. I say Kittens, because while I know of three people who have owned their current Kitten from new, I know of only the one Rebel that is still with its first owner, and I know of no, or at any rate can't think of any, Foxes that are still with their first owner – do feel free to put me right. (Editor prepares to be engulfed by letters and telephone calls from indignant discerning individuals who have owned their Reliant Rebels, Kittens, and Foxes from new – go on, make my day!)

**Brian**

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