

Reliant Kitten *Register*

NEWSLETTER 77

July - August 2007



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

Rebel parts stock held by: - Adrian Hanwell

New Kitten / Fox / Rebel parts stock held by Brian Marshall

Rebel alternative parts list contact: John Blagburn

Kitten alternative parts list contact: Situation vacant

Fox alternative parts list contact: Duncan Bradford

Our Mutual Aid Spares scheme is run for us by Phil Hallam

Tempest Registrar: Martin Seymour 19 Cedar Court, Churchfields,

Mewsletter pictures – should be sent to John Pearce

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.

Web page:- <http://www.kitreg.org.uk/> or have a look at <http://www.reliantkitten.co.uk>

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This front cover picture shows one of two Reliant Kittens that are being driven to parts foreign for charity this summer. This one is going the furthest, to Mongolia no less, some five or six thousand miles no less! The driver and navigator returning by way of the Trans Siberian Railway. If you are quick (and if I get this to you on time) you could pop along to Hyde Park and see Owen O'Brien and Terry Farrell off on the 21st of July. Those with the relevant facilities can learn a whole lot more at <http://www.justgiving.com/TwoGrumpyOldMen> or see a general overview of the whole event at <http://mongolrally.theadventurists.com/> If you do not have a computer or internet access you can go along with this magazine to your local library and ask them to show you – go on, don't be an internet virgin any longer.

As I said, this is one of two, the other being taken to Krakow in Poland on the second of August, see www.to-krakow.co.uk by Finlay James from Lincoln. Good luck chaps, a write up (with pictures if you like) will, as you know, be much appreciated.



Spurred on by the fact that I have, so far this year, been able to get the mag out in the middle of the two months covered by each edition (for the first time since I started doing this!). I thought to myself "I wonder if I could get this one out before Owen leaves from Hyde Park on the 21st of July?" And indeed if we could manage to have the picture he sent in with that letter on the cover. In particular Owen O'Brien's letter (see page 12) which arrived early in June, days after I had posted the last edition to you was a tad, ambitious? Certainly, but there is no harm in a bit of ambition now and then. By now you will know if I succeeded.

June saw a flurry of activity, some triggered by the arrival of the last edition through letterboxes everywhere, and some simply by coincidence. Much the on-going result of us having a holiday in May, we returned just before the holiday weekend at the end of the month, and elected to continue our holiday at home till the following week, great fun, but it left us still trying to catch up with the messages and mail that had accumulated during our absence well into June.

So, with the potential change to the planned cover picture to contend with, the planned one not being time sensitive, and with the need to get the amended wording into P.F. Spares advert (sorry Rob, I thought I had explained when we first spoke about this that the next cover had already been printed when you asked us to make the change, and with the dash to get it to the printers before we went away I didn't make mention of it, my apologies.) Thank you for your continued support, it is appreciated.

My thanks to both Adrian Hanwell – don't forget his "Great Eastern Rally" at Ingatestone Hall, Essex, on Sunday 22nd July - and Duncan Bradford for their help with input, it is appreciated chaps. That said, I noticed that the drawing Duncan sent me last time got truncated a bit, more software glitches, perhaps Yoland and Roger Brown's generous offer of help to re-train me in the ways of more modern desk top publishing might help, thank you both – more new things to learn!

Such reaction as there was to the last edition was favourable, my thanks to those concerned for their kind words, to the two who suggested, not for the first time, that I make it monthly – sorry, but no chance this side of a lot more input from you and a major change to the way I run my life.

The suggestion has been made – talking of major changes – that some readers might like, prefer even, to receive the Mewsletter electronically, now in the short term this would mean me learning new tricks, but it would save money, by far the biggest expenditure we have is in producing and distributing the Mewsletter, which may then raise the matter of a reduced subscription for anyone who would like to have that happen and would be happy to receive their mag in such a manner, but that also gives me extra work – certainly in the short term. That said I am not burying my head in the sand, I can see substantial savings along such a route, if you have any strong views either way, just let us know. We will not be making any changes this side of Christmas, (no, I have no idea which Christmas!) other than possibly a trial run with one edition as a test to see if I can handle it, we are going to have the mag in its present form for a long time yet, whither it becomes available electronically, as an option, remains in the hands of my technical advisors, and my own time and enthusiasm – watch this space, and feel free to comment. Ed.

Rebellious conduct - 7

It's not that I'm superstitious or anything, but as we approached Christmas and another 2 weeks of inactivity for the Rebel, my mind went back to the troubles of last Christmas break. Although eager to start the New Year of commuting to and from work (the Rebel that is, not me) the Rebel suddenly changed its mind when the brakes decided that they were not so keen to re-awaken from 2 weeks off, and jammed on. Anyway, that was then, and 2006 saw new front wheel cylinders and shoes fitted plus a general freeing off of other brake components.

The installation of a master cylinder splash shield was a further insurance premium in an effort to ensure that the beginning of 2007 would not see us similarly grind to a hot and smelly standstill. (I well remember being delighted to discover that Reliant actually offered these as an option on the Rebel, not only that but my local dealer had 1 on the shelf and didn't know what it was! That was back in the days when we had 'real' winters, and the slush and snow would be thrown back and up by the front wheel right onto the brake master cylinder operating rod and under floor pedal assembly resulting in it becoming at the centre of a frozen lump of dirty mess that actually made the mechanism in front of the outrigger completely invisible! *We don't get winters like that these days! Ed.)*

So, with not an ounce (and I am delighted to learn that we are actually allowed to use the term these days without fear of prosecution!) of superstitious thought and full of optimism I was more than a bit miffed that the brakes started to play up again before we even reached Christmas.

It wasn't much, just a gentle jerk when rolling to a standstill following a moderate brake application. If I didn't brake the Rebel would roll freely enough, if I braked and then released, a slight drag could just be felt. As time was short just before Christmas, and not wanting to return from 2 weeks away to another frantic spannering session in the cold and dark, I replaced the only other items that I hadn't yet replaced, the front brake hoses. These looked fine externally, but experience has taught me that problems may well lurk internally. With age the hoses can deteriorate internally so as to restrict the flow of brake fluid. Not so much of a problem when it is highly pressurised by the pressure of your right foot on the pedal, but reluctant to allow the fluid back into the master cylinder under the spring pressure from the brake shoes.

Fortunately a local motor shop obtained a pair of hoses at short notice. I asked for Triumph Spitfire hoses as Reliant Rebel ones do not exist on their data base. At £22 this was probably not the best price available, but I was just glad to get the job done before going away. Again after bleeding the brakes the pedal seemed a bit lower than before, but following a bit of use, the pedal has now returned to normal.

All this rather clouded the other problem that appeared before Christmas, and one that was not easy to solve. The clutch was losing hydraulic fluid via the slave cylinder (yes, all you people out there with the early Rebels will be wondering what we are talking about, all the 750cc Rebels were equipped with a hydraulically operated clutch, that let them do away with the steady rod which ran from the front chassis cross member to the rear engine plate, and made for a smoother clutch at the same time).

All attempts to find a repair kit or replacement slave cylinder have so far failed (I am sure that Adrian Hanwell has one in amongst his stock of Rebel spares, I also think they may be the

same or very similar to the one used on a Morris Marina, but am not certain about that, Ed.) The regular topping up sessions were now down to every 2 days, so by the end of February I could ignore matters no longer. As the Rebel uses a 7/8" bore cylinder, I reckoned that Mr. Girling's idea of 7/8" should be the same as Mr. Lockheed's. I have no Girling spares, nor did anyone else I talked to, I do have plenty of Lockheed bits. Hence I stuffed a Lockheed piston and seal assembly into the Girling cylinder, and to date all is well.

Other than this the Rebel seems to have weathered the winter months quite well. It continues to start every morning with no trouble, and fuel consumption remains on the plus side of 40mpg despite some awful traffic on the homeward journey. The inside does get a bit wet as the door seals fail to live up to their name. Frequent drying out of the carpets makes me wonder if I should leave them out altogether until the summer. A leaking differential input shaft oil seal will need to be attended to, but not until the better weather - I hope!

Terry Horler April 2007

Thanks for the update Terry, keep them coming, Ed

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Moving along from Rebels to Kittens, below is an unfortunately very dark picture, but I think it gives you some idea of how good a paint job was done on Brian Beatty's kitten saloon, one of the pair mentioned last time that is currently enjoying a body off restoration.



Matters Tempestuous

In the last edition Brian suggested it was time the Tempests (and their owners) should get together. (I did. I did, but in fairness it was John Melody who planted the idea in my head, Ed.)

As an owner of one of these delightful little cars myself, this seems a brilliant idea and the most suitable venue must be the National Kit Car show at Stoneleigh on May bank holiday. There are plenty of reasons why this is a good place and it is central.

I run the Shropshire Alternative Car Club (ShACC) and we have had a pitch at the show since 2003 and we are very pleased to provide all Tempests with a home for this event. We usually have a barbecue on the Sunday evening.

Please contact Martin Seymour and myself if you are interested in this idea.

Yoland Brown - Brownhill House, Ruyton XI Towns, near Shrewsbury, Shropshire SY4 1LR Tel.: - 01939 261 121

brownhill@eleventowns.co.uk www.eleventowns.com

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Dear Brian,

30th March 2007

Due too unforeseen circumstances I allowed my membership to lapse some 3 years ago. I would like to re-enrol into the fold (so to speak) and so would be obliged if you could send me the relevant forms etc.

I no longer have the Kitten, I believe it went to somewhere in Sunderland.

I still have the Fox and am well onto a full body off restoration. The chassis is to my delight in remarkably well preserved with a light sanding and 4 coats of hammerite black it looks as good as new, too good to cover up really.

I have incorporated the roll bar modification as recommended by member Alan Shaw.

The chassis is on a home made ro-tisary frame, which is easy to move out of the way by just turning the frame to vertical and pushing to the side of the garage. This then gives me room to overhaul the motor. I have already done the gearbox (stuffed it full of rebel innards) the old box grumbled a bit.

Thanks for listening, I hope to hear from you soon.

Yours with a sore back and knees.

Dave Eyre - Barnsley - No. 133

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Dear Brian,

11-4-2007

Many thanks for the recent Mewsletter, I have not read it completely yet as tend to wait until I have time to savour its contents, but I have quickly flicked through it and note your comments about another get-together and must confess that I am as guilty as everyone else and have let things slide.

I did go to a local classic car show over Easter (I was too late to get the Kitten booked in to the show). The event is called the Midlands Festival of Transport and is held in Westin Park in the grounds of a country house. It takes place on Easter Sunday and Monday every year. They have both club displays and individual cars displayed by year together with autojumble and an events ring.

I did make enquiries and we could take part as a club with our own area. There appears to be no limit to the number of cars (within reason) that we could have there, but they do need to know all the details about a month or so before so that they can allocate space and send out entry permits in plenty of time.

We could go there for one or both days and there is camping on site. There is a charge of £2.00 per car which includes the driver and 1 adult and up to 2 children. (Normal entry is £7 per person) I am not certain if this covers both days or is £2 per day.

The organisers do have other events in the Midlands through the summer, but unfortunately most of these clash with prior commitments. If you think it would be as good idea perhaps you could include an article in the near future and see what response we get. If we were to go ahead for next year I would be willing to organise thing with the event promoters.

These are the bare facts I have at the moment, I could get more detailed information if we decide it is a good idea. I will sign off now and catch the post.

All the best fro now. Malcolm Rush - Whitchurch No.352

There are of course many such events on all over the country during the spring and summer months even running into September these days – a plus of global warming perhaps? One alternative, more specialised, and perhaps we are too big to consider it, but the 33rd (Inter) National Micro Car rally is to be held near Newark from the 6th till the 9th of September this year, would that be worthy of consideration? Of course let us not forget that John from Carlisle has invited us to attend the Cumbria Classic event in August. Spoilt for choice really, unless of course we do what we did the last time and arrange something just for us. I am open to comments / suggestions or ideas, and indeed any other volunteers..

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Dear Brian,

11th April 2007

Nice to talk to you on the phone last evening. As I said many moons ago, once I had retired and got all the jobs done that she who must be obeyed had on the list, I would get stuck into rebuilding the Kitten.

That time has come, so after 6 years the Kitten was unearthed from the piles of cardboard, carpet off-cuts etc., and has now been moved into the larger garage for operations to commence.

Now that I have more time It would be good to re-join the Kitten Register and get up to speed with things on the Kitten scene.

Pleas find enclosed my subscription. I will check as you suggested to see if the clutch is stuck.

Thanking you - Clive Angel - Royston No. 510

Welcome back Clive, I have to ask two things right away, firstly, what is the secret of being able to get to the end of her 'to do' list – Moira keeps adding things on every time I get anywhere near the end of ours – and secondly, failing the first, how do you fancy a working (unpaid!) holiday here? Joking apart, this is great news as far as your Kitten is concerned, if there is anything we can do to help with motivation, advice, or parts, just pick up the phone, or if time is not so demanding, drop us a line and we can ask within these humble pages, in any case, good luck, and if you can, please keep us up to date with progress. Ed.

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Dear Brian,

6th June 2007

Very many thanks for your help yesterday over the steering column bushes, and for doing it so quickly.

This time yesterday (11:45), I was afraid that the steering fault might mean curtains for the car – so you've quite literally given it a new lease of life.

Cheque enclosed.

Thanks again, yours, Hugh Redington - Hethersett, No. 332

Now I have to say that this is the second time this year that we have been contacted by an owner whose Kitten has failed the MOT, and whether because of something the tester said or whatever, they have been in doubt if the car can be kept going, the other one needed an anti-roll bar bush. Now It concerns me greatly to think that anyone would believe for a second that sourcing these parts was a problem. We have taken steps to ensure that the potentially difficult and expensive bits like steering racks, front dampers, front and rear springs, ball joints and wishbones are available to keep the wee cars going. That anyone should be worried about bits that cost less than £10 and are readily available just fills me with despair.

For goodness sake talk to me if you are having problems keeping the car on the road.

At the other end of the scale we have very competent and able people like Owen O'Brien, who, when his Kitten needed a new lower steering column, but not thinking to ask if we would have them in stock, as we have had for many years, had his renovated locally at a price that would have bought him 2 new ones. Just pick up the phone if you are in any doubt at all. Ed.

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Dear Brian,

Sunday 03 June 2007

Thanks for your letter reminding me of the lapse in my not renewing my subscription. It will be my last as "Reggie" (KVP 930P) is going on a one way trip to Mongolia in July.

In the last six months my co-driver Terry Farrell and I have renewed front and rear suspension, alternator radiator, lower U/G joint and complete braking system. Given that the head was taken off before she was laid up back in 1993, and all the valves were in good condition, we have not repeated this step.

There are a few jobs to be done before this 6 or 7 thousand mile journey, a roll bar and a sump guard to mention two, and naturally we will be taking a number of the most likely to be needed consumable spares as well as a second spare wheel.

For Team GrumpyOldMen the journey will start from Hyde Park in London on the 21st of July, going through Prague, Kiev in the Ukraine to the Russian border. Then we head north to Volgograd, Syzran, Omsk and Irkutsk to Ulan Baatar. We plan the journey to take 3 – 4 weeks, and will return by the Trans Siberian railway.

In Ulan Baatar "Reggie" will be auctioned to an NGO charity and give sterling service helping the people of Mongolia. These countries have a history of keeping elderly cars on the road.

Terry Farrell and I served in the RAF and he first owned "Reggie" in 1976 whilst serving in Belgium. She became my wife's car in 1978, and we kept her till 1983 when we went to work abroad. In 1989 she came back into the family and went to university with our daughter, failing an MOT in 1993 and being laid up. As you can imagine the farewell in Hyde Park will be a mixture of emotions for the two families.

If any of your readers wish to help the people of Mongolia, details can be found at <http://www.justgiving.com/TwoGrumpyOldMen> Or to get general information on the rally have a look at the site to be found at :- <http://mongolrally.theadventurists.com/>

I enclose a picture along with what will be our last subscription, and a handbook and manual that are surplus to our requirements. If you have a Kitten Register sticker I will willingly take it to Mongolia.

Owen O'Brien, Keevil (Wiltshire) No. 684

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Our man in Tore, Dick Goodall, has been keeping in touch, and from his recent selection of e-mails, I thought the following would keep Moira's desire that not every word within these hallowed pages should be motoring orientated (mind you, I could take issue with her there, but since she is the current proof reader, I guess I ought not to fall out with her!)

Question : What is the truest definition of Globalisation?

Answer: Princess Diana's death.

Question: How come?

Answer : An English princess with an Egyptian boyfriend crashes in a French tunnel, driving a German car with a Dutch engine, driven by a Belgian who was drunk on Scottish whisky, (check the bottle before you change the spelling), followed closely by Italian Paparazzi, on Japanese motorcycles; treated by an American doctor, using Brazilian medicines.

This is sent to you by a Puerto Rican, using Bill Gates's technology, and you're probably reading this on your computer, or a computer generated Mewsletter created using Taiwanese chips, and a Korean monitor, assembled by Bangladeshi workers in a Singapore plant, transported by Indian lorry-drivers, hijacked by Indonesians, unloaded by Sicilian longshoremen, and trucked to you by Mexican illegals.....

That, my friends, is: G l o b a l i s a t i o n !

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Right, you were warned, I invited you to protect yourself from further excessive input from this end, and, with a few notable exceptions, you disregarded my invitation – I should make you aware that I have no further adventures south planned till September, so you will need to step up to the mark if the next edition is not to be of somewhat reduced size!

After my January adventure I began to plan an ambitious trip which would begin in Scotland at the very beginning of March, take me almost to the south coast of England, tying in even more visits than usual, if not than ever before. Something to do with hay manufacture in cloud free weather I think.

In the beginning then I left Renfrew in the forenoon of March the first heading east, well east north east to Dunfermline near Kircaldy, ancient town of some importance in Scotland, a chap called Carnegie had connections there as does that lad (I say lad, he is ages with me, so he must still be a lad!) who by the time you read this will likely be running the whole island. Anyway, Dr. Grace Dick lives there and she is one of those rare individuals who has not only owned her Kitten from new, but has never subscribed to the Register (even though we have been helping to keep her car on the road for some years past!) In fairness she may well have been unaware of our involvement as her local Reliant dealer was the contact, not the good doctor herself. Yes of course I gave him details to pass on, but I have no way of knowing of he did so – moving on – I arrived at the good doctor's residence in Dunfermline in the late forenoon and enjoyed a glass of water and a chat (still watching the weight and will not adapt to coffee without sugar you see).



Part of our conversation covered these memory sticks or pen memory things that computers use these days, and I was boasting that, in spite of deficiencies on that front in the past, I had backed up this year's files to just such a device before my departure, and I was even able to put my hand in my pocket to show them what I was talking about – big mistake that as it happened, because I failed to put it properly back in my pocket after showing it off.

I left Dunfermline a little later than planned, and after a brief visit to her garage, Cassels Motors, to introduce myself – we had spoken on the telephone on numerous occasions over the years, but had never met, so I rectified that on my way to have lunch with my aunt and uncle in Dalgety Bay in Fife, just across the river Forth from Edinburgh. While there I was relating the tale of the stick memory to my uncle, and reached into my pocket to show him, only to discover its absence – grrrr, that meant having to go back to Dunfermline, which while not a huge detour, because I was already running late, meant a rather brisker than planned journey to the north east of England to spend the night with John Blagburn at Ellington near Morpeth.

John you know John, he has often contributed to these pages over the past dozen or more years, and currently owns "Orange Blossom", the most frequently featured Rebel estate car seen on our front cover. John had arranged for us to spend a couple of hours with Dave Allen that evening, and what with my late arrival, in spite of my throwing fuel economy to the wind, it was all a bit of a rush to eat before Dave arrived. You will have seen Dave's list of events in the last edition. Good to have you on board Dave, I enjoyed our chat.

The following morning, the Friday, had been the most ambitious of the trip, the plan was to meet no less than 6 people for the first time. Unfortunately Ivor at High Spenneth was not well enough, which sad as that was, saved me an hour or so. Ivor I hope that things are sorted out now, and hope to get the chance to see you another time. (Ivor, like John, has a Rebel estate, and we had had aspirations of a front cover picture with both Rebels in it, sadly not this trip) and so my first visit was to meet Lesley and Michael Hardy from Chester le Street. Their Fox

was looking good though I really can't see those seats fitting into it guys, do let me know if they do, I am sure other Fox owners would like to know. Lesley and Michael actually have more animals in their house than we do, and that is quite an achievement I may tell you! It was good to meet you both and at last be able to put faces to the names.

John Blagburn - March 2007



On then to meet Dan and Brian Wade from Darlington, sadly Dan had to go to university in York that afternoon, and I missed him as I was a little late. However, after having a look at their 2 Kittens, Brian took me to see Wally at Owen Springs, the chap who had very kindly helped us out with a pair of bushes in a pair of back springs for Dan's Kitten recently, but then I got badly sidetracked. In the same industrial estate there is a model engineering supply company, M-Machine, who not only supply materials to that trade, but also have a subsidiary, the Great Northern Steam Company who build and overhaul traction engines from the 12" to the foot scale to smaller working models, and model steam locomotives, and they let me in to have a look through their workshop – the child in a sweetie factory analogy is the one that applies, and the time just ran away. See the pictures on page 20 for a flavour of what they had there that day.



The dashboard of Dan's Kitten - March 2007

Dan's dad Brian removing a faulty rear brake pipe



Right, I am, yet again, struggling with this computer, it seems that I can't, quite, get two pictures on the one page, only stuck for a tiny amount of room, but stuck nonetheless! Anyway, the next one should be the dashboard of Dan's Kitten, well one of them, he has a white one as well.

Oh, hang on a minute while I phone a friend – ahh, that's better, thank you Derek, I have finally learned how to control the size of the pictures, lest I forget it is all down to right clicking on the picture, and then selecting the picture format option, which then lets you into a size tab where many things become possible – progress at last, see page 20 for an example of more than 1 picture on a page!

So, back to the story, that extra visit meant that I was going to be late arriving in Preston under Scar, so I had to ring Michael and Janet Bentley, to apologise for the fact that I was going to be late arriving at my final destination of that day in Wensleydale. Again fuel economy was a distant dream as I whistled down the road for one of Janet's excellent meals.

Michael was wanting to produce a programme, and I, as you may remember, had the recent back-up files in my pocket, so we spent an hour or two putting his A4 sheets into a neat A5 format not unlike a shortened version of this magazine. It was great to see you both again, thanks as ever for your hospitality Michael & Janet.

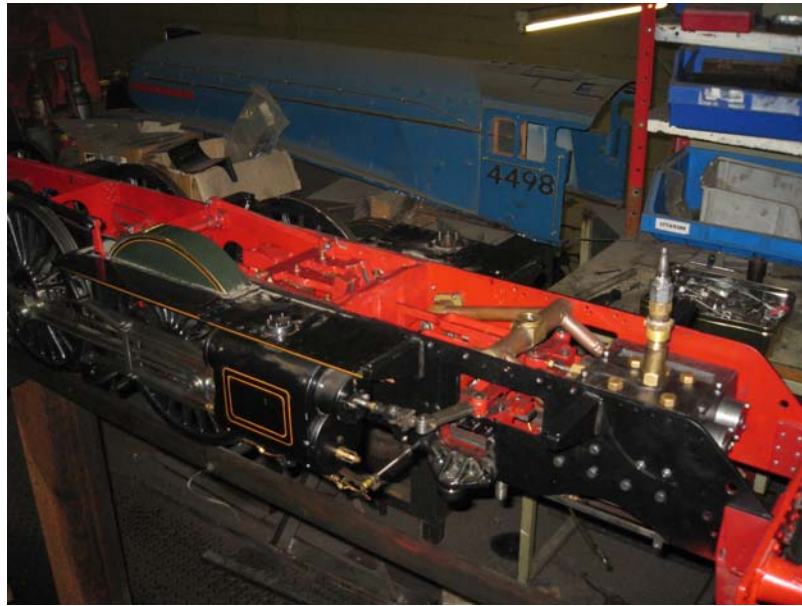
Off then on the Saturday to head south, first port of call was that most helpful man many of you know, Dennis at Michaels. Dennis has a sweet tooth, and I always try to drop in an apple pie when passing, good to see you again Dennis (yes, he is on our mailing list). On then to our pattern maker at Edlington, just the west side of the A1 from Doncaster, and thence to Alan and Megan Shaw's, over that lovely road again, you remember the A628, the one with the blown over lorries on my previous trip? Well this time I was going east to west for a change, it is an even more spectacular run in this direction, this time to drop off some old unit steering racks and collect some springs, thanks for the sustenance and refreshments Alan and Megan, then on to the Liege factory. Peter Davis has the business back at home in Bidford in Avon south of Birmingham, oddly enough there is no escaping the steam locomotive enthusiasts of this world, Peter has a mint "O" gauge Flying Scotsman adorning one of his sitting room shelves. Thanks Peter and Ingrid for the hospitality, never enough time when cramming so much into a day, I was soon off on my way to spend the night with the Wardleys at Thurlaston, thanks Tom, very handy for my meeting in Birmingham the following day. Something of a

contrast to yesterday where the total mileage was only just over 100, today saw over 300 miles covered.

The Sunday morning, poor weather, and off to meet Keith Gittus who had recently acquired a prototype Fox from Reliant, part of their recent sell off prior to their recent move of premises. What a bargain that turned out to be, well done Keith. You may see it soon on a front cover, not only an owner with his Reliant, but with two of them – just be patient.

O.K. that's patient enough! Because I am struggling I will show you a picture of the 'new' Fox in Keith's stable. This was the prototype test bed we are told for the fuel injected 850 engine which never made it into production. It is in lovely condition, virtually brand new, a really great buy, well done Keith.





A confusing picture that second one, it shows the body of A4 “Sir Nigel Gresley” in the background, with the chassis of a Great Western loco in the foreground, not sure if it was a King or a Castle – and that’s bad because there was a day when I would have known the difference! They were both in at the Great Northern Steam Company for overhaul, I really could have spent a lot longer in that establishment I can tell you! The reason the photo, like all the dozen or so I took there that day is so poor, is that the poor light and lack of available space made it impossible to get far enough back from the subject to take a proper picture.

On then to my meeting in Birmingham which finished promptly ahead of its 4:00pm deadline, and I was then off to collect our front covers from John Pearce, thanks as ever John, my next mistake of the trip was leaving my glasses at Leighton Buzzard (it was the dog’s fault – honest!) and having to go back for them which made my arrival in London at my aunt’s house a bit more of a challenge than planned - I really must be more careful.

The London traffic was lighter than anticipated, and aided by my new toy – a satellite navigation system that Moira and Arleen gave me for Christmas, I was, at the end of the day, almost on time at Blackheath just south of Greenwich.



On the Monday, my aunt, who does not drive, agreed to come with me for a run in the Brighton direction, and we called in to see Andrew and Angie Norman at Nutley, you saw some of Andrew's cars on the picture on page 37 of the last edition, though he has since sold the Tempest. Time was short for everyone, but we enjoyed a coffee and cake over a chat, Andrew even treated us to a tune on one of his concertinas, those so equipped might care to have a look at A.C.Norman.co.uk.

We then dashed back to London to visit my cousin on the north side of the Thames before returning to Blackheath for a second night.

Tuesday was another short mileage day, and after lunch I headed off for Brentwood to see Adrian Hanwell, another name that should be well known to readers (he has been inside the front cover as Rebel parts man for quite a while now). We had a relaxing meal in a local hostelry whilst setting the world to rights, and made it to bed before midnight – just, in preparation for our early start on Wednesday. Great to see you again Adrian, thanks for the hospitality.

Off then into deepest Suffolk to drop off a steering rack for Terry Wheeler 's Asquith van, and the chance to put another face to a name I have known for a couple of years, good to meet you Terry.



Hence via Tom Lockhart's for a coffee break, you remember Tom, the engineer who rebuilt dad's boat for me, and from there to Coventry to collect our lower steering columns thence north to drop off the batch of springs at Rotherham on my way to sanctuary at the Box residence in Burton in Kendal for the night. John, please thank Jackie again for her hospitality. They had another friend from Canada staying over on her way to Crufts, and we enjoyed a pleasant evening together in front of an open fire with a glass of wine, most relaxing, thank you.

Then on the final morning of my trip John took me to meet John Melody, the new owner of Tempest Cars. Here we are outside his workshop near Preston. John (Box) was so keen to get the old company name in the picture that he cut our feet off – ouch!

John it was good to meet you at last, thanks for the tour, and the offer to our readers of any of the Fox panels that you are so rapidly building a stock of. So if any of you Foxy folk out there reading this are in need of a door, wing, bumpers, windscreens or indeed just about any Fox body part at all, get in touch with John, he has limited storage space, and will not be able to keep these parts for ever. 01253 790720 is the number to be ringing.



All in all it was a really good trip, I was able to see John Blagburn's new house, he has only lived there for a couple or three years and I had not till this trip managed to visit him, (we used to see John, one way or another, two or three times a year) also Michael and Janet who I used to see several times a year and had not managed to see for a year or more as well as all the others who I was able to meet for the first time, indeed in one case at least, the last time I will see Andrew and Angie at Nutley, as they are moving a couple or three hundred miles closer to Scotland later this year. Good luck with the move Andrew. Tom Wardley, it was good to see you again too, twice in as many months! Something of a record I think - have you finished that path yet?

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Dear Brian,

08.05.2007

In the last issue of the Mewsletter you asked about left hand drive chassis.

As I have both LHD and RHD kittens I can answer that. The front engine mountings are 7 centimetres to the left or to the right, the gearbox mount is about 4 centimetres left or right as the chassis cross bracing is not symmetric, and the steering rack mountings are not in exactly the same place. I know that because, when I restored my blue RHD estate, I had a spare LHD

chassis which I had shotblasted, zinc coated and rebuilt as a rolling chassis, and at the moment of putting the – repainted – body on the chassis the engine fouled the body and the gearbox was not in line with the tunnel. So I had to cut and weld on opposite front uprights reinforcement plates to support the engine and modify the rear gearbox support.

Otherwise my 2 kittens are going well, and this winter I bought new Mini brake drums at £10 each, they are really cheap, and with a bit of turning of the hubs and drums you can put them together.

At the last Beaulieu autojumble in September, I found 2 new Lucas distributors at £210 each, a new starter motor and alternator at £285 each, so I have some stock.

This winter I swapped my unfinished 1968 2.8 litre XJ6 Jaguar for a 1936 750cc Rosengart restoration project. The Rosengart is a French made Austin Seven, and I will build a little 2 seater body in place of the ugly 4 seater that was on the chassis.

Last week someone told me he had a 1970 3 litre Marcos restoration project for sale. I know that since 30 years I have always wanted to buy one of them. So now I have to work for the next 10 years at everything I want to restore.

Sincerely yours Patrick (Vallat) Switzerland. No. 702

Patrick many thanks for those details and the up-date, I know that I am the last person to be in a position to offer sensible advice about motor cars, but it sounds to me as though you are about to be joining that increasing band of wonderfully skilled and enthusiastic individuals I know who are going to have to live to be 200 years old, and fit with it, if they are to be able to complete all the projects they would like to complete – just enjoy what you can while you can – mind you, a Marcos, hmmm, I can see the temptation.... Good luck whatever you decide.

Aarrggghhh, I've done it again, remembered something rather late in the day, if I have already covered the matter of windscreen rubbers recently fine, if not, and this is the frustrating bit, I am making a determined effort to get this to you by mid July, someone wrote recently telling me that they had had a new 'universal' windscreen rubber fitted by a company who specialise in fitting replacement windcreens, and I neither have the letter to hand, nor can I remember either who sent it or which company - if any of this information turns up before I go to print I will amend this item, if not, at least you will be aware that a solution is out there, albeit at a price, I think he said in the region of £60, mind you if that was a fitted price it is a bargain as a new rubber from Reliant will come close to that, you will still have to fit it, and I know that a number of our readers have found the quality of the factory supplied item to be less than satisfactory in recent years, whereas the quality of the one referred to seems to have been first class from what little I do remember. Ed.

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Getting Technical

Now you're able to have pics in the mag I've attached a couple of pics that may help make things clearer for people if you want to use the new high quality Poly bushes on the Fox front strut. All the best, Duncan

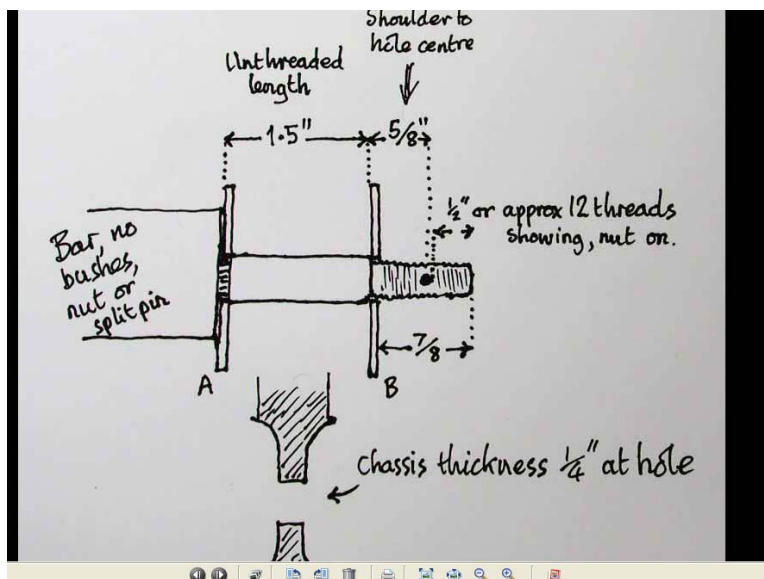
The photo below shows a new bush of the original style in the centre. On the right are two bushes showing how they are compressed into shape in use: note the saucer shape, which is to fit into the depressions on either face of the chassis front cross-member. On the left are two of the poor quality replacement bushes, which have been fitted correctly, but had to be removed after only one night, whereas the others had lasted perfectly well for many years.



The drawing over the page shows the tie-bar in relation to the cross-section of the chassis.

The new-style bushes are non-compressible, but, if fitted with the raised centre side to the chassis, will do perfectly the job of locating the tie-bar to the chassis. Their weakness is that they are rather on the unyielding side to permit the tie-bar to swing up and down with the normal suspension travel. For this reason it is very important that the tie-bar front nut is tightened only just so far that it takes up the slack of any fore-and-aft movement, but allows the tie-bar to wiggle up and down without straining. In practice there is some strain but this seems to be taken up sufficiently by the bushes.

The danger in over-tightening is that then the stud itself tries to flex and could possibly break off or bend. I have seen bent ones and have heard of them breaking off before, which points to them not being robust enough to cope with any additional force. Leaving too much play would result in unreliable steering and suspension performance especially under braking or acceleration.



The assembly method on the original set-up was to tighten the front nut, which was castellated, compressing the new bushes in a controlled fashion, until the split pin just fitted through. With the new set-up the position of the split pin hole is not appropriate. Instead you can mark the new position, dismantle, and drill a new hole, or you can just rely on a new Nyloc nut, or you could fit locking nuts. This must be up to you, but should a nut work loose it may not be apparent until you brake, whereupon the affected wheel will be allowed to swing backwards and you will find yourself steered in an exciting new direction. [Guess how I know?]

Although everyone fitting alternatives such as these bushes must accept responsibility for themselves, I can see no deterioration in handling, or in the structure of the bushes, after 2 years' use, whereas trying to get successful results from the original style bush led to them often completely disintegrating without warning. Also, as you will very likely have altered the steering geometry it's advisable to have it checked to avoid tyre wear at the least. Incidentally, removal of the tie-bar is quite straightforward as long as you bear in mind that both the front nut and the rear bolt are likely to be rusted in place. Copious amounts of WD40 should take care of the front nut, once you have removed the split pin [if present] and cleaned the thread meticulously. Removal of the rear bolt is necessary, but it's usually a struggle as it is a close fit through a tube welded into the tie-bar, and rust will have bonded it in. Once again WD40 helps, but beware of using force, especially don't try to hammer it up from below as this will damage the thread and achieve nothing. A well-fitting socket on the top, wedged against leaning over and slipping off, will enable you to twist the bolt slightly back and forth and encourage the WD40 to creep in. Application of heat from a blowtorch is beneficial, although this may not show until it has cooled down after you walk away in exasperation to find a big hammer and/or a bottle of gin. Once the hold of the rust has been cracked things will move! Early tie-bars had the threaded part turned down to a smaller diameter, which prevented overtightening as the front washer had a smaller hole, as in the diagram. I have not come across these in practice, but it's possible that this stopping point leaves too much slack in the bushes and the hole will need enlarging. Later ones have the threaded part the same diameter as the shaft, and so both washers are the same. I do know that I have never tightened so far as the end of the thread though, so even the early ones should be OK with no alteration.

A great bonus of doing this job is the opportunity to clean and Waxoyl all the parts of the tie-bar and wishbone that you can't normally get at. Hopefully it goes without saying that you'd better grease nuts, bolt and tube well before reassembly.

Duncan Bradford - Norfolk

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Sales and Wants

FOR Sale :- Kitten chassis, never been welded, needs cleaning, £25, buyer collects. Ring Brian for details Junction 025 on the M1.

Kitten for sale :- 1976 Kitten saloon OFO 909R. Hereford Salvage Services Geoff is the man.

For Sale :- Reliant Kitten van with side windows, concours winner at Burford, as seen on page 36 of the last edition. Large amount of new and secondhand spares. This is one of the best if

not the best Kitten you are likely to get the opportunity to purchase anywhere. M.O.T.'d and taxed, sensible offers over £1,000 to Len Gardner. Kent.

For Sale :- Jim Spences Kitten spares in central Scotland.

For Sale :- some of my bits are still available, the lock-up will need to me cleared this summer, so if there are any secondhand bits you may need, now would be a good time to talk to me. I will not enjoy scrapping parts that may some day be of use to someone, but I need to make progress. So if you are after anything from a dashboard to a door, a bonnet hinge to a sidelight lens, manifolds galore, give me a ring. 0141 8866117 is the number you require.

For Sale :- Brian Ayers Kitten Sports, on the road and registered, see the cover of Mag. 68, (numbered wrongly as 67!) For a picture of the fabulous looking vehicle, contact Bryan for details. Newstead Abbey

For Sale :- A very rare opportunity to own a unique piece of motoring history, the Bobcat is on the market. See the front cover of edition 56 for a picture This was Robert Box's solution to making a Kitten do 100mph, and it does look good. Contact John Pearce for details

EPILOGUE

The end has come, the time is near, to raise at last the final curtain, well, it has been a while since I lapsed into song titles, or were those just some words, never mind, you get the gist. It has been a mad rush to try and get this one out in time to give you even a few days notice about Owen and Terry's departure, if I have succeeded it will have been worth it, and I have, thanks to old friend Derek, learned how to control the size of the pictures, which lets me get two on a page, or possibly more. All I need to do now is find more pictures – feel free to help in that regard.

It is currently 6:00am on Thursday the 28th of June, George Burdett from Orkney had an AGM to attend in Glasgow yesterday, so we offered to put him up for a couple of nights, then Arleen's car was broken into while she was at work yesterday, it has been a busy week, but I seem to be coping, albeit just!

Right, points of note,

1:- I have, yes again, let the paperwork get out of hand, if you are waiting to hear from me, please don't be shy about reminding me, I know I have to find the throttle cables for someone, and I am still trying to resolve the bottom wishbone high quality bush situation, 2 new samples arrived yesterday, but there is this postal strike today, so I will not send them on for evaluation till next week, by which time I hope this will be at the printers.

2:- Reliant have moved premises, not far I gather, but moved, and if I can find that bit of paper before I finish this I will include the new details here..

Reliant Parts World Ltd., Orbital Way, Cannock WS11 8XW

3:- Don't forget if you are into car events, or just fancy a different day out, Adrian's D. L. O. C. do:- The "Great Eastern Rally" is on at Ingatestone Hall, Essex, on Sunday 22nd July, where I know you will be made welcome.

I hope this finds you and yours well, do keep up with the greasing and lubricating, the cars as well, and I will talk to you again in about 10 weeks time. Do please send in any stories or pictures that you can, I will not be saying so much next time if you can help it.

Till then take care, enjoy the cars, and take and send me some pictures please, digital for preference.

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