

Reliant Kitten Register

NEWSLETTER 80

January - February 2008



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

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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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Index

Pages 4 to 6	Editorial thoughts.
Page 7	Omitted from the last edition!
Pages 8 to 12	From your Renewal Notices...
Pages 13 to 16	Rebellious Conduct – Episode 9
Pages 17 to 20	Rebel Spares, well a few of them at any rate
Pages 21	Foxes Den, well, it's about Asquiths really!
Page 22	Matters Tempestuous & Liege Page
Pages 23 & 24	Readers Letters
Pages 25 & 26	Tales from Tore
Page 27	Vodka sipping religious man
Page 28	Our 2008 Meeting – act Now Please!
Pages 29 - 33	Getting technical – suspension
Page 34	Spare parts – a springy tale
Page 36	Sales & Wants.
Pages 37 & 38	Epilogue.

A new year and a new trend in cover pictures. This rare left hand drive Rebel saloon, believed to be chassis 100108 was registered in July 1967, but believed built a year or two earlier. It has been rescued from an uncertain future by Wouter van Oploo who plans to restore it. The body, as you can see, is not bad, but the chassis needs major work. Wouter would like advice on the best method of removing the numerous layers of paint without damaging the gel coat. Now someone was recently telling me of a product that does just that, but this memory of mine has played up again and I can neither remember the product nor who recommended it – Help please!

Welcome to our first attempt for 2008, and a belated Happy New Year to you and yours.

This is our 80th edition since I began this back in 1991, in some ways it seems like no time at all, in others it seems as though we have always been here. There have been many changes from the Register's point of view, and there has been much development from that first couple of A4 sheets with no cover picture and no colour which went out twice a year, to our current bi-monthly production complete with colour cover, thanks to John Pearce.

The people I have met and made contact with have been as inspirational as the variety of cars, and I am comfortable with the belief that we have been able to help keep a number of these fine wee cars on the road, or in some cases developed into alternative modes of transport.

I remember joking with Peter Davis that if we were not careful we would end up with more Liege on the roads than Kittens – when I said that I could perceive a time when their numbers might equal that of the number of Rebels on the road, and not only has it exceeded that, but if we don't take better care of our Kittens my joke with Peter will not be funny any more! While Tempest production is about half that of the Liege, they too have eaten into the number of Kittens and Foxes out there, though there is much, much more Reliant content in a Tempest than in a Liege – I could be flippant here and make comparisons with Ferrari and McLaren, but I have too much respect and sympathy for Ron Dennis.

Speaking of Peter Davis, thanks for the up-date Peter, he is even busier than ever, just back from Rome planning his next endurance event, "Roma – Italia", he covered over 3,000 miles doing the first recce, has booked 5 hotels for the event, then returned to pass the medical for his 2008 International racing licence, still competing in high mileage events on 2 wheels as well as 4, not to mention his on-going work on Liege, though he admits to me privately that working from home is a mixed blessing. And that's only some of what he is up to - Me, I just wish I had a 100th of his energy! Keep up the good work Peter.

If you are doing nothing else on the 16th of May I think Peter 'owns' Mallory Park for the day, something to do with a 6 hour endurance test.

To digress completely – just taking the Christmas cards down and we only had two this year that we don't know who they came from, and I promised Moira that I would ask for your help, if you are "Jim, Mary & Michelle" or "Isabel & Tommy", please give me a ring and put us wise. We used to get one from a John, now we know several John's, but we always got one more 'John'; card than we were expecting, we didn't this year, so either he got fed up not hearing from us or whatever, but these 'new' ones have us puzzled.

Still in Christmas card re-cycling mode Joe, you remember Joe, (Baulderstone-Salthouse) the one man whose surname steadfastly refused to fit into the space allocated for that purpose on the database, he used to own a Tempest, the first kit if memory serves (I think it's for sale right now, see the adverts page, Joe sold it a few years ago, and it was at Burford) anyway, Joe keeps in touch, and was boasting – following my claims of great fuel economy from a certain automatic Citroen, that he had traded his old Mini One diesel in, it 'only' managed to do 62.7 miles to a gallon, however his new one, a Mini Cooper Clubman D has just returned 77.7 on a recent run,

and I think the Mini uses a 2 litre diesel, even bigger than the Citroen's 1.9, he must be a light footed chap that's all I can say! (Yes I realise the Mini is smaller than the old BX – but he is doing well).

Right that's the Christmas cards recycled, one individual I will single out for a mention is Les Collier, good to hear from you again Les, thanks for keeping in touch.

Continuing with my erratic thought processes, the mention of Burford – do you realise that was almost three years ago! - brings sharply into focus thought of this year's get together. Malcolm Rush is waiting patiently to hear from you, if this is going to happen at all, the amount of planning and organisation is simply too much to consider for anything less than double figures as far as vehicle numbers are concerned, and to date your response has been less than enthusiastic, lets be hearing from you – Malcolm is the man

This next question probably ought to be in the technical section, and I may make reference to it there, but, while it is in my mind, I had a telephone call yesterday from Graeme Shaw asking about rear brake drum availability. I know I have long complained about the state of my memory, but that really shook me. I could not with confidence, remember the position. I am pretty certain that the front ones are the same as those used on the earlier three wheelers, the ones with 10" wheels, and they are still available new, but I don't think the back ones match, and I don't think new ones are available. Also I never did get Brian Millar to write down just what machining was required to make Mini ones fit – I am pretty sure he fitted Mini ones all round, but I am also pretty sure that there was quite a lot of machining involved, at least to the extent of making the big hole in the middle bigger to clear the Kitten hub, and obviously opening out one of the stud holes to match the Reliant spec – but how much, and was that all?

Coming at this from another angle, we do have an excellent relationship with a pattern maker, and we do have contacts in the machining world, we could always make new ones. But how much demand is there? I would not want to have to spread the pattern costs over a batch of less than say 20, and while I would consider the Register, or one of our very helpful volunteer parts stockists, keeping a few in stock, we would need at least half a dozen folk to commit to buying a pair. Let me know your views. Meantime I will dig out the old ones that are buried in that lock-up I keep threatening to empty, and see what condition they are in.

Alan Shaw is another individual I feel warrants special mention, Alan's wisdom and engineering expertise have been a tremendous support for a number of years, one of a diminishing number who have owned their Kitten from new, and still use it as daily transport. Alan has yet again come up with a simple answer to a question that, on initial asking, sounded complicated, in this case the question was "How do you compare the performance of an old leaf spring to that of a new one?" See the technical section for the answer to that one.

Like many things in life, once you know the answer it seems both simple and obvious, but it took Alan's fertile mind to come up with this ingenious and low-tech answer. Thank you, Alan.

How many magazines to get produced is always a question that I have to define the answer to, every time we have another edition printed. In past years I always tended to have

plenty made, those who enquire about the Register get a complimentary copy to give them a flavour of what they might expect should they join us, and most of them do. But I always seemed to end up with a lot left at the end of the year, so last year I restricted the number to 20 more than the number of paid up subscribers, allowing for the dozen complimentary ones we distribute. But we ran out of three of last years editions, and at this time of year in particular, there is a lot of guesswork and faith involved in the decision making process. Don't worry, I'll cope, but it is easier if I know how many of those who have not yet paid their 2008 subscription will be doing so. There are always late renewals, without shaming anyone I can tell you that last year the latest 2007 renewal was received in November – that's why the fact that we ran out of some of last year's editions is so fresh in my mind, I didn't have a full set to give him. Two points here – firstly Moira is delighted, less bits of paper, secondly, while I do still have some of the earlier ones, I am not sure where! (Unless Moira 'tidied' them while I was busy!?!)

Right, I've wittered on for long enough, at the time of writing, January the 5th, about 100 souls have renewed their subscriptions for this year, so the future is secure once again – thank you for your continued support. If you are one of those who has yet to renew your subscription for 2008, now would be a good time to do it. This will be the last magazine you will receive until you do – you have been warned!

As ever my thanks to those who have contributed to the magazine over the past year, my apologies to those I have let down in any way, and may we continue going from strength to strength during 2008.

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Omitted from the last edition – and finally found on Brian's desk!

Dear Brian,

Oct '07

My wife has been having secret correspondence with another man, she has telephoned him on numerous occasions (only twice John, honest!). She has also been secretive over money and apparently the cad involved has also had his wife involved. I don't know what they get up to in Scotland in their crofts and amongst the heather, but we are having none of that round here!

On the up-side I have just received a Fox for my birthday (full Tax and MOT) it's been a few years since I've owned one, but I have remained on the Register's mailing list faithfully as I knew I would be back one day.

Of course the new car is just the start, and I foolishly got rid of most of my spares and literature not long after selling my last Fox some years back.

I need a tow bar, or drawings for one, and I may even consider another Fox complete if it is cheap, local / free / delivered. Well I am retired now, hence the plan is to use the Fox to keep costs down – I hope – and I should have the time to work on it, however the time does fly by (*Aye, and no more public holidays for you now, Ed!*)

I am trying to talk my wife Mary, into writing an article on her recent experiences married to a Fox fancier, however I think she wants to keep it quiet!

Thanks for your help Brian.

John Metcalfe - Catwick, East Yorkshire No. 265

P.S. anyone know of an automatic gearbox conversion?, have a drawing of the early Rebel remote gear change linkage, have drawings for a stainless steel fuel tank – do they vary much from model to model? Will one fit most other small Reliants?

Briefly John, I don't know of an automatic conversion save the Salamander, and it used a Ford engine and 'C3' auto box, lots of mods to get it in there. I should have a Rebel remote linkage somewhere, though it might be out on loan! There was a complete early box for sale a while back in the south, it was advertised in these pages at the time, and I don't know if it ever found a new home. Yes the tanks are very similar, the Rebels being most different, but the current three wheeler tank fits a Kitten / Fox, but they are out of stock right now, due in Feb '08. Ed. Oh and I will try to dig you out a couple of inlet manifolds when we are next in the lock-up.

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From your renewal notices

I always have these great intentions, both in life generally, and in regard to the Register, and Mewsletter in particular – then 'other things' – seem to get in the way! I think it's called Life!

If I worked harder, and did not allow myself to get so easily distracted, I might do better – enough with the excuses. Some, if not most of the following should be / have been addressed at the time to the individuals concerned, but I really don't have the motivation right now to do the individual letters and or phone calls, and there is always the possibility that you might either know the answer or have another or better or just different solution – do please feel free to chip in your tuppence worth.

'A' frames, cars for the towing of with. Now I am sure, and if I can find it I will publish it, but the Federation recently did something on these, I am sure they are frowned upon, and may be illegal in some countries. That said I know a number of people who have used them over many years with great success. We, my brother Alan and I, along with some of the guys in the Thistle branch of the Reliant Owners Club, did try to make one to tow a rolling display Kitten chassis – about 20 years ago – and it was a miserable failure, buckled badly on the first corner – so clearly you either need to be better at engineering than that group proved to be, or adopt a design that is well proven.

The point is, I was asked, by two people along with their renewals recently, where they could get one, and, Stuart Vickers asked me to advertise his Tempest, complete with such a device!

Then again, what happened to the frame that Reg Wyatt had, he sold his Kitten saloon last year, and used to tow it all over the country behind his camper van? So, if you are wanting to do that, you are not alone, and we need to pool the information that these guys have.

Terry Metson for one I know is looking for such a device, if you can help in any way, please get in touch.

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Dear Brian,

January 2008

Apologies for not returning my renewal notice before 2008, Christmas is always a hectic time and like most things papery and important it was lost amongst the mess I call my desk, kudos though for printing on yellow paper, one of the reasons it didn't slip completely from mind.

After nearly two years of being void of Kittens I finally came into possession of two saloons. I have been waiting eagerly for the right car to come along, something not perfect, but ripe for rebuild and modification for me to drive later this year, hoping I pass my test once I'm seventeen in November.

LLW 312P is a turquoise Kitten saloon that was advertised on the kitten-online site, being about 45 minutes away in Andover I couldn't resist a quick call to see if it was still available. The car had been sat dormant on the old boy's drive for the best part of 10 years, and whilst it was complete and very original, it would need a lot of work to bring back up to roadworthy standard, liking a challenge I handed over the notes and towed it home on a trailer. I have been working on it slowly since around November, so far the suspension front and back has been fully rebuilt and the chassis cleaned up and repainted, hopefully it will be back on the road by the end of January.

RDU 491R is a white Kitten DL saloon that I acquired by swapping Reliant parts to help out a good friend. Whilst I have not done anything with the car yet, it is a well used little car and requires attention, having been kept barely on the road for many years, proving unreliable and finally blowing it's engine up in 2007. I will eventually fully strip and rebuild it for use as my transport in 2009, the intention being to fit a Dick Harvey race engine I have tucked away and give Nick Keyser's pepped up Kitten a run for its money.

Here's to another year of Reliant motoring, hopefully without Kitten calamity!

Regards, Phil Andrew - Reading No. 726

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Dear Brian,

03 January 2008

Here is my cheque and renewal form for the Register and I just want to thank you for keeping up the good work, and particularly the Mewsletter which so many of us eagerly read from

cover to cover as soon as it arrives. My wife also has a jolly good look through it as there are so often articles that interest her too.

These days we seem to be living through the dark ages – little or even no sunshine day after day and down here colder than we are normally used to. Certainly not conducive to working on cars out of doors in a bitter wind.

Here's looking to the Spring and better still the Summer – mind you the tourists then clutter our roads, block our car parks, so we locals are forced to stay off the roads then!

All the best to you and Moira and good health too.

Peter Hemming - Cornwall No. 178

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Dear Brian,

6/1/08

Thanks for your letter of 3rd November and all the info you sent. Could you send me some more past Mewsletters, they seem a good read and are very informative.

I enclose a cheque, I would have contacted you sooner but Christmas got in the way, sanity has now returned.

I look forward to a long and rewarding friendship with you and the Register in the future.

Compliments of the season to you and yours.

By the way, can you put me in touch with any other Asquith owners in my area?

Ken Lawrence - Fareham Hampshire No. 822

Ken, see the bottom of Page 21 for some Asquith details, Ed.

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Dear Brian,

22 December 2007

Sadly I am no longer a Kitten owner, but I enjoy reading the Mewsletter so much that I have decided to continue my membership of the Register for 2008 at least. Subscription enclosed.

I like the magazine because you pay proper regard to the correct use of the English language – refreshing and sadly unusual these days. Added to that the content is not totally technical, and is hence of interest even to someone like me who is not of a technical bent.

After a great deal of soul searching I have allowed my kitten to be taken to the crusher (see 1) as it was apparently suffering from terminal rust in the chassis in the area of the rear wheels. Even I could see what him outdoors was on about when he showed me gaping, ragged edged holes where there ought to have been nice black metal. He discovered these while preparing the car for an M.O.T. a few years ago, and for a while thought he might on retirement find the time and inclination to take the body off – I was amazed to hear that you could do things like that to a car – and repair the damage, but when he looked more closely he found, I quote that “the mounting brackets bonded into the bottom of the B pillars had also rusted away and would be extremely difficult to reinstate.” (see 2)

When he did retire my husband found the motivation to tackle the work was lacking, especially as I had given up driving when I retired five years earlier, and he has two rather more exciting cars to play with (see 3). We decided that - oh boy, this editing thing is really difficult – should I really put this in print?!? Oh, I’m being bold this year, and we all have a sense of humour - don’t we? Even if expensively and comprehensively restored the Kitten would still be worth less than a bottom-of-the-market cooker, and would be about as easy to sell as a secondhand washing machine, it would be better to scrap it before the Gestapo from the DVLA, greenies, local authority, EU et al turn really nasty about old bangers. (see 4).

The Kitten has been with us for 29 years, and had served us fairly reliably for the first 23 of them, covering 36,000 miles in our hands out of a total of 50,000. “Once I had put it together properly” I hear himself shouting.

We now have for sale one authentic Reliant Kitten Owners Handbook circa 1976, (Reliant Part no. 26447) intact but cover slightly distressed, and one authentic Reliant Kitten saloon and Estate Workshop Manual, also circa 1976 (Reliant part no. 91048) intact in its proper binder, and pretty clean, £10 for the handbook, and £25 for the manual, or both for £60. Please insert ad in the magazine, or pass on any random enquiries to 01727 851917.

Yours sincerely, Tricia Nash - St. Albans o. 282

P.S., Enclosed the final pictures of our car on crunch day, and also of an Asquith spotted on Ynys Mon in Autumn 2006.

Right, Tricia, I was very tempted to interrupt you on a number of occasions, but you will see that I instead put in comment numbers, and here are the comments – please don’t be offended, I know we all have to make hard decisions in life sometimes, Ed.

I am pretty sure that a female dog was mentioned as my initial reaction, here we are looking for old units to recondition and she goes and sends it to the crusher!!!!!! That said, I do realise that moving a car without its front suspension and steering, not to say back axle and springs, is a mite tricky.

Both Les Cruickshank and Phil Hallam gave us chapter and verse on two different but equally effective solutions to that one some years ago, and while I know of many Kittens, on the road, with the same problem, I have only heard of one that was failed an M.O.T. because of it!

I did mean to give you a ring about this one – what could possibly be more exciting to play with than a Kitten?

There are lots of adjectives that spring to mind here, sadly, frustratingly, worryingly (are there any adjectives that don't end in ingly or dly?) anyway, the point is that that has happened to more than one of our reader's cars, so it is a thing to be aware of.

Anyway Tricia, it is great to have you still on board, thank you for your continued support, and I do hope that we will be able to meet when you are in Scotland in the summer. We are only a mile from the M8, just 3 miles from Glasgow airport. If you are driving north from Carlisle, use the B7078 rather than the A74 for a much more relaxing drive to within 30 miles of Glasgow.

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Martin Blunn you may recall always writes me a letter along with his subscription and generous spares donation, thank you as ever Martin for your loyal support. Anyway, there were just the two renewals in the post this morning, Martin's, and that of Micheal Bromby from Hull, and, quite by chance, it is Micheal who is the current custodian of the turquoise Kitten saloon that Martin, and his dad, owned for the first 25 years or thereabouts of its life TEK 229S, and yes Martin, it is still on the road. Now I have never been one to believe in co-incidences, but you have to admit – that was a curious occurrence!

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Rebel Round up

REBELLIOUS CONDUCT – EPISODE 9

I left Episode 8 with a puddle of oil under the rear axle and a rapidly expiring MOT certificate. Well, the puddle of oil problem is still there but on the upside, a new MOT certificate was easily won. I have yet to replace the rear axle pinion oil seal, I couldn't budge the pinion nut so may have to seek help on a high lift ramp to obtain the required leverage. The leak does not seem very apparent in daily use, just a small spot being deposited as proof that the Rebel had indeed been parked there. However, leave the Rebel stationary for more than 2 or 3 days, it's enough for a USA spy in the sky to spot! More happily, my MOT garage was again suitably amused to see the Rebel. After prodding it with a long stick, counting the wheels and giving it their usual thorough going over – it passed. The examiner was impressed by the sturdiness of the chassis and hefty rear axle, good job it didn't drop any oil on him whilst he was admiring it! This

also marked the end of my second year of ownership of LRF 671K and a total mileage of 11,500 covered in that time.

In my previous ramblings I mentioned a sighting of a Fox Tandy camper in a lay-by at Lelant in Cornwall. I first saw it in August 2006 and have been keeping an eye on it each time I pass. I have never seen a Fox other than in pictures and this one I just had to have a closer look at. Each time I saw it looked rather unused but I gathered that it did belong to a member of the Register. Finally, on an early morning walk, I met the owners, Arthur and Nicki. They were busy cleaning it and getting it back to life. Arthur had done some useful modifications to the Fox, a 1275cc 'A' Series engine mated to the standard Reliant gearbox, Disc front brakes and stainless steel door frames. It had been an idea of mine to photograph the Fox and my Rebel together. Not so easy as my Rebel and I live in Bristol with frequent trips to Cornwall made in a vehicle that is of no interest in this magazine. This idea almost came to fruition when my wife, who enjoys far more holiday periods than I do, shot off to Cornwall in the unspeakable vehicle a week or so before I could join her. Hence the plan was, to drive into work in the Rebel as per normal, and then the 200 miles to Cornwall after work. This was in August when we experienced one of the wettest summers ever; the Rebel doesn't mind the wet – but 200 miles? Whether the Rebel minded or not, here was that opportunity for a Fox and Rebel get together in that lay-by in Lelant. So why didn't it happen? Well, the sun came out, that's why. The forecast for the coming week looked like sun all the way so at the last minute, the Rebel stayed home and I took my Frog eyed Sprite instead. Well, I have been using the Rebel every day for work and hood off motoring in the Sprite has been rather limited this year. Anyway, my chance meeting with Arthur and Nicki was not a moment too late; they were preparing the Fox for a new owner to pick it up the very next day. So, the Fox/Rebel photo became a Fox/Frog photo instead. Still, with digital remastering of photos these days, it could still be faked!

September is usually the month that we have a mass gathering of Rebels here in the south west. Well, to be more precise, just 2 Rebels. John Parker and I usually attend a couple of local shows to allow the Rebels to compare notes but this year, we both missed each other. I was still in Cornwall when John attended the first show on the Saturday, but I just got back in time to attend the second show on the Sunday, which John didn't.

Not to be outdone, I got in touch with Ian Edwards who has a Rebel pickup. Ian is not a member of the Register, but has recently acquired another Rebel, a 1969 estate. Hence, we managed a Rebel threesome. It could have been a foursome if I had got in touch with John in time. Sorry John, but it is still possible, and locally too.

Ian had converted his Rebel to a pickup from a 1971 Van. My 1972 Rebel started life as a van but was converted to an estate very early on in its life. Both now have 848cc engines replacing their original 701cc wheezers. Comparing some figures, we found the following –

Ian's Rebel	Registered	16th December 1971	Chassis No	E150663
My Rebel	Registered	13th July 1972	Chassis No	E150682

Although our Rebels were registered some 7 months apart, they are separated by just 19 units by chassis number.



According to Daniel Lockton's book, "Rebel without Applause", only 29 Rebel 700 vans were built. Ian's example had a mechanically operated clutch and originally equipped with a dynamo and voltage regulator. My Rebel has a hydraulically operated clutch, an alternator and no voltage regulator. The wiring shows no sign of one ever being removed. The transmission tunnels are also different, Ian's having provision for the remote gear change housing, mine having a smaller tunnel with the gear lever acting directly to the gearbox. I didn't realise that the chassis plate also stated the original engine number; this confirming that mine was originally a 701cc engine. One other little clue to LRF having the new all synchro gearbox, in the bottom right hand corner of the windscreen, a sticker giving the gearshift diagram. The all synchro gearbox having reverse gear in a different position. Unfortunately, the sticker has finally succumbed to old age and just recently crumbled onto the floor. As bought, I assumed it would have been a 750cc because of the clutch and transmission features. Ian and I agreed that mine must be something of a transitional model having the then current 701cc engine and other 700 features but with the forthcoming 750cc clutch and transmission. Can anyone add comment to this?

Ian's latest acquisition, a 1969 Estate may be used to re-body his pickup chassis and converted back to a van. The body appears to be very good but not so the chassis. Should the plan not come to fruition, there could be some Rebel spares going locally!

To finish on, I have just experienced some - KITTEN ENCOUNTERS My early morning walk took me in a direction that I have rather overlooked in recent times. About a mile from my home, a local farm has become something of a Mecca of Classic vehicles. Sat in the middle of the field was a blue Kitten Estate. The passenger door was left wide open but everything looked intact. The body looked good and so did the interior. The long wet grass precluded a chassis inspection. This Kitten seemed far to be good to be left abandoned in this way. Nearby, on the approach lane to the farm, a blue Kitten saloon also looked in good shape but a lot less forlorn than the poor Estate. I will try and find out more about these two Kittens and whether they are available to someone who may give them a better life. If you are interested, please contact me via Brian.

Terry Horler - Bristol No. 755

Terry, thanks as ever for the up-date, I do feel frustrated that I am unable to give you a definitive answer regarding the 700 / 750 cut off point. I do know that in spite of some publicity, Rebels were very slow to sell, and while a few were registered within days of production, many were not registered till many months, in some cases over a year after they were built. Added to that the fact that I am sure I was not the only individual to swap parts between early and late ones over the years, and indeed Reliant's own ways of working, make it all very difficult – which is no reason for not trying!

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Adrian Hanwell, who regular readers may recall holds a large stock of mostly second-hand Rebel spare parts which he keeps in a nice dry lock-up, is finally getting organised – something that I failed to do in 2 decades, and has sent me some pictures of some of the parts. That said,

some of them are not original Rebel parts, the thermostat housings for example, only one of them is Rebel, (should I borrow it to get a pattern made, or will e-bay yield sufficient numbers to meet future demand?) the others, with one exception – which I think may be Mini or Austin/Morris – are from the 850 Reliant engine, which was never fitted to the Rebel by Reliant. That said I am sure Adrian is open to offers – they will fit your Kitten or Fox, or indeed any vehicle that uses the 850 Reliant engine!



Thanks Adrian for the pictures, and for looking after the parts, I hope that this will help get some of them moved on to new homes.



A selection of air filter housings, above the Rebel ones and below a mixture of 850 ones Kitten / Robin . Rialto even – or did the early Kittens use the above type as well as the later Rebels?



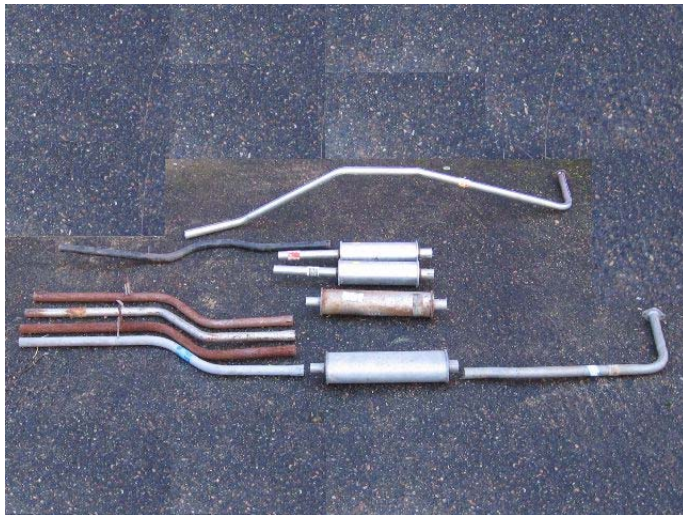
Whatever, if you see anything there of interest, Give Adrian a ring.



These are a batch of towing brackets that Brian had produced specially to fit Rebel Saloons. The rear chassis cross tie needs to be up-graded from the lightweight 'U' section that it is, to a much more substantial 50 by 25mm 3mm thick rectangular tube, (which wants to be drilled and have a pair of bolts fitted from the top prior to installation), and an access hole needs cutting in the boot floor to facilitate attachment of the front of the bracket to the centre of the rear damper mounting cross tube with suitable U' bolts..



Above right is a selection of engines – offers to Adrian.



Pretty self explanatory here, various exhaust parts – I don't think they are all Rebel, that top one looks to me to be from either a Robin ./ Rialto or possibly a Kitten, can you tell from that picture? Please let us know if you can, and again contact Adrian if you are interested.

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## **Foxes Den**

O.K., the Foxes must be hibernating, so I will move on to the Asquith Shetland van for a moment. One of our recently subscribed Asquith owners was asking me if there were any others in his area, and I was unable to immediately answer that question – I must brush up on my computer skills and up-date the reports the system gives us. We in fact have details on just 4 Asquiths at the moment, though I am aware of another 5, one of which is in America! I must make more determined efforts to learn more about the 'others', especially since the Register has helped

keep 2 of them on the road this past year! The ones we 'have' are as follows (see, I can do this because there are so few of them, it does not take long!) :-

Brian Wiggin's green one from Gloucestershire  
Terry Wheeler's cream one from Suffolk  
Susan Richards' green one from London  
and Ken Lawrence's blue and white one from Hants.

So now you know, the others I will try and write to, or in a couple of cases their garages, to, again, try to establish contact.

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## **Matters Tempestuous**

It has been reasonably quiet on the Tempest front of late but now that the warmer weather is coming it is always an incentive to get back in the garage again and do some more mechanicing. The previous builder of my car fitted MGB wire wheels with all new tyres utilising a conversion plate (commercially available) for the hub to take the central spinner. Although they look great, I know the rear axle ratios are standard and as the conversion adds quite a bit of weight I will probably sell them so if anyone is interested let me know. I also know of a Campbell kit that is 90% complete and for sale at a reduced price, contact me if you want one of these amazing cars!

Over the last few years the fate of the Tempest as not been totally secure and it has mainly been due to this grey state of affairs that I have not pursued getting a Tempest meet and other associated activities together with much vigour. Now that John Melody is getting the production moving in the right direction I feel now is the time to get the register's affairs in a more organised fashion. Having talked to John Melody recently he has a demonstrator car nearly finished and well on the way to creating a front disc brake conversion. Eventually the body will be updated with a one-piece fibreglass tub but for the moment the kit will remain in panel form. John is going to be visiting 4 kit car shows this year and taking the Tempest with him.

Although I have some old records of kits built etc in order to get an up to date register please would you send me details of your Tempest with as much detail as possible and preferably a photo. Email is fine. If you know of anyone with a kit languishing in a garage please let me know as we may be able to re-home it. What other activities would you like, and would be willing to help? We have already made mention of getting some cars together at the Kit Car Show at Stoneleigh, please make contact if you are interested so that we can make definite plans.

## **Liege page**

I happen to know that some of the Liege guys are considering a trip to Le-Mans in June, set me thinking.... Perhaps not, but should you be of such a mind, I certainly don't mind putting you in touch with like minded individuals, you know how to get in touch with me, Ed.



Also, as previously mentioned, Peter is well ahead with plans for his Roma-Italia 2008 Sports car Challenge  
15-19 September, 2500km in 5 days  
[www.guildofmotorendurance.co.uk](http://www.guildofmotorendurance.co.uk)

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## **Readers Letters**

Dear Brian,

13/12/07

It has been a long time since I supplied anything for the Magazine, but after nearly 29 years of Kitten ownership, I have a few definitive answers to recent questions – so here goes!

Mistakes in the workshop manual – there are quite a few, mostly of academic value only, but the following three are of practical significance.

The drawing of the rear brakes (Section L. Page 4) is indeed incorrect, it shows the driving side rear brake upside down.

Under lubrication and maintenance, Page 6 check / adjust carburettor settings, should say 900RPM.

Under fuel system, page 4 fast idle should be set to approx 1250RPM also the 40thou gap suggested is too much, and will on many carburettors not give any fast idle at all, let alone the incorrect 2250RPM suggested. The actual gap varies depending on the profile of the cam (which altered several times either by accident or design during production) but would be more typically 25thou.

Headlamps, these were, according to my Lucas list, only used by Reliant on the Bond Bug, Kitten and Fox, and on one other car, the Hillman Avenger 1973 – 1976, also the smaller Talbot Sunbeam used those lamps, and had the original Lucas part number LUB409 Talbot soon gobbled up the Rootes group, of which Hillman was a part, and then Peugeot took over Talbot. Perhaps in the parts department of such main dealers lurks a shelf full of them?

On electronic ignition, I have to take exception to the comments recently seen within these pages regarding the Lumenation vs the Reliant (Lucas) system. The Lumenation system – an earlier design, uses a light source and optical chopper to initiate the spark firing. This system is known to fail on these units and does require regular cleaning. The Reliant (Lucas) system uses a Hall effect device (well known in the electronics world as one of the most durable and reliable components ever). The main unit is constructed to military type standards with most components operating at less than half their rated values. We now have 4 of these on our cars and over 28 years of use I have to say as an electronics engineer that you cannot get better than these units – they may be equalled, but never bettered.

This ignition system was originally available under the following part numbers :-

|                                                              |       |
|--------------------------------------------------------------|-------|
| Regal 700, Robin 750 up to engine number 7941                | 92757 |
| Robin 750 from engine number 7942, plus Robin 850 and Kitten | 92758 |
| Scimitar GTE 3.0 Litre 1970 onwards                          | 92759 |

All three of those kits are no longer available, but :- Rialto kit 92971 was still available in 2006, and may still be.

This kit may be easily converted to Kitten kit 92758 as follows.

Drill a 3/16" diameter hole through the centre of the dimpled spigot on the vane switch base plate. File flat the remains of the spigot.

This modification makes the kit identical to the 92758 Kitten kit.

Hopefully the above clears up a few points and provides some interesting reading.

Finally, many thanks Brian and Moira for your hard work without which the rest of us would be struggling in isolation.

Graeme Shaw

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Hello Brian,

December 2007

Square headlamps, I have two usable items, plus one 'make do' along with two plastic back 'pots'. There are several other Reliant bits I'm putting on ebay these days, so anyone searching on Reliant parts should find them. Not forgetting that I still have a goodly pile of these to pass on.

Alan Osborn

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## **Tales from Tore**

Hello Brian.

2nd December 2007

In my last note re headlamp bulbs I mentioned that there was little of note to report on the Kitten front. I really should have known better. On Wednesday Kitty's engine died in a rainstorm while homeward bound, resulting in an undignified dive to the verge of the A9 trunk road. A brief attempt at poking about under the bonnet did not reveal an answer and a tow home was needed.

Thursday saw me, just for interest, turn the key and the wee beast sprang to life! Hmm. I was convinced that there must be a reason and spent most of the daylight trying to pin down the fault. Removed the petrol pipe from the carb, popped it into a container and switched the ignition on, the SU pump clucked away and soon filled the container, so that seems OK. Removed the air filter and base then the float chamber lid to find the chamber suitably full of fuel. Removed the float chamber lid and checked that the float was free to pivot and that the float valve was not sticking. OK so far. Soaked up the fuel in the float chamber with a rag and looked for dirt in the bottom, there was almost none. Reassembled the bits and the pump quickly filled the float chamber. Now what?

I lifted the carb slide and let it go, it seems to be sticking a bit. Better remove the 'bell' to remove the piston and needle. Oh! The throttle cable bracket gets in the way. Nothing for it but to remove the carb & heat exchanger together then split them and remove the 'bell'. Inverted the piston and the oil that drained out was a bit thick and gooey, so cleaned it out. Wiped the piston and inside the bell with soft tissue and reassembled. Took the throttle cable bracket and converted the bolt hole into a slot so that next time I can remove it, then the 'bell', without having to remove the carb etc. Perhaps fitting a Robin bracket would be an idea? Reassembled and filled the dashpot with 3 in 1 oil. The engine started first time and ticked over well. Now what?

So I turned to the electrics. The wire from the coil to the condenser tail lead was renewed 4 years ago; perhaps that is faulty again. So I made another and fitted it, all seemed well. As a matter of course I fitted a new set of contact breaker pints, a new condenser and cleaned out the distributor cap and the rotor arm. Again all seemed well. Finally checked the fuses are all seated properly. Engine worked fine.

Hopefully the elusive fault has been eliminated, time will tell.

Then checked the valve clearances and adjusted as necessary.

Friday saw Kitty out on the road. A trip to the next village went well and I decided to go to town to renew the road tax. Bad move! After a mile the engine died again and eventually Kitty was towed home. This is becoming a bad habit. Not to worry, I used my bus pass to go to town and do the business.

On Saturday I used my bus pass to go to a motor factor and buy some bits which might prove useful; and to go with my good lady to town. To prove troubles never come singly, the washing machine had conked out. As it is 6 years old and had been giving other troubles we decided it would be likely cheaper to buy a new one. I hope delivery is quick.

Sunday started with a hard frost, but I was soon outside to look for the elusive fault. It should be something obvious which I have overlooked. The fuel pipe from pump to carb was kinked so it was renewed. Kitty started straight away and idled OK. Right, I will leave it idling for a good while and see what happens. After about half an hour the engine cut out and would not start. Pulled the fuel pipe off the carb, stuck it into a container and switched on the ignition. The pump did not work. Tested that electric fluid was getting to the pump and that the earth was OK, still a dead pump. Could the fuel suction pipe be choked? Removed the inlet pipe from the pump,

inserted a bit of clean pipe and tried sucking, fuel soon rose towards me, so that's OK. Tried blowing down the pipe and made some impression, should be OK. Tried switching on the ignition with no pipes connected to the pump, and it did not work, not a single cluck resulted. Ah, I think I know what has happened. Note that this pump is only 18 months old from brand new!! Removed the end cover from the pump to find that the contacts were dirty and a bit burnt, after only 10k miles. That's not very good. The old pump was donkey's years old before it failed for the same reason. Cleaned up the contacts with fine wet + dry paper and then a slip of paper and refitted everything. Kitty started willingly as normal. This time I left it ticking over for an hour and a half with no problems. I think I have found the problem, which I've experienced on a Morris Minor many years ago, but I did not think that such a young pump would fail and my first checks backed me up.

Should I now just get on and use the car? Sorry, I have now have no faith in the pump and I don't wish Kitty to appear as an unreliable car. It's bad P.R. for Reliants to be seen broken down at the roadside. From the Internet I see that Morris Minor dealers now sell SU fuel pumps with solid state switching and that is the way I intend to go. Must get one ordered early tomorrow, the expense will be worth peace of mind.

While browsing Minor sites I looked for the price of steering racks. Yes recon units are available at a price of 40 quid, can't be bad. The sting in the tail is the almost universal £30 surcharge until a reconditionable unit is returned. Is that a tip for Uncle Brian?

By the way, the halogen headlamp bulbs are a worthwhile improvement, should have fitted them ages ago. Best Wishes to all, #157

I have to say that the following may cause offence if you are of a particularly strong religious nature and a bit short in the humour department, if that is the case just skip the page.

## **SIPPING VODKA**

A new priest at his first mass was so nervous he could hardly speak. After mass he asked the monsignor how he had done. The monsignor replied, "When I am worried about getting nervous on the pulpit, I put a glass of vodka next to the water glass. If I start to get nervous, I take a sip." So next Sunday he took the monsignor's advice. At the beginning of the sermon, he got nervous and took a drink. He proceeded to talk up a storm. Upon his return to his office after the mass, he found the following note on the door:

Sip the vodka, don't gulp.

There are 10 commandments, not 12.

There are 12 disciples, not 10.

Jesus was consecrated, not constipated.

Jacob wagered his donkey, he did not bet his ass.

We do not refer to Jesus Christ as the late J.C.

The Father, Son, and Holy Ghost are not referred to as Daddy, Junior and the spook.

David slew Goliath; he did not kick the shit out of him.



When David was hit by a rock and was knocked off his donkey, don't say he was stoned off his ass.

We do not refer to the cross as the "Big T."

When Jesus broke the bread at the last supper he said, "Take this and eat it for it is my body." He did not say "Eat me".

The Virgin Mary is not called "Mary with the Cherry".

The recommended grace before a meal is not: Rub-A-Dub-Dub thanks for the grub, Yeah God.

Next Sunday there will be a taffy pulling contest at St. Peter's not a Peter pulling contest at St. Taffy's.

The Origination of this is unknown, but it brought a smile to our faces.

## **2008 get together**

As you will be aware Malcolm Rush has kindly offered to organise a do for us this year. The venue, near Wrexham (just a bit south of Liverpool) was voted Britain's best historic house in a recent UKTV History programme, and also has the accolade of being the best historic attraction in Wales – coming just 8th in the "Britain's best Historic Site" competition. So not a bad venue then!

We have arranged for sole access to the area on the West front of the house, which will make a wonderful backdrop – lots of great potential to fill more than a few pages in here later in the year! Let's just hope the sun shines this time!

If I am organised in time, there will be a colour flyer enclosed giving you some more details of the venue ( he said a week before this is going to print – I did speak to them today about getting them, January 15th, honest – oh, Malcolm, lest I forget, it was Landsey Gordon with whom I spoke, pronounced Lindsey, she married a Scotsman from Dundee). Regular readers may recall the editor's eccentric ways in relation to songs, "A Gordon for me" does spring to mind, but I didn't think of that when I was speaking to her!

Malcolm has managed to negotiate free entry to the gardens and outbuildings, which includes the restaurant! (free entry, not free food!) and a special concessionary rate for the house itself – though National Trust members get in free provided they bring their membership cards along!

Anyway, if we are to proceed it is imperative that we have some idea of numbers, so far only Denis has promised to come in his Tempest, thank you for your response Denis. The rest of you need to act now if this is going to happen – so, to that end you will find a form enclosed, please complete it and return it to Malcolm now, or give him a ring on 01948 840896.

For those interested we can arrange tours of the house, and also a guided tour of the garden with their Head Gardner, but they do need notice of these things, see the form for more details.

The possible dates we are looking at are either the first Sunday in July, August, or September – see, I can be democratic – just complete the form appropriately, get it back to

Malcolm as soon as you possibly can, and by very early March at the latest, and we'll let you know more next time.

## **Getting Technical** - December 2007

### **Reliant Kitten Anti – roll gear and front suspension.**

I enclose some notes regarding the above which may help a front suspension fighter. The mods illustrated have been done on Graeme's cars and my own, and have proved to be satisfactory. It appears that the first of the litter had 15mm (or 9/16") anti-roll bars, with shorter legs than the later 20mm ones. The longitudinal positions of the bearings on the chassis were then about right on the early ones, though vertically  $\frac{3}{4}$ " too high. (1)

Then for some obscure reason 20mm bars were fitted. They were never bent enough, and that, and the longer legs cocked over the links in both planes. Thus the links, rubbers and wishbone holes had a wretched start to their working lives, not to mention that part of the bend was now inside a bearing with not really enough rubber to give flexibility. I think we have to live with the last. That said, Brian has sourced a high quality replacement for the mounting rubbers which are thicker, and hence require either new longer metal securing straps, or the use of an appropriate spacer. It goes a couple of mm towards replacing some of the flex lost by the adoption of the thicker bar. Well, it all worked 'after a sort', and many a Kitten has been scrapped through accident or neglect before these troubles arose. I have some sympathy. Anyone making a complicated product finds things that, with hindsight, could be better, but if you don't start selling you're out of business.

Of all the out of sight, out of mind water collectors of the Kitten chassis, the lower wishbone must be one of the outest.

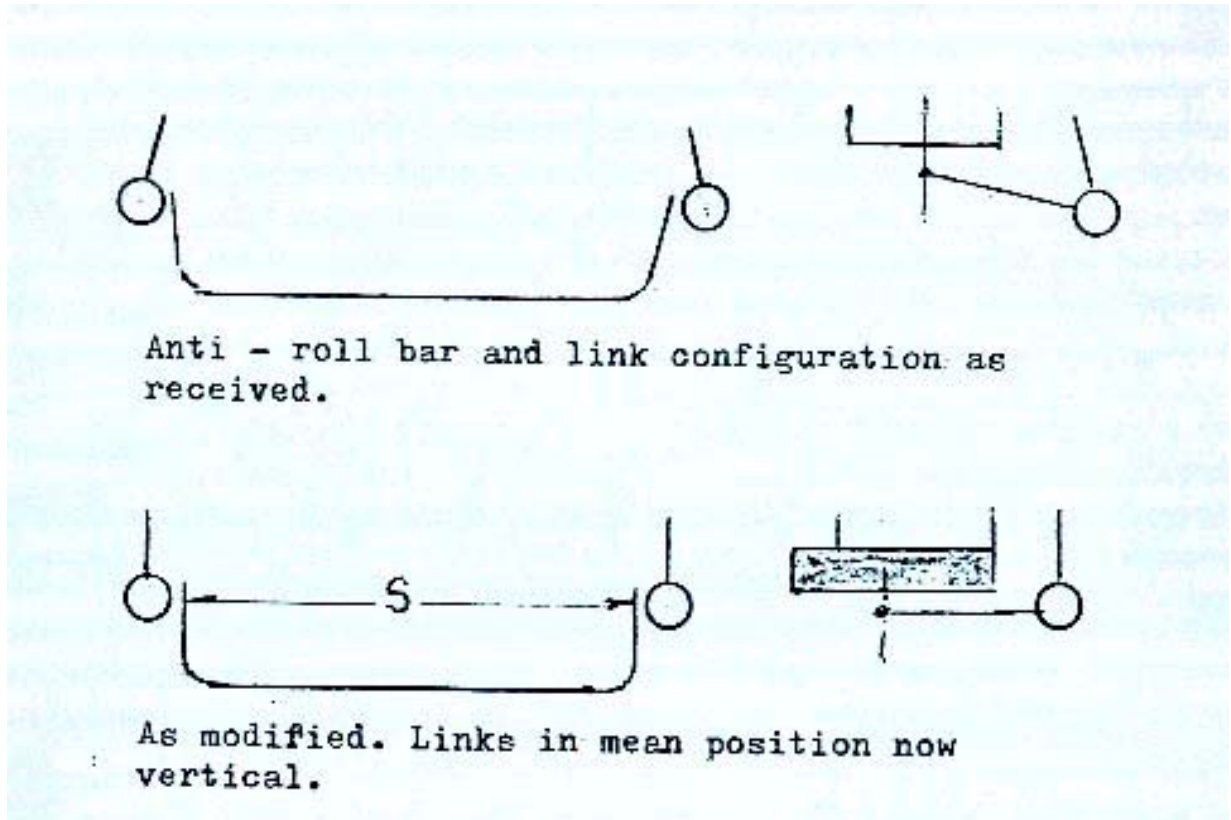
A front end service only takes 20 minutes. Lift and prop the whole front by the cross member. Free the steering. Turn the wheels to grease the ball joints – doing this with the joints unloaded gets the grease where it should be. Don't whizz the steering round, give the oil time to get out of the rack bellows. Spray or anoint dampers, anti-roll bar links, track rod ends, anchor plates, brake pipes, wishbone members, nuts – anything that looks dry. Don't be put off by tales of oil attacking rubber. The rubber boots are, or should be full of grease from the same distilling plant, and even on a low mileage tyre treads will go long before the side walls suffer because of casual splashes.

From under the bonnet, dose the bottom universal joint of the steering column, and especially the 'dust seal', using a made up long handled brush which is ready standing in a tin of old gear oil. Not old engine oil, which may well lubricate, but, with any inhibitors long gone, now contains sulphur, nitrous oxides and water. Aqua Fortis.

A lot of trouble? Nothing compared to the trouble you'll have if you don't do it. All the parts on a nice new car are at the start of a journey back to before they came out of the ground. Rust and decay never sleep. There is no permanent fix, and no discharge in this war.

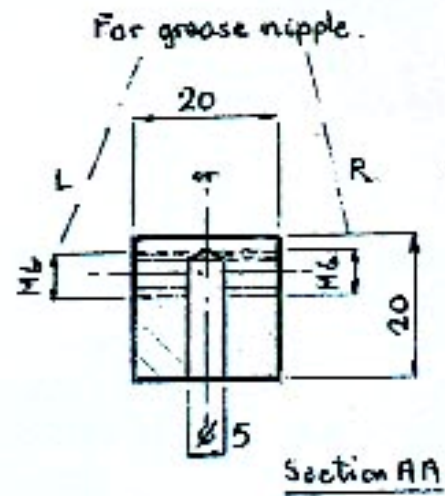
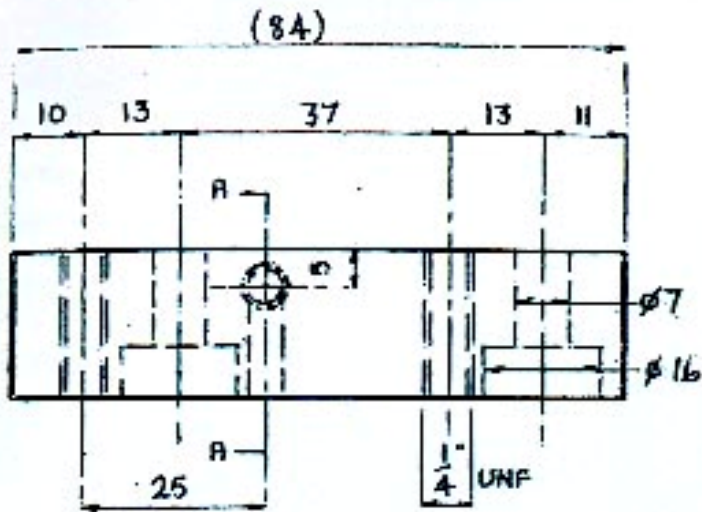
Still, with a mendable vehicle, and a Kitten, indeed all Reliant cars, fall into that category, a long rearguard action is possible.

A. Shaw.

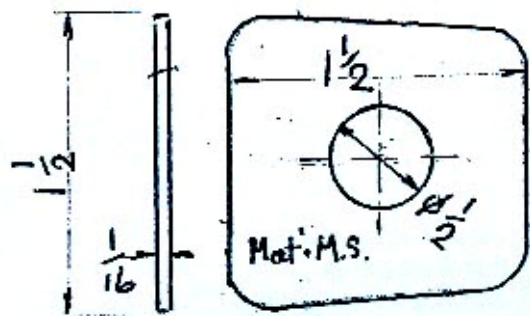


The anti-roll bar is easily bent a bit more. Obtain a metre length of M8 screwed rod and 3 nuts. Thread it through the holes, secure with 2 nuts at one end, tighten the nut at the other end until half the correction to dimension 's' is achieved. Make a little firebrick nest and apply a blowlamp to the bend. When the single nut goes slack, half the job is done. Let it cool and repeat for the other end.

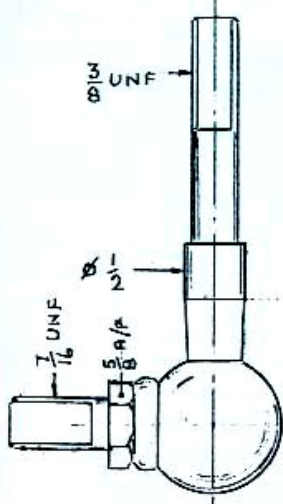
There follows block dimensions for correction of the error in the other plane, as featured in the Mewsletter some 4 or 5 years ago, and here repeated. If the new type of flexible bushes now available are used, there is no need of the grease nipple drilling.



The hole in the Lower wishbone may well have suffered. Approximate dimensions for top and bottom plates to resolve this are given opposite.



(Drawing 1D)



If the  $\frac{3}{8}$ " diameter is badly damaged The  $\frac{1}{2}$ " diameter can be drilled and tapped for new bit to be made up and inserted.

## Vertical links for Reliant Kitten anti-roll bar.

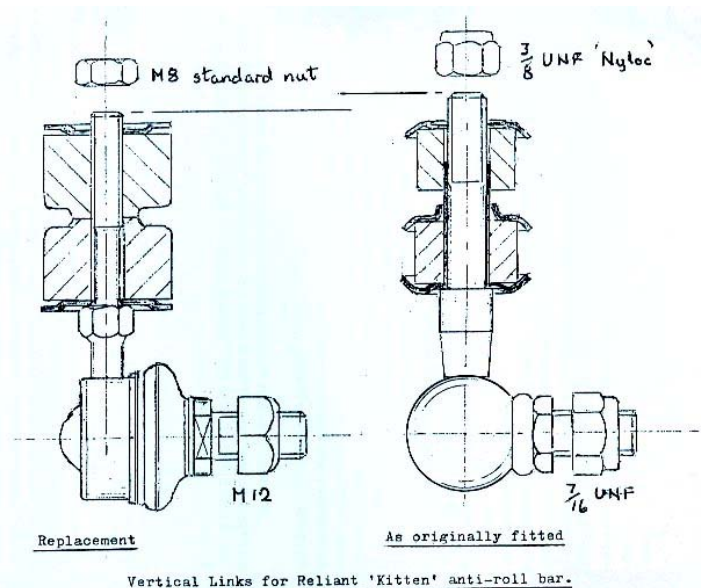
It is possible to fit the replacement links directly, but only if the arms of the anti-roll bar have been bent so that the link will lie almost vertically. If they have not, it will be difficult – probably impossible, to start the M8 nuts.

It might be advisable to shorten the rubbers by 3 or 4mm so as to leave room for a 'Nyloc' nut or a lockwasher.

The lower washer on the replacement is captive, the M8 thread having been 'rolled' on an undersize blank. Comparison with the "original" arrangement seems to show that nobody is clear about what happens between washers and rubber.

Returning to the anti-roll bar, any bending correction should be done hot, as previously described. The material seems to be a medium carbon steel, and if the forging has been, perhaps accidentally, quenched, any attempt to cold work it may start a crack.

I wonder about the history of these bars. That on my 1980 Robin is 9/16", say 15mm diameter, composition unknown but let's say a medium carbon steel. Graeme's 1976 Kitten is similarly fitted. Maybe somebody felt that it wasn't quite stiff enough for coil spring suspension, and went up to 20mm on later models. This would pit both stiffness and strength up by (20/15) cubed, a factor of 2.37 – in which case mild steel would have done the job easily – steel is a remarkable material in that it can be as cast, rolled, cold worked, alloyed in various ways, and that within the elastic limit the elastic modulus hardly changes.



*You would not believe the job I had trying to get these excellent drawings of Alan's in the spaces where they ought to be – I just hope that my instructions to the printers were clear, and*

*that they followed them to the letter – yet I have this space here ! Oh well, it's not a perfect world. I am investigating a contact of John Box's, thank you John, to source more appropriately sized bushes for the new anti-roll bar links that will make getting the M8 nut started a simpler task, indeed leave room for a Nyloc nut to work. I must remember to get some M8 Nyloc nuts to replace the ordinary ones that come with the links, Ed.*

## **Spare parts**

We had a situation last year, when we supplied a pair of back springs for a Kitten saloon, which, when they were fitted, raised the car too high at the back. Not just a little bit too high, but several inches too high! Now this was only the second pair of that batch to be sold, the first pair you have read about within these pages already, and the only problem with them was the absence of a clear plan to fit them, as attested to by Bill Starkey within these pages a couple of editions back.

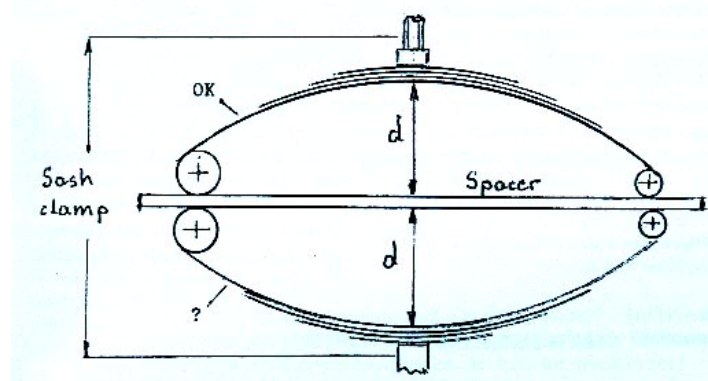
When Brian (the new owner of the springs, not the Editor!) complained, very politely, I was puzzled, and concerned. Graeme Shaw was a great help, but you can only do so much over the phone. Eventually we bought the springs back, young Brian fitted a tired single leaf pair from a three wheeler, which did hold his car at an appropriate distance above the ground, we still do not know what is different about his chassis. I believe he got it from a chap who had stripped a Kitten and was planning building a special, but then abandoned those plans, so there may be a clue, but I don't know for certain. One question that arose was "How high should the back of a Kitten sit?" Well if you look at the brochure picture, pretty high! As a rule of thumb, looking over the top of the back tyre – assuming you are using original wheels and tyres, you should see, just at the top of the tyre, the bottom of the chassis cross tube, the one that mounts the top of the rear dampers. So now you know.

Another question that young Brian had asked me, and at that time I could not answer, was "How do you test a spring for 'springyness'?" Well Alan Shaw came up with the following simple – well it is now that we know about it – way of testing them.

The diagram overleaf shows how a questionable (brand new) spring was checked for shape against a good second hand one known to be OK. Use of a sash clamp across both springs gave equality of loading. Dimension 'd' on spring?' started at 197mm when unloaded, and 188mm on spring 'OK.' With the slack just taken out the dimensions were 187 and 186mm.

The clamp was then wound in until it ran out of screw, the 'd's were then 143 and 141mm. That's not bad.

The spacer used was an available piece of hardwood.



As ever, we are indebted to Alan Shaw for his wisdom and technical expertise. It is down to Alan's determination and engineering expertise that many of the surviving Kittens and Foxes, and their derivatives in the shape of a number of Asquith vans and Tempests have been kept on the road these last few years. Thank you Alan, both for your willingness to share the expertise as well as all the other work you do for us, as the need arises. No man has done more to keep our cars on the road over the last few years. All I do is organise the storage and distribution, a small feat in comparison.

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## Sales and Wants

For Sale :- Tempest Kit one by John Box, complete with 'A' frame and light board for towing behind a motor home. £2.500. For more details ring Stuart East Yorkshire.

For Sale :- 1982 Kitten DL Estate. Recent parts include: new radiator, recon cylinderhead, lower ball joints, steering rack, alternator. Also a new oil pump – not fitted. Set of alloy wheels. £250, contact Simon Lincolnshire

For Sale :- Fox Custom 1984 requires either a piston or an engine. No MOT, on SORN. Good home needed, ring Reg Ling. Somerset area.

For Sale :- Reliant Rebel Saloon, M.O.T. till June 2008, New master cylinder, previous owner did a lot of restoration work on this road tax exempt model. £475 Contact Jason Briggs

For Sale :- Brand new stainless Fox window frame channels £260 the set, incl fixings but not including the rubber channels. Contact Duncan or Sandy

For Sale Set of 4 new 145/80R10 tubeless tyres on good 10" steel wheels, I can deliver these early in March if you live between Glasgow and London. £100 all in, ring 0141 8866117 before 28h February.

Free to a good home, well yours for a pound to keep things legal. Fox 1984 original documents 1 owner from New some spares. Peter Glenn. See Classic Van & Pick-Up Vol 2 No. 2 page 25 for a picture of an identical vehicle.



WANTED :- Reclining Driver's Seat for Kitten. (black preferred, but not essential!)

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## **Epilogue**

Ahh, the end is in sight! Just for a change I thought I would mention ball joints, propshaft hardy spicers and the likes at the beginning of this page – GET THAT GREASE GUN OUT AND USE IT NOW!

O.K., now that you are back in the warm cosy shelter of your living room, or wherever you read this, why not plan to lay side half an hour next week to perform the front suspension lubrication task as outlined by Alan Shaw on page 30. I know he said it takes 20 minutes, but I bet you don't happen to have a suitable brush attached to the end of a bit of broom handle lying in a pot of gear oil in the corner of your garage or shed – so I am making allowances! I am assuming of course that you didn't follow the recommendation at the end of the previous paragraph, and so have done part of the job already!

Moving on to other matters, I had a conversation with someone, probably late in November or December, and I promised to send off a set of Fox front strut replacement heavy duty bushes – but I didn't do it at the time – unusually I had offered to just send them and get payment later, so no payment has arrived to remind me – and I can't remember who it was – please enlighten me, and I will attend to it at once. On that same subject, Keith Gittus uses a combination solution to that situation which might be a better compromise, he uses one of our new poly ones along with a softer bush on the other side of the chassis, soft one to the front I think, to more gently absorb the braking loads. Sounds like a good idea – more details next time.

I just had a visit from Jim Spence, 18/1/08, we had not seen Jim for a while (I think he really came to satisfy himself that the kitchen was not just in my imagination) good to see you again Jim. By chance he was only 10 minutes away from here when Thomas Mitchell arrived – his day off – it was Thomas who had bought Jim's Rebel saloon about 4 or 5 years back, I had put them in touch at that time, but how strange that they should both call in on the same day – just a pity they missed each other. Now ask me again if I believe in coincidence!?!

Drive it day this year is Sunday April the 20th, so, even if your car is not on the road, perhaps you could give it an airing on the drive for others to see? Might force you to get those wheels on, what! The Federation are keen to promote DID 2008 to the next generation, and will be telling us more about that soon, I will need to make sure that our next edition is out in good time to fill you in.

Another on-line government petition you might care to sign up to can be found at <http://petitions.pm.gov.uk/Classic-Cars/> now there is a proposal to ban the use of cars over a certain age from certain town centres, the age they are looking at is 15 years! The deadline for this one is March, the 18th I believe, but don't leave it till then.

Obviously (presumably) this is just an opening gambit, they would never really do that – would they?, but it could be the thin edge of a wedge we do not want to let get a grip in the first place. What really riles me is that the people who come up with these (adjective, adjective) ideas are in the main well paid, and at the end of the day, well paid by our taxes – no point in getting my blood pressure up I know, but it does rile me somewhat.

Having said all that, the Federation's words of knowledge and wisdom are ringing loud in my ear in relation to on-line petitions, that one in particular, under the heading "Myths and Petitions – again" they highlighted that one in particular which has in fact the right sentiments (calling for the Prime Minister to reject proposals to ban or restrict the use of old cars) but with a totally erroneous explanation. This petition which closes in March has recently been given a new lease of life (as mentioned). While the Federation make no further comment on whether one should or should not 'sign' they know that the threats mentioned are, as Henry Ford might have said, bunk.

In other words, rather than spending time signing all sorts of well meaning sounding on-line petitions each year, far better to become a member of the F.B.H.V.C., and so help those who really know what is going on, and are better equipped to do something about it.

Right, January 28th now and renewals are up to the 150 mark, so what's keeping you? That well known phrase "Action this day" springs to mind.

Talk to you again soon, Brian



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