

# RELIANT KITTEN REGISTER

## Mewsletter 128

January – February 2016



*This very unusual hatchback conversion is on a Kitten recently rescued by Adam Turpin of the ROC..... Last on the road in 1991 he tells me but otherwise he knows little about it. Although basically sound, the front bulkhead has been severely modified to accommodate an unknown different engine (not supplied with car). Anybody know who built it? Or anything else about it? Adam plans to treat it as a long-term restoration....., We'll picture it again when its finished.*

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



## **The Reliant Kitten Register**

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# Dinky Cars

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E & o e

I hope it is not too late to wish A Happy New Year to you and yours.

It is, in so many ways, really hard to believe that I started this a quarter of a century ago.

I am really not sure if I should try to resist the wave of nostalgia that I am feeling just now. I have made so many friends and met so many interesting and wonderful people thanks to running the Register, that it has greatly enriched my life.

I am not going to give you a list of names, both because some of them are no longer with us, and because, with my memory these days, I would be bound to miss someone!

One thing I am in no doubt about is that we have helped owners to keep quite a number of our beloved wee cars running through the years, and in that regard I must single out Alan Shaw in particular for keeping us going with a steady supply of reconditioned steering racks and ball joints (back in the days when they were not readily available) which goes some way to offsetting the guilt I feel about the number of, Rebels in particular, that I broke for spares over the years.

Any anniversary can be used both to reflect, and look ahead, and I am doing both of those things in, I hope, almost equal degrees.

As part of our 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary year, I felt so Presidential last time, suggesting five more years, (Just needed to be one better than the Yanks!), that I thought we might have something here, so, after some discussion, we have decided to indulge in having ourselves a President for the first time. And so It was agreed that I should approach John Box to see if he would be prepared to accept the position of being our first Honorary President.

John has seen others in Car Clubs in that position, both finding it was rather like being the Pope, in that once adopted, you were in it for life, and that the job, in some cases, comes with a huge commitment both in time and expense traipsing round the country attending events, often at the individual's own expense.

Of course we are not like that, (though of course John, you will always be most welcome at any of our, very rare, events) and I was not unhappy to agree to John's suggestion that a fixed term would be appropriate. In spite of what I was saying above, (about those who wish to, being subjected to another half decade of "this") we agreed on a 3 year term.

So, Welcome Mr. President.

A couple of things that have been on my daily task list for months and that is because I do not have a quick answer to hand, perhaps you can help?

Jim Short was looking for a Kitten clutch cable, and asking about Calcium batteries back in August, see Jim, I have not forgotten!

I was not aware there was a supply problem with clutch cables, but I ought to check, just no time, can you advise?

Also, though not currently a subscriber, Gemma was asking if I could help find a Webster 4 wheeled Bond Bug, can you help with that by any chance? [g.l.jefferies@btinternet.com](mailto:g.l.jefferies@btinternet.com) Or contact Brian.

Then my old friend from Essex, Bob Neal, asked me if I knew or could find out what make / model the DVLA classify the Salamander as, and I have yet to find the answer, again, can you help?

So, I feel that by asking you, I can, with a relatively clear conscience, remove those three from my daily task list, and just have them pop up on the weekend list in future. (In the hope that you can help me find answers!)

Like the in-box on my computer, (which I did get down to 7 items this week – 9/1/16) which always seems to have emails in it, some from many months ago, still not dealt with, my daily task list seems to be getting clogged up with items that I seem incapable of resolving, must try harder!

Moving on....

.....

## Reader's Letters

Actually he is no longer a reader, but Terry Dickson, who was with us from 2002 till 2006 when he had his Kitten estate (the red one with the galvanised chassis that Keith Parrott would not sell me when I wanted it!, selling me his saloon instead! (I wonder how many reading this remember the "Wee Red Car" which took me to Land's End– the day old blue eyes passed away – (actually, sometimes life's little



*From your renewal notices*

Brian,

7<sup>th</sup> December 2015

Thanks for another year’s interesting Mewsletters. Mention of Fox back axles reminds me – mine is getting very noisy - after 160k. What a contrast with the Rebel, which is still quiet after 130k.

The Fox is due an MOT soon, so the bottom ball joints will have a careful examination – I have 1 original, and 1 Metro mod type.

All the best.

Dave Richmond No. 338 from Hayes in Middlesex.

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I must mention Steve Casey, who has completed the rebuild of his Kitten van, and it is now on the road.

**Well done Steve.** No. 772 from Nuneaton

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Hi Brian

9/12/15

I won’t be renewing my subscription this year as I can’t see me getting another Reliant.

I have really enjoyed this “club” and your style of writing.

Best wishes, Bev (Crook) No. 563 from Milton Keynes

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Colin Rimmer’s brother Fred has an Asquith, and I believe a number of fire pump engines that may be for sale. (the engines, not the Asquith!) Fred is not (yet) a subscriber, and I don’t have direct contact details for him, this is really just to remind me! Colin will know how to get in touch, give me a ring if you are interested and I’ll do the needful.

Right, I'm really not going to type up every comment from every renewal notice, but I must say thank you to Keith Smith, Neale Shepherd, and Dave Miller for their kind comments. I am under no illusions that I make plenty of mistakes, but I do the best I can, with a lot of help, and it is very rewarding to be appreciated, thanks

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In no particular order whatsoever, Frank Heil (No. 505) would be happy to once again own a good Cipher, or failing that a good Kitten, let me know if you can help and I will put you in touch.

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Stuart Vickers (No. 683) was asking how many of the early Rebels were made, the ones with the spare wheel under the bonnet, he has two awaiting restoration. I have some research to do before I can answer that one, and memory gaps to fill in, for example, did the spare wheel move to the boot at the same time as the steering changed or not? I seem to remember a number of about 50 or so, but, as you should know by now, my memory cannot always be relied upon. I have owned 3 of them over the years.

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Rob and Fiona Wilkes (No. 428) from Abingdon do not get mentioned terribly often within these pages these days, but while they sold their Kitten estate some years ago, they are still "with us", and continue to enjoy the magazine. Great to have you continued support Rob & Fiona, thanks.

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Derry Bowman (No. 943) from Plymouth is thinking of selling his very original Kitten, see the supplementary sheet for details.

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Phil Knowles (No. 1020) is building an engine to replace the rather tired one in his Jimp (it is running and in regular use). He is also gathering some spares for a mechanical refit in the future.

Phil, we have new front dampers and springs in stock, Ed.

Simon Robson (No. 513) reminds me that he is on the lookout for an early Rebel remote gearchange mechanism complete with lever. Simon, my apologies for letting this slip, see the supplementary sheet for contact details. Ed.

.....

Steve Head (No. 1013) is having James rebuild the engine in his Kitten estate, he hopes to have it back by the time you are reading this. Watch this space. "I happen to know that James is in hospital (January '16) undergoing surgery to hopefully rectify a problem as I type, wishing you a speedy recovery James."

.....

Bill Starkey (No. 386) from Hyde has kindly sent me an update on his Kitten which you will read all about next time, thanks Bill.

.....

John Wilks (No. 1006) deserves a mention and an apology, sorry John, records duly amended. John is one of that elite group who has a running Tempest. If my appalling memory serves, it has been a while since one of them adorned our front cover, do you by any chance have a suitable picture we might use to rectify that shortcoming John?

.....

As you probably know, I use email quite a bit these days, and, thanks to John Pearce, the website harvests quite a few contacts, many, but not all of whom join our ranks.

Here is one such case, who has yet to subscribe :-

From: Rassie Erasmus on Monday, October 12, 2015 10:02 AM  
To: [info@kitreg.org.uk](mailto:info@kitreg.org.uk)  
Subject: Reliant Kitten in S.A.

Hi. I just bought a Reliant Kitten for no reason. How could it be possible

to end up in Durban, South Africa? Regards, Rassie Erasmus.



Thanks Brian, am still unsure what I will do with it. I got 15 V8 cars and this one may also end up with one.

# Liege Page

You might think that after a quarter of a century I would be getting good at this, but not always!

Peaks and troughs seem to be the order of the day, and after so many pages featuring Peter Davies' wonderful wee cars last time, I have, right now, nothing new to add on that front!

Peter, sadly, falls into the category of people I keep meaning to keep in touch with, but fail abysmally to do so, one day.... Ed.

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Hi Brian,

5<sup>th</sup> November 2015

Hope you are well, as I had my first leave of the year this week, I started my second rebuilt of my faithful Kitty, the last one made ten years before, finished for the Burford 2005 meeting.

It's a body off job, I began undoing all the inner parts last Saturday, heaving the body Wednesday, and bringing it to my friend's body shop Yesterday, having scrubbed and washed the chassis which had been sandblasted and flame zinc sprayed last time, the rear spring blades brushed and painted this morning, the front suspension I had refurbished last Winter, all the suspension components powder coated and new brake backplates and cylinders, needs only cleaning. I'll give a black paint coat to the chassis tomorrow. Everything is made easy by an exceptional Indian Summer, we have sun since three months with only one or two days rain and very kind temperatures.

Next week, if I can take a bit more leave (I still have leaves from last Year to take, plus five weeks for this Year) we have had so much work at our workshop. I'll be at my friend's body shop to mend the many scars collected along the intensive use during the ten last years. The Kitty stays along my friend's TVR Grantura body, a restoration project found in May in London, and for which I'll do the mechanical part of the restoration to pay for the paint and preparation of my Kitty. I have my spare engine on the bench with new liners and pistons, sports camshaft and many other new parts, to be fitted with the Liege two carbs set you

and many other new parts, to be fitted with the Liege two carbs set you brought to the Burford meeting.

I'll send you some pictures as soon as I've more time.

Last Saturday, I took my Marcos for a short run, first time on the road since 25 plus years, 20 spent in a barn along with cows, completely dismantled before I came to the rescue.

Have a nice weekend,

Patrick (Vallat) No. 702 from Switzerland.

.....

## Cipher News

Following the green Cipher's recent track day at Woodbridge, the car has been subject to a number of upgrades, to improve both the handling of the car, and cure a couple of features that developed on the day.

On the handling side, at the rear, GAZ adjustable dampers have been fitted to improve the rear end handling, which proved somewhat lively on the initially wet track at Woodbridge. 13" minilight style wheels have also been fitted using 15mm spacers, these match the front wheels, although I got away with 10mm spacers on the front. The car is now running BF Goodrich 175/70 tyres all round. At the front, the dampers and springs that looked like the original fitted items, have been changed to a pair of RKR supplied GAZ adjustables using 150 pound/inch springs. The shocks are currently set on position 5 all round, and so far seem OK, but will no doubt be tweaked a little over the next few months.

The track day also saw the gearbox start jumping out of second gear under hard load, and a slight water leak develop from the top hose. Both faults only developed as my times came down, and as both faults are fine away from the track. I've concluded that the cause for the top hose is soft engine and gearbox mounts allowing excessive engine gearbox movement under cornering and braking. While Land Rover

Reliant engine mounts an alternative gearbox mount option appears unavailable. The jumping out of second gear I suspect will be a gearbox strip to investigate further.

Regards, Dave Corby No. 980 from Colchester

*Many thanks for that Dave, and for kindly agreeing to step in as our Cipher contact man.*

It is with great sadness that I have to tell everyone that Helen Fitch, Simon's lovely wife, lost her battle with cancer just before Christmas. Our deepest sympathy and thoughts are with Simon, and young Freya, and Georgia, at this incredibly difficult time.

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## Kitten Story Part 2 - By Chris Tooth

Having got the engine to a point where a few hours work would allow it to be fitted to the chassis, we move on to the front suspension. Many years ago new rubber gaiters were obtained for the steering rack so this was started first. Again the rust bug had eaten its fill so wire brushing and sprayed red primer and shiny black top coat brought it back to life. The two track rod ends appear to be unworn though the rubber boots were tired. Some more were ordered through Ebay, with very quick delivery. As an experiment blue Hammerite was sprayed onto the ends after wire brushing to see how good it is to keep rust away.

Fitting the larger diameter boot proved very difficult, so a cone was made up using some 1.5 inch plastic water pipe. I wasn't too happy with the rack, and I may need to do some more work on it later. I will need to find some shims, or shim stock, before taking it apart.

Next the anti-roll bar which responded to wire brush, coarse aluminium oxide paper and paint. The ends were poor. On the Scimitar these were replaced with rose bushes and rubber boots to keep the dirt out and they proved very effective, not expensive either. So the same will be used here. New polyurethane bushes have been bought for the connection to the lower wishbone. *(I should point out that we stock these items, Ed)*



Superflex also supplied the polyurethane bushes for the wishbone ends, two pieces for each top wishbone and one piece for the lower.

So, strip down the suspension, pull out the old bushes, clean, wire brush, de-rust with Hammerite Rust Remover, and paint with two coats each of red undercoat, and black enamel. Just like that! With the back plates nearly three weeks of work. They did look nice when finished.

The back plates and ball joints were sprayed with an engineering quality spray called Pro-Coat.

Delays were freeing rusted in bolts, removing the ball joints, and the worst, those stupid brake adjusters.

As this is the car with two of nearly everything I started with two sets of suspension to strip. Of four adjusters and several days of heat and soak only one freed off.



Off to the internet, where replacement backplates were about £45 each. Nice to have new, but still with those adjusters, I remember them from my early days of driving. I'm glad I didn't design them, fine when new, but after an English summer. In the tool box was the spanner with square holes, and it all came flooding back, lying at the roadside in the wet gutter, rounding off the corners of the adjuster.

However, one chap had made his own using 19mm round bar and hex socket head grub screws. My modification was to cut the existing ones out, they fought every inch of the way, then machine them to leave a shoulder through the backplate, 12/13mm diameter. Finally drill and tap M10 to take a 20mm long M10 grub screw, locktited in.

Assembly using M10 Belleville washers and half nuts would have been perfect, but these were not obtainable, so domed stainless washers, wavy spring washers and half nuts, made a solid, yet adjustable, unit. Proof will be in the testing later.



As the brake cylinders left much to be desired, like welded solid, new ones were purchased. They look lovely and came the day after they were ordered. Ordered new boots for the four ball joints too, and again just two days. If the internet had been around in 1965 I would have kept the 1939 Ford 8, the 1948 Lea Francis and the Sunbeam Talbot Supreme.

Drums were painted with black high temperature spray paint.

This part of the job has been a slog, and I am glad to be able to start to fit it all back on the chassis. But first clean and repaint the chassis.

Twelve years ago it was red leaded, and hasn't fared too badly. A rub down and coat with more cellulose red lead applied with a paint brush, topped off with shiny black cellulose.

This time everything is to be liberally coated with Waxoil.

I had bought, and fitted, AVO adjustable shock absorbers and springs twelve years ago and, though not driven, they had not fared too well. The story is the same, spring adjusters had to be un-seized, and all

cleaned up. The damper rate adjusters could not be released and after a call to AVO they said that they would attempt to repair them. A couple of weeks later they were returned all functional and no charge. Many thanks to them.

The rear shock absorbers were also new twelve years ago, and were quite rusty too. Rubbing down with 60 grade alox cloth took most of the rust off, and treating with Hamerite Rust Remover, then coats of cellulose red lead, and finally shiny black, made them quite pretty.

The rear axle was removed from the chassis and given the treatment. Surprisingly the new brake shoe retainers I had fitted were bright as a button, but the paint on the brake plates was not much good. One project to be started, once the car is on the road, is to look at this corrosion problem and try to find a way to reduce it.



The front seal on the rear axle is leaking so this will require replacing. Now came a shock. It was a three wheeler axle. To cut a long story short, I was unable to remove the hubs and back plates to replace with Kitten ones and so have had to rebuild as is. I bought new cylinders but will now wait until better weather and warmer days before the enjoyable task of reassembly.



What lessons to be learnt? Leaving things lying out in California might be fine, and many treasures have been brought back to old blighty. Leave them out in the English climate without protection, not recommended.

Apart from the chassis and engine, all the parts are now stored in the dry, and as the weather improves into spring they will be reassembled.

Chris Tooth, No. 659 from St. Day in Cornwall

Dear Brian,

20<sup>th</sup> December 2015

You may or you may not know the answer to this, but in view of the fact that there have been Mewsletter articles by members who during a full rebuilt, galvanised the chassis, whilst others instead chose to bead blast and then powder coat it.

I have been torn between which of those alternatives to adopt, though I am more inclined to the latter, since the weather out here is pretty mild, even in winter, so salt in the Santiago area is NOT sprayed on the roads, and with global warming, even less likely in the future, as is the case, in Northern Britain. (*And don't I know it! Ed.*)

Certainly my old home from home; Newcastle upon Tyne, lying between Northumberland and County Durham, t'was perhaps one of the "saltiest corners" of G.B. with very cold "brass-monkey" weather, blowing across the North Sea from Iceland and Norway. I recall barely three-year old Ford Escort Mk1s, suffering from tin-worm in the front wing and Macpherson turrets section.

Let me know also on progress re the tubular front wishbones, otherwise, if the Club project has been shelved, I will set about getting some made out here, for both Kittens. First build a good Jig, with the existing ones and then set to with some good C.D.S. 1 1/2" tubing gusseted, on the outer ends..

Best Regards, Frankie. No. 601 from Chile

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Editor's ramblings ahead of a Technical article on  
unleaded fuel (and how it affects Reliant engines) by John Pearce.

*One thing which I seem to be spending an increasing amount of time on these days is emails, and I often find it easier to talk to people, so anyone following one of my email conversations will often not see the whole story, because I have probably spoken to the person on the phone in between.*

*This recently brought to light a situation which John thought I had missed, and it dawned on me that his covering email might in fact be of interest to some of our newer readers, and indeed the refreshing of things is not a bad idea, so, when I was recently asked me about unleaded fuel and Reliant engines, John, not knowing that I had spoken to him, and indeed told him about Alan Shaw's experience, his new "unleaded" head has been sitting in his garage for a decade and a half, during which his Kitten has covered some 30,000 miles or so, and he is still waiting for any sign of deterioration in the head or valves on his Kitten's engine, which uses unleaded fuel all the time.*

*I singled Alan out because not only is he a first class engineer, but he is one of the few people on the planet who has owned his Kitten from new, and has covered a fair few miles in it now, and so has considerable experience over more years than even those like John (Pearce) and Alan (Osborn), not to mention Graeme Shaw, all of whom have run Kittens (though the relevant thing is Reliants) that have covered hundreds of thousands of miles. Alan, Shaw's, is still on its original engine, with its original pistons and liners, and original bearings, as is his son Graeme's, and between the two of them they have covered about half a million miles! Both John and Alan have, I think, covered about that many Kitten miles each, but not on the same engine.*

*So, back to the original point, John, not having realised that there had been a couple of phone calls in between our emails, kindly put the following together, to help with concerns over unleaded petrol :-*

I thought I would explain, in detail, the leaded/unleaded petrol situation regarding small Reliant engines.....

All small Reliants, from 1962 when the 600cc Regal OHV engines first came out, are perfectly fine with unleaded petrol. Being made of aluminium, they must, by definition, have sintered steel valve seats (the part that can suffer damage in cast iron engines).

Not just Reliant, this applies to any vehicle having an aluminium engine or cylinder head, Hillman Imp, Jowett Javelin, most Japanese motorcycles, in fact any!

Aluminium expands when heated whereas cast iron does not (at least nowhere near as much).... Had the valve seats been made of cast

iron, or even standard steel, (either of which would have been much cheaper) then they would simply fall out of the head when the engine warmed up – not a good idea.....

Cast iron engines (most cars of the period, small Fords, Vauxhalls and BL offerings for example), mostly had cast iron cylinder heads and the valve seats were simply machined into the head casting – fine and cheap, but cast iron is also intrinsically soft, so needs lubrication, which the lead in leaded petrol provided. Without lead, over time, the hammering of the valves up and down causes the seat to “recess”, hence the term “valve seat recession”. Some sporty versions of engines had aluminium cylinder heads on cast iron blocks and are also fine for unleaded but these dissimilar metals were found to often lead to different problems. One manufacturer (Skoda) even did things the other way – a cast iron head on an alloy block..... (Jowett did it that way too, Ed!) Unsurprisingly these cars rapidly developed a reputation for regular head gasket problems (due again to the different expansion rates of the two metals).

So they needed a durable material that would expand and contract under heating/cooling – sintered steel was the answer, used in all alloy cylinder heads since the 1930's.

The Reliant factory did (at the time) sell (expensive) so-called “unleaded” cylinder heads (on an exchange basis) but by and large this was something of a con. The only difference was that they updated to later (and better) valve stem oil seals – the originals had always shown a tendency to get brittle over time and then split and fail, regardless of what sort of fuel was used..... The later seals (standard on engines made after 1989) are better and longer-lived, but still fail over time. Alas they cannot be retro-fitted to earlier heads as they used a different design of valve guide (they were an “off the shelf” seal so the guides were modified to accept them), which are also smaller in diameter than the earlier design so to fit them the head needs machining and sleeving.....

So, unleaded fuel is fine for a small OHV Reliant engine. Most of us tend to use the “super” unleaded rather than the “premium”. This is because standard unleaded is 95 octane or less and super is 97 or higher and Reliant engines were designed to run on 97. Most will happily run on the standard unleaded without problems but tend to “pink” (pre-ignite) unless the ignition timing is retarded a little, which reduces

performance somewhat.

Hopefully this helps.....

John (Pearce) No. 304 from Leighton Buzzard

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## Kitty Technical's

Just a few observations to let you know I am still watching. I see on page 15 of Mews 126 a nice picture of an inlet and exhaust manifold and being proudly cleaned and painted but there is no mention of the very necessary modifications that are needed to these parts.

The exhaust usually has casting flash filling up to 1/3 of the exhaust hole. It is a dirty job with the Black and Decker and a rotary burr to correct this. Transfer the head gasket shapes to the exhaust manifold and cut it out to suit. The inlet manifold mods I have mentioned several times and I do not recommend the 'racing' ones where 1-2 and 3-4 are joined together. NOBODY has explained how this works yet so why do it?

Another idea in Mews 126 shows a Fiesta Weber carb, fine improvement no doubt, but still a lot of work, and will your insurance company understand?

Now the bit I must question is the part that says "massive improvement and power over the SU". Now have you tried a gas flowed SU with a couple mods I have mentioned several times in the past? I have a standard block yet often pass 70 in third gear! I am amazed that the gear box takes it, as the millage on it is quite excessive, but perhaps they like being thrashed?

Just to keep you up to date, I haven't been doing too many Reliant miles this summer, have been involved in too many other 'normal' cars and camper vans. Anyway Kitty car awaited an MOT as the brakes were getting tired as the drums were running away from the shoes. So we had some nice new drums and we wanted to change the rear drums to fit the 'front' drums to the back as well. As you know that means removing the horseshoe spacer that they fitted in 1976.

Eventually we did all this and got an MOT, with the man commenting that he thought the brakes were quite good for once!

Alan Osborn No. 295 from Watton in Norfolk

.....

*Now, I could have cheated and kept the following till next time, but the wonders computers, cut or copy and paste, and email, have made it possible for me to quickly and easily insert Chris' response to Alan's comments :-*

.....

Afternoon Brian,

I have, in fact, ground out the exhaust manifold to fit the gasket which does line up with the block.

Comments by Al, I had read in the past, said that useful gains are made by doing this. I must re-read my article, because I cannot understand why I did not say so, as it took so long to do it.

Also I have now found the right insulator for the carburetor, having previously made up a stack of paper ones to achieve heat insulation. My aim at the moment is to get it re-assembled and through the MOT and do the fettling later. Though I was going to check, fettle parts as I fitted them, including flow in the inlet and exhaust systems.

To be honest, if I get it running it will be a pleasant surprise.

I would like to give very large credit and thanks to John Pearce who gave me a lot of solid advice and very useful articles. He is a mine of helpful information.

Having said all that, I have had to stop for quite a while. The problems with the 3 wheeler rear axle threw me, and the local blacksmith had it for a couple of weeks and did nothing to get the hubs off. Now that I have accepted that, the 3 wheel axle will have to do for the moment. I have new cylinders and flexible hoses and if I can source a hub remover later, I will repair the Kitten axle and fit that. What I do have to do now is get copper brake pipes. Do I buy made up or do I

make them myself?

Necessary work on the house has slowed progress down. I am at the point of reassembling all the parts to fit the chassis, once several clear days show up. I need to do this as I cannot move in my workshop!

Regards Chris Tooth No. 659 from St. Day in Cornwall

~~~~~

*As I mentioned to you last time, Keith (Gittus) was keen that I should remind all Kitten and Fox owners not to rely on the MoT man, but to check the wishbones on your car for corrosion, and, though not as easy with them on the car, check them for cracks too.*

*Having one fail in service, either by it collapsing, or worse still, breaking, is a frightening not to say dangerous event which is best avoided (he said, speaking from experience, at motorway speed on a dark windy wet night on the M8 coming home from a meeting in Edinburgh many years ago, but not so many that the experience is not still fresh in my memory!).*

*In Keith's own words and pictures then :-*

Hi Brian, thank you for the quick turn around with the bottom wishbone and tie rod for the kitten estate.

I thought it worth sending you some before photo's to prompt us all to have a look at the condition of our own cars' suspension with the winter and salted roads. This car had a long MOT, so one can only surmise the wishbone had a crust of rust where the holes are now. I'm told this was very scary when it happened, as the car was not going slowly, and resulted in a chunk being removed from the wheel arch. Keith (154).

~~~~~

**Right, a frustrating odd corner to fill,**

For many years now I have been on a diet of :-

Zenith, SU, Solex, Stromberg and Webber,

but the doc says I am still having too many carbs!



The problem of course was not so much the holes in the lower wishbone, but the failure of the tie rod! (strut if you will).



I'm sure you get the message.



Oops....



Ouch!



One of my regrets was not having more of these made at the time, that was the last of that batch of 10, the price was right, but now, sadly, it is not! Ahh, hindsight!

*You may notice that we had the (Fox) re-inforcing plates put fore and aft, unlike the original Fox ones, which, because of that, (or the lack of that!) were handed, and we had the plates seam welded rather than spot welded, as the originals, to keep moisture out and so slow the corrosion process, the only dilemma was should we bore them to Kitten or Fox spec.? we opted for Kitten, both because, at the time, there were more of them, and because it was thought easier to open a hole out rather than bush it down.*

*A recent communication from Frankie, our man in Chile, reminded me that I had mentioned to him a few years back that we were looking at having these components re-produced in tubular material. I had had discussions about that with John Melody when he ran Tempest Cars, but, perhaps sadly, we did nothing other than talk about it. John is retired now. Product liability was, and still is, a worry. We do, thanks to John Box, have the original drawings, and there are suitably qualified and insured companies out there, but, for a price some two or three times what I had been hoping for (which was already twice what we paid last time!)*

## Epilogue

I am typing this in October 2015 would you believe! I just took the Christmas edition to the printers yesterday – a second attempt mind you, the version I took them on Monday had half a page blank, and a note in the middle of Jim McKillop’s tale to remind me to add in his updates, omissions I rectified overnight, though had I actually checked the hard copy I took with me, I would have spotted both errors, one day....

I sometimes struggle to understand why I rush to get things done, after all, I was weeks ahead of any schedule there might have been, but I just wanted it off my desk to make way for other things – we were introducing some digital aspects to our family and friends’ Christmas cards for the first time last year – well, it will be last year by the time you are reading this, right now I still have to remove those who have agreed to go digital, from the label print file we use for the Christmas cards – Oh jings, I still have a feeling of terrible foreboding that we are diving down this digital motorway like lemmings, just setting ourselves up for a cataclysmic disaster, no tax discs any more for goodness sake, where will it end....

On that topic, things are worse than I imagined, my brother-in-law just got himself a wee job, just a 3 month contract, to digitize medical records, (30 year old records, but those of people who are still alive), what terrifies me is that after scanning them in and storing them in “the cloud”, they are shredding the original paperwork, that just can’t be a wise move.

I’d best stop this and get on with that (updating our Christmas card label list) – priorities priorities!!

Right, it is Boxing day, I am just home from my annual pilgrimage to meet those hardy Austin 7 people, who gather at the Stirling motorway service area every year at this time. A poor turnout

this year, just the 4 Austins, but great to see the guys again.

January now, Boxing day was my second day out, Christmas was the first in two weeks, laid low by a cold and bad cough, it ended up with the doc coming to see me, antibiotics and steroids, and here we are in January, my voice has not fully returned, and I am as weak as the wee 4 wheeled Reliant that followed the Rebel.

### **Things will improve!**

My thanks to those who renewed their subscriptions promptly, it looks as though you are all going to be stuck with more of this for another half decade at least!

I, as regular readers will know, am always frustrated by the extra time I chose to spend chasing those who are silent on receipt of their renewal notice, but old habits die hard, that said there is always room for improvement, however – IF YOU HAVE NOT YET PAID YOUR SUBSCRIPTRION FOR 2016, THIS WILL BE THE LAST MAGAZINE YOU WILL RECEIVE UNTIL YOU DO.

Stepping down from my soapbox, I am well aware that there are many much more important things in life than completing a small form and finding your cheque book (and I am aware that I probably ought to move with the times – one day...)

Anyway, it is the middle of January now, time I was getting this off to the printers, so it only remains for me to wish you all the very best for 2016, and to plead with you to grease those Kitten and Fox ball joints, and oil the trunnions on your Rebel! Oh, and you might do the hardy spicers on the propshaft while you are under there!

*Brian*

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