

# RELIANT KITTEN REGISTER



## **Mewsletter 140** *January - February 2018*



This issue's picture is a marriage of a late Robin Hatchback and a Kitten – something Reliant really should have done themselves.... Who originally built it we've no idea, but here's what we do know about it.

Ouh 268R was acquired early in 2013 by Tony Richards, who sadly made little progress with the car before ill health forced him to reconsider things. He sold the car to Peter Wellington, a long-time subscriber to the Register, who agreed to buy it in the spring of 2017, but Peter had too many irons in the fire, and so it came to pass that Tony Thorne acquired this unique vehicle in the late summer of 2017, All three of them live in Devon, within 25 miles of each other!

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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.....



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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.

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

# **Dinky Cars**

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## I N D E X

- Page 3        Index.
- Pages 4 & 5    Editorial.
- Page 6        From the Oval Office!
- Page 7        Just one of Life's Little Co-incidences!
- Pages 8 - 10   Peter Linfield – obituary.
- Page 11        Leige Page, well, almost!
- Pages 12 / 20   Sienna Rebuild Finale by Grant Ford.
- Pages 21 & 22   Getting Technical – top ball joints – by Keith.
- Pages 23 & 24   Back Springs – Kitten and Fox.
- Page 25        Tempests and Llangollen 2018
- Page 26        Encouraging Dishonesty?
- Page 27        An apologetic explanation.
- Pages 28 & 29   Epilogue.

E & o e

A belated Happy New Year to you and yours (he said on January the second!) I fear it may be well into February at best, before you get to read this, though I will try for earlier.

December was a lost month for me, (and January too as it turned out!) and I have to, frustratingly and reluctantly, admit that my hopes of a full recovery may not be realistic, but hopefully the longer (and drier, please!) days will help.

As some of you clearly know, John has got us set up with on-line applications and renewals. It is early days, and a different way of

working (and I expect involves paying “commission” to PayPal), and new forms for me to deal with, but we are getting to grips with the learning curve, and if it makes life easier going forward, it can’t be bad, can it?

That said, this virtually total dependence our society has on the internet these days does not sit comfortably in my mind – how will we cope when it breaks down?

I may have said it before, but we owe a big THANK YOU to Phil Hallam for digging me out of a hole in December by taking over the complicated mailing of the Christmas magazines. Thanks Phil, they would only have gone out in the second half of January had it been left to me. Much appreciated.

I should say thanks too to the NHS, without who I probably would not be here, a brief summary would be :-

I spent 4 days in the new “Queen Elizabeth University Hospital” in Glasgow in December.

The whole experience was quite something. The response to my 111 call on the Sunday morning was very impressive. They said they would call back within 4 hours, in fact did so in under 40 minutes, then said a doctor would be out within 3 hours, one arrived in under half an hour, and very quickly came to the conclusion that I needed to be in hospital, she called for an ambulance, which arrived very promptly.

I was in (my choice of) hospital just a couple of hours after first dialing 111! I realise that there was a degree of luck there, but I was mightily impressed.

My stay might have been briefer if I had sought medical assistance earlier, but I really thought it was just a bad cold, with a very annoying cough, which, sadly, I still have, though, thankfully, it is beginning to break up at last!

I did phone my doctor’s surgery twice the previous week, Monday and Friday, and had a word with the practice nurse, and we agreed that I was doing all the right things, so, just to carry on. I did not think I was bad enough to justify a visit from the doctor, but I seriously doubted my ability to get from the car into the surgery.

The fact is that I have been so weak and tired throughout

December, that everything has slipped badly behind.

Anyway, Sepsis having been diagnosed, I was eventually rehomed, temporarily, in room 111, (yes, the same as the telephone number I had dialed to get here!) before being found a bed on the 10th floor (the orthopedic floor – nothing to do with my situation, they just happened to have a bed available there) at two in the morning, just 38 hours after my arrival on site.

What a view! I was on the tenth floor looking out over the southern approaches of the Clyde Tunnel, high above the top floor of the multi storey car park, the old clock tower, Westmarc (where I had been a couple of months ago for the assessment for an electric wheelchair, bits of which are falling off already – I must find my Allen keys!) BAE Systems, an absolutely wonderful view over Glasgow. It would make a great Jack Vettriano painting with the tenements and snow!

There were a few staff who were very understanding, and had great empathy, but they were in a minority, and the variation in response times to “the buzzer” was frustrating, anything from a couple of minutes to half an hour or more was at times both distressing and frustrating.

It was clear that the hospital was full, and that demand for beds exceeded supply (a bit like houses in the country today I thought!) and that, at the coal face, the staff to patient ratio is just too low, and it was clear they wanted my bed back as quickly as possible. The doctor’s expression on Wednesday morning was just wonderful, when he called in to see how I was doing, and to ask, rather apprehensively, how I felt about getting home in the next 24 hours? Well, I was pleased to see his delight when I said I could be gone within the hour if he would let me. In the event, the entire departure procedure took just over 2 hours.

I am still very weak and tired, coughing a lot, especially if I talk (Moir is enjoying the peace and quiet!) but glad to be home, able to breathe through my nose most of the time now, and planning a very quiet second half of December, and start to the New Year.

I need not just to think, but to actually take steps to make life simpler and easier in future, though I have no idea how to go about achieving that!

Brian



## Just one of Life's Little Co-incidences!

I was trying to catch up with some long overdue correspondence recently (instead of getting on with this magazine I'm sorry to say), but hey, progress is progress.

I had a list of a couple of dozen or so people I had been meaning to contact for a while, on a variety of topics, a few of them were lapsed subscribers to the Register, and I wanted to make one last attempt at finding out what had happened to their cars.

I have been trying to get through 3 a day (of that list of 2 dozen or so) this month (he said on the 6<sup>th</sup> of February).

It is all part of my Roman phase, I am trying to become a Centurion, not that I have graduated to a Toga yet mind you!

The target is to process 100 bits of paper a day till I get on top of things. I used, last year, to target 10 an hour, but some things took an hour, so that quickly fell by the wayside, rather like New Year Resolutions.

Anyway, remembering the immortal words of Mary Poppins, I thought making a game of it might help me to make progress.

I began by trying to define the task, counting the bits of paper in the piles on my desk, I gave up half way through the second pile (there are 5 of them in total) when I had reached 500, I decided to stop wasting time counting, and start actually dealing with them! During the first week in February, the best day saw me get through 68, but most days a couple of dozen was all I could manage, some days not even that many!

I had just written to Andrew Berry, who had bought Glen's old red Fox back in the Autumn of 2012, it was A415 GDC, and my next one on the list was Matthew Whitmore, he too used to have, may very still have for all I know, a Fox. The curious thing is that his Fox was A414 GDC. Now I know that Reliant used to Register vehicles in batches, as did many car dealers, but I had no intention or plan to group these people into vehicle type, never mind checking their registration numbers, as it says at the top of the page, **just one of life's little co-incidences!**

Ed.

## Peter M. Linfield

Peter and I first met when he joined the Thistle Branch of the Reliant Owners' Club quarter of a century ago, looking for parts for his Kitten. He signed up to this Register in 1995, 232 was his number.

Those of you who were at Llangollen the past couple of years will know Peter, he came in his pre-war Morgan in 2016, and his Kitten last year, though it played up on the Saturday evening, so he and Jennifer came to the field on the Sunday in their rather tidy 190 Mercedes.

Peter, like all of our engineering orientated friends, I always found fascinating to listen to. He had a great depth of knowledge and experience.

His DIY skills were put through their paces for a few years when, upon early retirement in 2000, he bought and renovated Auchendarroch Cottage, in Duror, Argyll.

I stayed overnight there on my way to Tobermory to collect a certain Daimler tourer about 2003.

A regular competitor at the "Doune Classic Challenge" in the 1980's and 90's, Peter, and his son Mark often helping make up a team of 3 cars there for many years. We called ourselves "The Resin Rockets", or "The Roaring Reliants" if we were able to field a second team, often coming away with trophies, usually first, sometime second, seldom as low as third!

Peter Malcolm Linfield was born in Cheshire on the 3rd of March 1931, one of 3 children, Peter was almost 81 years old when he passed away on the first of February following a stroke just

before Christmas last year.

A keen cyclist, often doing time trials all over England and Wales in his youth, that bike is still in the garage at Banavie.

His first job was as an Apprentice Draughtsman with the Atomic Energy Authority at Capenhurst, from where, as a reward for becoming their best Apprentice Draughtsman, he was asked to represent them at the opening of Nuclear Plant at Calderhall by the Queen. Isn't the English language wonderful, of course he was not asked by the Queen!

It was while working there that a young secretary caught his eye.

In those days Peter ran a 3 wheeled BSA. Peter and Jennifer got engaged on Valentine's day 1959.

They honeymooned in the Lake District in his Riley Monaco in 1960, then touring North to Oban, Fort William, and the Islands, returning via Inverness.

Peter moved job in 1961 to Shell, as an Engine Stress Analyst at their Thornton Research Centre, a post he held for 18 years.

While Peter and Jennifer raised their 3 children in Cheshire, they often spent holidays on Coll, Isla, and Mull, and it was when stopping over at a B&B in Fort William, that Peter was given an advert for the post of Draughtsman at the British Aluminium Works there, so in 1979, they sold their Cheshire home, and moved north.

Renovating old houses, and not so old cars, was a thing that Peter has always enjoyed, and he had a few, including not just the

1939 Morgan that those at Llangollen in 2016 saw, but a Morgan 4 + 4 too, as well as a Peerless, which I am told he took the whole family, and dog, on holiday to Mull in, and with 3 bikes on the roof!

He has had various Jaguars, Rovers, a Riley RME, Austin 7's and a Morris Minor, Reliant Scimitar, and of course his Lotus Elan, but the longest serving of them was his Reliant Kitten estate, bought near Cambeltown in 1980 with just 167 miles on the clock, it now has 137,000 under its belt, and is currently taxed and tested, it was at Llangollen in 2017.

A keen supporter of the Reliant Owners Club and the Reliant Kitten Register, as well as the VSCC (Vintage Sports Car Club) amongst others, Peter will be greatly missed.



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# *Liege Page*

Now I know that you guys are an active lot, and, with a few much appreciated exceptions, too busy doing things, to have the time to put pen to paper or finger to keyboard to share your adventures and exploits with us, but the space is here!

One communication I had this week, late February, mentioned Liege, so while it is tenuous link, I have a page fill – so :-

Kevin Clark wrote to tell me that, whilst killing a few spare moments on-line, he chanced across the website – [howmanyleft.co.uk](http://howmanyleft.co.uk) and was surprised not to be able to find any Liege there.

What he did find were 3 types of Kitten, (Kitten / Kitten DL & Kitten Van) and a year by year record going back for a decade and a half of numbers of vehicles in those categories on the road – or is that numbers in existence, that is questionable because, while in decline over that period of time, two of them have increased recently!

Those numbers, for the above mentioned 3 categories of Kitten, for 2017 were 57 / 53 & 16 by the way.

If one was in mischievous mood one might suggest that if one was to remove about 50 Liege and say 35 Tempests from those numbers, that it would be really clear that the figures just don't stack up!

All of which goes to highlight another problem, (in my, mind at any rate) which is not just a niggling fear of how we will survive without the internet, but how close to reality and the truth the information provided by it really is?

Sounds a bit like Pandora's box to me, but it does make one wonder.....

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# Are We There Yet?

## Sienna Finale

Returning any classic to the road after a long layoff tends to present a series of 'lack of use' faults, and the Sienna is no different after 25 years in hiding. Gaskets and seals were the first to show their failings, with oil escaping from the sump and rear axle half-shafts, both eager to offer drips onto the garage floor after just a few miles of testing.



Alan re-routed our new speedo when the old one failed to cover 5 miles.

The speedo cable gave up on the second road test, mainly due to the fact that we routed it at right angles, offering it little chance of survival. The half-shaft seals have failed due to remaining in one position for 2½ decades, and replacements for those were delivered for just a few pounds from Phil at Brook Road Garage 01737761875; our biggest issue will be removing the rear hubs without causing too much damage. Reliant Parts World (Nigel) 01543431941 stocked the speedo cable at just £16.00 and one item that often fails on the 850cc engine, the £25.00 thermostat housing. 'We keep them on the shelf' Nigel

explained, due to the fact they can crack (as had mine), (*I have to say that they usually crack when they are overtightened, Ed.!*) the leak becoming apparent after a few miles as the coolant temperatures rise.



Returning to Pagham Service Station (01243262943) for a nervous wait whilst Ian carried out my re-test, having failed the first attempt with binding rear brakes and emissions. The brakes were new and just required adjustment, whilst the carbon dioxide mix leaving the exhaust would take a little longer to correct. This confirms the benefit of using a classic friendly garage and a tester that understands the workings of the SU carb and is willing to put in the time to get it right.

So, with MOT in hand, surely I should be one happy enthusiast? Well no, not really, when the return journey home showed up another problem of long term lack of use; overheating.



Replacing the sump gasket revealed an engine that has had little use but also minimum attention over several decades. A new gasket stopped the leak and several coats of red paint improved the look, but the sludge evicted from inside the sump proved to be the biggest bonus and worth the price of a gasket. We also believe the lack of coolant replacement is our prime suspect for this engine getting very hot once on the move. The Reliant motor warms normally and only when driven did the needle rise towards the 'H', our problem was it doesn't return towards 'Cold'. It just gets hotter until you switch it off and wait, pointing towards a flow problem or blockage, either way, to prove this the

cylinder head needed to come off; just what I need, now we're ready to enjoy the summer.



### **Bargain Hunter Strikes Gold.**

I found 'gasketsforclassics' on a well-known auction site and was supplied a complete head-set for only £19.00 and it worked perfectly. At the same time, we replaced the engine mounts because it was convenient, but the real drama occurred when I took the pressure washer to the water jackets around the block. The debris and brown corrosion was unbelievable, and certainly could not have been left.

Alan removed, then stripped the cylinder head, and a de-choke followed, and finally the valves were lapped in with a fine paste, the whole job cost less than £50. Reliant parts are as cheap as chips!

Things still weren't perfect, after all that effort the needle still failed to settle and the original radiator looked the likely culprit. Too small, old and most likely full of engine sewage. The area it occupied was only half that available, and armed with the measurements I trawled the world-wide web to secure the bargain of the century. If you ever need a new 'rad' checkout 'huayu2016' on Ebay, the unit that matched my requirements was from a Hyundai Atoz, and this brand new, fully packaged radiator, complete with cap, was delivered to my door for an all-inclusive....£5.99 total! That's right six quid!



To test prior to fitting, Alan very cleverly devised a 'quickfit' securing system to drive the car with the radiator outside of the body; it worked perfectly.



One piece of box section frame was removed making space for a pair of base brackets, fabricated with holes to accept the plastic positioning lugs. With the top secured by a similar steel plate, longer hoses were sourced along with fresh alloy tubing. Plumbed in, fresh coolant, plus a final oil change, and four months behind schedule she is done, and runs like a dream; its only taken three and a half years since I first found it languishing at the back of Professor Anthony Stevens unit in Kent.



## Road Test

What's it like to drive? Well the first thing of note is 40hp doesn't count for much. even if does weigh less than a catwalk model.

Acceleration is fine until the higher revs are reached, then she just runs out of puff; that though can be fixed. A larger SU and new free flowing exhaust manifold should help and a driver's diet programme for me and my mate is the next best option. Over 50mph it's like sitting in a

hurricane but through the country lanes, its honestly such a blast, is it legal to have so much fun with any automobile? The 'go-kart' steering is exact and takes a while to adjust your style, point and go whilst it sticks like you know what! Encouraging the hooligan in the pilot because the momentum needs to be maintained, the brakes offer total confidence and whilst some of my design may need altering, the Sienna is the most fun I have had sat behind a wheel for years. Thanks to Professor Stevens for trusting me with his first prototype and 'Spraying Bob' who created the lovely finish on my not so perfect panel work.



Obviously also a big 'cheers' to the engineering skills of my long suffering mate Alan, his efforts have ensured this strange little car with the DNA of Mazda's MX5 survives today; bringing forth interest and questions from all age groups, mainly 'what the hell is that'? For those that have followed this saga, a big thanks for bothering, and to my credit card company, 'yes I know, but I will pay it off eventually'. This elderly piece of British motoring history offers more smiles per mile than I thought possible and will endeavour not to hold up traffic on 'A' roads and dual carriageways of the south. Although, given the opportunity, combined with additional bravery from its pilot this odd rarity can disappear on the twisty bits; hopefully for years to come.

For those who care to endure my pathetic film making abilities, the Sienna is on the move in a 2-minute clip on; <https://youtu.be/npsbdKrh6Zs>

Grant Ford for [www.classiccarmag.net](http://www.classiccarmag.net)





Well, we made it! Thanks Grant, and everyone else, my apologies for this taking so long. I have had the story, all of it, for the past year or thereabouts now. Just not as organised as I would like, but, we are not just nearly there, but have arrived!

That said, had I been really organised, the following might have been on the front cover! Ed.



## Getting Technical

Hi Brian,

17<sup>th</sup> December 2017

There seems to be a shortage of original Reliant Kitten top ball joints which has happened in the past, (*we do actually have a few original new ones in stock, as well as a few reconditioned ones too, Ed*) and an alternative needed to be found.

Turned out the nearest was a Vauxhall Viva (or HA Bedford van) bottom ball joint, but the circlip groove is in the wrong place, so you will need a spacer to fill the gap between the wishbone and the circlip groove in the GM ball joint.

Viva bottom ball joints can be found on Ebay @ around £13.50 each and you will need a new 1 1/2" circlip, as well as that spacer. Once assembled they do work well - see photo's. (*I was hoping for better pictures, but won't hold this back, Ed!*)





**We have a batch of the spacers in stock.**

**Keith (Gittus)**

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## Reliant Kitten and Fox rear springs

Early in 2018 I had a call from a girl, looking for a 3 leaf back spring for her dad's Kitten. She was not a subscriber, and told me that they usually get bits from PartsWorld, or a local guy in Mansfield, who has 28 Reliants! Clearly, I need to know more!

Anyway, that spurred me into putting finger to keyboard, and I thought I may as well share the following hour's work with you :-

This is a brief, but I hope sufficiently detailed information sheet, based on over 20 years experience of small 4 wheeled Reliant back springs.

Reliant made hand made cars, and odd discrepancies are no surprise, they have been known to just use what was available to get cars out the door.

By 1977, Kittens were all using 4 leaf back springs. When the Fox came out in the early 80's, about the first 50 used Kitten axles (most Foxes have a slightly wider back axle than the Kitten, also a different final drive ratio). The Foxes used a 5 leaf version of the Kitten back spring, (the Tandy Camper vans have a 6 leaf version, we stock them all) but, the Fox, and Tandy, used a different bush at the front of the rear spring, having a heavier (larger diameter) bolt, securing the front of the back spring to the chassis than the Kitten. The outside diameter of both Kitten and Fox bushes is the same, it is just the diameter of the hole in the middle of the big front (of the rear spring) bush that is 1/16ths of an inch different.

The 4 small bushes, at the back of each spring, and at the top of each rear spring hanger, are the same throughout the small Reliant range. (They are all half inch bore).

Some Kitten owners have, over the past decade or so, rebuilt their Kittens using a Fox chassis (they were galvanised, and slightly stronger in some areas), in spite of knowing this, and trying to make sure that people wanting to buy new springs understand the situation, no less than 3 times, people have ordered the wrong parts from us.

We normally supply new springs with new bushes fitted, and we also carry a stock of all the bushes (sometimes an enthusiastic MOT man will moan about perished bushes, and insist they are replaced) or indeed an owner carrying out a comprehensive restoration will want to renew all the bushes as part of the refurbishment process, a commendable thing to do.

We can supply whatever you need. The 3 problems we had, were all because the people concerned did not understand what they needed, and or failed to follow our pretty simple instructions about checking.

The fact is it is a real pain swapping these bushes over, (unless you have the right tools to hand) never mind the extra postage involved, or the delays if you are using a garage to do the work for you (yes, some folk do that you know! And no shame there).

So, unless you have owned the vehicle from new, or are absolutely 100% certain that you know every detail of its history, assume nothing, check the diameter of the bolt at the front of the back springs. You are going to have to take them out to change the springs, so you may as well make sure they are free now!

The original Kitten ones, like the Robin, indeed all the Reliant 3 wheelers with leaf back springs, are 7/16", while the Foxes are 8/16th, better known as half inch.

That 16th of an inch is not that obvious to the naked eye, unless you happen to have one of each sitting side by side, you really need to measure it!

Brian W. Marshall - January 2018

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Just reading that over, it occurs to me that I might mention that in my opinion, the best / easiest / most accurate way of measuring such a thing as the diameter of a bolt is with a caliper, if you do not have one, a simple digital readout thing is readily available, yes, I'm going to say it – on-line!

# Tempest Update

Hi Brian,

18<sup>th</sup> December 2017

Is it possible to put me in touch with a Tempest owner who will be willing to let my wife and I have a look at one.

Maybe you have a membership list? I live in Hertfordshire (a mile from junction 17 on the M25).

I am a new member, No 1061

Regards, Brian Fereday.

*That appeal was sent to me in good enough time that I should have put it in the supplementary sheet last time, but, as you know, I was a bit distracted in December, and beyond.... My apologies Brian, and to your wife. Ed.*

*If you can help, please get in touch with me and I will pass on the relevant details, thanks. Ed.*

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## *Llangollen 2018*

At this point in time all I can tell you is the date, so, diaries out....

We will be at Llangollen again this year, thank you Malcolm, the last weekend in July, that is to say the 28<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup>.

Malcolm can be contacted on [rkrshowpostbox@gmail.com](mailto:rkrshowpostbox@gmail.com)

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## Encouraging dishonesty?

Well, that might be, ever so slightly, too strong a title, but I was brought up with the mantra that “Honesty is the best policy”, however, as we grown-ups, know, sadly, that is not always the case!

I think the situation is like not quite like not telling the truth, that is to say, not saying anything, as distinct from actually telling lies.

It was recently brought to my attention, thank you Brian (C), that the hoops that one is not just expected, but obliged, to jump through, if admitting to changing the engine in a vehicle these days, are just, I was going to say that I will need to choose my words carefully here, and, as far as modern cars are concerned, I accept that they might require a different skill set, but ridiculous is the word I would use to describe the red tape involved.

I freely admit to breaking my own rules, and common sense here, having not researched the facts of the matter thoroughly, but it occurs to me, that if nothing else (besides filling a page of the mag), this might both raise awareness, and, just possibly, provoke a response? (Please nicely!)

As I understand it, if you change the engine in your car, you must now provide the powers that be, not only with an official receipt for the “new” engine, but also an official receipt from the approved / qualified installer. Failing which, you will need to get, at your own expense, an engineer’s report that the installation has been carried out correctly and safely.

I gather that one individual (at least), unaware of the “new rules” (I believe they were introduced in 2016 / 17), simply filled in the V5C with the replacement engine’s details, and sent it off to the DVLA, expecting a new document to be forthcoming, only to be told that not only would they not issue a new one, but that he should not use the vehicle, until such time as he complied with “the rules”.

Oops doesn’t really cover it!

Ed.

As you may have realised this edition is later than usual.

Regular readers will be aware that I don't do deadlines, this whole thing, apart from being something of an enjoyable hobby and interest, is a therapeutic distraction from the harsh realities of life, a life which I have allowed to get in the way of such welcome distractions recently. My apologies.

I wish I could say it won't happen again, but until I get the lock-up emptied and given up, and the loft and utility room if not cleared, tidied, not to mention my office. Well, there are priorities, priorities which, frustratingly, need to be addressed with less available energy and stamina than was available just a few months ago.

I honestly do not know how best to, if not proceed, at least make progress. I know I've said it before, but that elusive "one day" the one on which I'll get organised, is proving to be both elusive and seemingly unattainable, but I need to find a way of getting there.

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I must again thank Phil for his help and support, and John Pearce and Keith Gittus amongst others, for their suggestions and help to fill some pages in here.

You have not actually seen much of their efforts and ideas yet, but you may well do next time.

Quite by chance it was Kevin Clark's communication about the numbers of cars, Kittens in particular, that are "left", that motivated me to finally finish this, so Kevin, thanks – and I am still hoping to get a hurle in your Liege sometime!

And here I have another tiny bit of space to fill. I was going to share the flavour of the notes that accompany some of your renewal notices, keep them coming please. Coen, it is good to hear that your Kitten is still giving excellent daily service. Dick Watson, the HRG man, Welcome back Dick, is, once again, a regular Kitten user, he is looking for some parts for it, see the supplementary sheet for those details.

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# Epilogue

Here we are again at the end of another edition, and the start of another year. If I am at all organised, and unless you are one of our 5 year subscribers, if I think that you have renewed your subscription for this year, your card should be enclosed. If it isn't, it won't be, and this will be the last magazine that you will get until I hear from you.

Right now (first week into January) I am still too far behind to suggest that in those circumstances, non-renewals, might find a reminder of some sort enclosed, I will be very impressed if I have caught up enough by the time this goes in the post, to have been able to organise such a thing. So, help me out please, **action this day!**

I can tell you that, by mid February, I am gradually getting back in harness.

I am a bit of a technophobe, if that is the word, I do not get on well with all these modern electronic gadgets. One reason I don't have a smart-phone.

However, I have been considering a dash-cam, but I want one that I can easily capture still images from, to use as pictures in a magazine for example, but have yet to be convinced that such a thing exists, within the limits of my capabilities.

I was reminded of this last week when I went to Fort William to attend Peter's funeral. I just made it into Glencoe before they shut the snow gates.

The run up over Rannoch Moor was spectacular, by far the worst conditions I have driven through. I'm so glad Moira had been unable to come with me, that just would just not have worked.

But thanks to my snow tyres, a light right foot, and a determined guy in an Audi in front, who I would like to thank if I ever

met him, I got the worst 10 miles behind me in just over half an hour.

Now a camera would not have shown that much, visibility at the best points was about 50 yards or so for the worst few miles, and the snow was driving really hard, so much so that the left side of the car was just a mass of frozen snow, so you could not see out that side at all, but it might have picked up some interesting images of the results of a head on collision that had put one vehicle completely off the road. They had collided offside headlight to offside headlight. To be fair the conditions were bad, you could not see the road at all, so you did not know where the centre was, and the snow poles are not actually exactly at the edge of the road, and you really don't want to be dropping a wheel or two into the ditch!

One of the biggest hazards were the folk who decided to give up and turn back, trying to do a 5 or more point turn in those conditions in such poor visibility was difficult not to say just dangerous! To be fair most doing that did it when we were either just crawling, or at a standstill while trying to get past the accident scene.

The journey was a great adventure, and I had to come back the coast road and over Connel Bridge, near Oban, to get back.

The most striking thing about the entire journey was the number of really bad potholes.

The church, St. Andrew's, is a delightful place, they have a web site that gives great views inside, look it up if you can. The virtual tour shows it off really well.

Anyway, my apologies for this being late, and, in spite of the cold, don't forget to Grease those balljoints!

*Brian*

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