

# RELIANT KITTEN REGISTER



## Mewsletter 143

July - August 2018



*It has been a while since we had a Liege on the cover. This one, pictured by me in Scotland in 2002, belongs to Bob Riches, and they are both in Australia these days! (Bob, and the Liege above). Thanks to Colin Marshall, we are able to share his Scottish summer Liege adventure. Colin did a tour of the Western Isles of Scotland in his Liege, Swampy, this July, details of which you will find inside. Ed.*

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

☎ 0141 886 6117

E-mail: [info@kitreg.org.uk](mailto:info@kitreg.org.uk)



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



## **The Reliant Kitten Register**

**Hon. President John Box**

Rebel parts stock held by: - Adrian Hanwell Tel: **01723 341498**

New Kitten / Fox / Rebel parts stock held by Brian Marshall Tel: **0141 886 6117**  
E-mail [info@kitreg.org.uk](mailto:info@kitreg.org.uk)

Rebel alternative parts list contact: John Blagburn, Tel: **01670 862255**

E-mail: [wirelessjohn@googlemail.com](mailto:wirelessjohn@googlemail.com)

Kitten alternative parts list: Contact: Alan Osborn, Tel: **01953 884681**

E-mail: [alan@aloz.org.uk](mailto:alan@aloz.org.uk)

Fox alternative parts list contact: Duncan Bradford, 6 Clabon First Close, Norwich, NR3 4HE.

Tel: **01603 663311** E-Mail [hidunc@ntlworld.com](mailto:hidunc@ntlworld.com)

Cipher Contact: Dave Corby, Tel: **07456 508287** E-Mail: [dave.corby@ntlworld.com](mailto:dave.corby@ntlworld.com)

Tempest Registrar: Roger Brown, Brownhill House, Ruyton XI Towns, Shrewsbury, SY4 1LR

Tel: **01939 261121** E-mail [tempest@eleventowns.com](mailto:tempest@eleventowns.com) web site: <http://www.tempestregister.org.uk/>

Mewsletter pictures – should be sent to John Pearce at 7 Harworth Close, Mansfield, Notts. NG19 6QP

Tel: **01623 400687**. E-mail [john@atodini.co.uk](mailto:john@atodini.co.uk)

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# **Dinky Cars**

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# Mews 143

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E & o e

I said it last time, and I'll say it again, it's all about timing! See Tempest News on page 14 / 15 to see what I mean.

Anyway, welcome to what, if we had just the 4 editions a year, would no doubt be our Summer edition. (Quite how the Jowett Car Club consistently manage to produce a "Jowetteer" every month, that has some 32 very full pages in it, is something that fills me with admiration, and not a little envy! – Mind you there are more than twice as many of them "Jowetters", as there are of us! – Relianteers?).

I had no sooner packed the last edition when I remembered one of the things I had been supposed to put on the supplementary sheet, and that was Joe's mentioning of the fact that he had the following for sale :-

We currently have a Vantique, just having new MOT, and then it will be up for sale. Also we have a barn find Kitten just in, looking for a home, £ 1,500, it runs and drives.



All best, **Joe Mason**, Reliant Spares

So, with apologies to anyone else I have forgotten to include something for, I will move on.

We enjoyed a flurry of new subscribers in March and April, back up to an average of one a week. We have not enjoyed that level of interest for a while, and, to give credit where it is due, more than half of them came in on-line through the web site. Were it not for the 4 we subsequently signed up from mid May to mid June, all arriving through my letter box, I would have been tempted to believe that John was right about letting those who wish, join on-line, and use Pay pal if they wished to do so!

We still have a situation to resolve with using Paypal, a change we were forced to make, after initial testing seemed very hopeful (their commission apart!) , has caused an, as yet unresolved problem, watch this space!

## From the Oval Office

Although famed for its three wheelers, Reliant certainly cannot be accused of being a one product company. Through the years their range has covered Sabres, Scimitars, Rebels, Kittens, Foxes, Ants, Taxis, Boats and prototypes for Ford and BMC, but all good things come to an end, and the search was on to replace the Robin.

The French had come up with a new classification of small car which, legend had it, could be driven by almost any citizen sixteen years old and over. They were propelled by small diesel engines via CVT transmissions and had a max speed in the region of 35 mph. As they were homologated in the EU there was nothing to stop their use in the UK.



There were several makers to choose from, and Reliant went for Ligier, after all, they did make racing cars, so they should know a thing or two. In 1998 two of the microcars arrived at Two Gates for assessment. One was trailered north for me to try out away from



prying eyes in the Midlands. It was left hand steer of course, and there were various UK legalities it needed, like rear fog lights, etc. It was very entertaining, but not quick enough for A road traffic. One night I drove it down to Tamworth avoiding the motorways, it averaged 33 mph (max 37) and a little over 40 mpg which was disappointing as we had expected at least 60. It all looked quite encouraging, and Ligier went ahead with a RHD conversion for the UK, but we needed to speed it up to at least 50 mph.



At this point it got complicated because Ligier were going to market their cars through Piaggio, the Italian Company famous for its scooters and little three wheeled commercials. Piaggio could not supply faster versions of the Ligier without contravening the homologation. They also wanted Reliant to sell their three wheel commercials into the UK. A few shows were organised, and at the NEC, Russell Watson stood in the back of a Piaggio truck, performing arias to the background of an electronic orchestra, an event he is unlikely to wish to recall.

At another show the Piaggio was built as an ice cream vending vehicle, and bags of ice cream powder were delivered from Italy to be consumed by visitors to the stand. The surplus bags of powder, and there were many, were distributed around the Reliant staff for home consumption.

The attempts to wring more speed out of the Ligiers were thwarted by Ministry officials requiring official approvals and

paperwork, and despite obtaining faster petrol-powered versions, the enterprise died, leaving ice cream as Reliant's last viable new product.

Regards, John

.....

Shining the light ahead!

*John (Pearce) is always very good at covering for me, as well as being a font of knowledge, so I am going to use Dick Sherwin's recent enquiry, and John's reply, to fill a couple of pages.*

*I thought we had covered this in the past, indeed Steve's new index has no less than 8 references to lights, however I accept that it does not break down into which lights, so some research would be needed to sort out which ones are headlight specific*

*I have not taken the time to check, but I doubt you will find many contradictions. Ed.*

Morning Brian! 10/05/2018

Our Kitten is still soldiering on, showing signs of age, but is still willing. *(I know just how it feels! Ed.).*

One outstanding requirement is for new headlights, as the reflectors are badly corroded. I have been expecting an MOT failure on these for several years, but she scrapes through.

The rectangular headlights seem to be in the hen's teeth category, and I wondered if you know of what other vehicles used the same headlight. There are several "standard" sizes of rectangle, so it is difficult to know if a rectangular Fiesta light is the same as a Rialto light or an Avenger light. Any clues for me?

Thanks for the Register Mewsletter, always a good read.

Regards from Dick Sherwin, No. 126 from Horsham.

*Anyway, I was on holiday when that arrived, and John, knowing that, and having the answers, chose to reply for me, thank you John.*

Brian is away at the moment, due back today or tomorrow, but I suspect he might have passed this to me to deal with anyway. Fiesta lights are very different, but the same lights were used on some Escort Mk 1's and Cortina Mk 3's. In fact these lights were popular on many cars from the 60's, into the '70's, but be aware that not all had a side-lamp aperture in them.

Other cars that used this light are Fiat 126 & BIS, which are fairly easy to source but will almost certainly be in LHD configuration so will dip the wrong way. Not too difficult to overcome though, as the difference is only the front glass and these are simply stuck to the reflectors with mastic, so can be removed and swapped over with care. If you decide to do this, be very careful to attach the glass the correct way up though, it is worth marking the top before starting the change-over. Also get the correct mastic, as the domestic/bathroom type is not strong enough, or heat-resistant either.

Some models of Triumph Toledo & Hillman Hunter/Minx used these headlights. Only the very earliest Rialtos, (1982-84) used this actual light, later models being fitted with a different one, but these invariably don't have a side-lamp aperture, neither do Metro ones, which, like the Fiat ones, are reasonably easy to source.

If you have to get lights without a side-lamp aperture, you might need to either drill the reflector, (as I have recently had to do on my 1971 Honda 90) as these only had the side-lamp in the headlamp from 1968 – 1972, so replacements don't have a hole, or to change the front indicator lights for Rialto/Metro ones where the side-light is part of the indicator assembly.

Be aware that e-bay is full of LED conversions, some of which say they are suitable for Kittens – they are not!! It is completely illegal in the UK anyway to retro-fit LED (or HID) lamp conversions, unless construction and use regulations are followed to the letter.... Quite how you would fit both automatic self-levelling and headlamp power washers, both of which are essential if you are to comply with the law, is beyond me – OK, it could be done but why? At night the difference is easy for the Old Bill to spot, and many are being prosecuted for using them!

They are still out there somewhere – you just have to hunt for them..... John (Pearce) No. 304 from Mansfield.



## *Llangollen 2018 - as seen from Scotland*

Where to begin? We set off on the Thursday, having planned a leisurely run down to Wigan for the night, at what has become Moira's favourite Premier Inn.

The trip began well enough, if not as economically as my usual driving style allows. The need for speed was drinking fuel, by maintaining a cruising speed that enabled me to cover some 20 or so miles more each hour than I do when meandering along at the sort of pace I do when travelling on my own.

We had heard on the radio that the M6 was closed south of junction 33, due to a lorry having collided with a bridge, but we had not realised the tail back effect. It took us just under 7 hours to go the last 3½ miles to Junction 33, where we finally got off the Motorway, and, as a result, it was just before one in the morning that we finally got to bed.

This trip was the worst I can remember as far as forgetting things goes. There were mitigating circumstances, which, for once, I will not bore you with, but, never the less, we forgot half a dozen things, and also, because of a combination of factors, I had not even bothered to try and produce I.D. badges for everyone, indeed anyone this year.

Enough of my shortcomings.... We had decided that, time, traffic and weather permitting, we would head south on the Friday morning, and fit in a visit to see Keith and Glen Gittus. They had been booked to stay at the same B&B as us, just a few hundred yards from the Motor Museum, but had had to cancel not long before the event, as Keith had suffered a heart attack.

There must be some appropriate joke to be made about the timing of that major event, as it happened on the very day that Keith was going to have been taking delivery of his "new" car, a Scimitar SS1, but, try as I might, I just cannot seem find the right form of words just now – but I have to say, Keith, if you had changed your mind, there are less desperate ways to get out of a deal.... We wish you a speedy recovery.

You will, I am sure, be relieved to hear that, thanks to John, Tony, Malcolm and Colin, you can be saved from too much more from me here just now. I'll catch up in the Epilogue. Ed.

## **Llangollen 2018** by the organiser

Well our Llangollen luck finally ran out on the Sunday. After all the warm sunny weather before and after, what did we get - torrential rain, it may have dampened our clothes, but not our spirits. It could have been worse, at least we had it dry for our run and boat trip on Saturday. Seventeen intrepid members braved the perilous crossing of the Pontcysyllte Aqueduct. All went well until we reached the middle (126ft above the River Dee) when the oxygen masks dropped down, although this caused some panic, in true British tradition we persevered and made it all the way across and returned without losing anybody overboard. On returning to base we celebrated with a nice lunch in the tearoom, leaving early enough to return to the museum to allow us more time to catch up with other members, this was just as well considering the weather on Sunday.

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It was good to see Brian and Moira again, and through this article I would like to thank Brian again for yet another year of dedication to the Register in spite of it being a very difficult year for them both. This thank you should also include Moira, as without her support I'm sure Brian wouldn't be able to achieve as much as he does.



It was also good to see Dave Price this year, as it was Dave who organised the first get together back in 2005 at Burford. Who would have thought that it would have grown from that to metamorphose into an annual weekend event.







And last but by no means least I would like to thank Tony Weise for not only organising the plaques, but also donating them as well. Cheers Tony.



There were several new faces there this year, so to them I say 'welcome to the family', and to all the familiar faces - really good to see you again. Who knows, if the weather had been better on Sunday, it might have encouraged a bigger turnout.

Talking to members over the weekend, the plan for next year seems to be to return to the museum again, but just have a longer run with a stop for lunch. We have had a train trip and a boat trip, it was suggested that the next logical step would be a plane trip or even hang gliding, but that was just a bit of fun wasn't it?!!!!

Talking to Geoff at the museum, he told me that as very few members visited the museum (understandable, as it doesn't change much year to year) that he is thinking of charging a flat fee for the hire of the field (this would cover everything). He mentioned a fee of £200 and would leave it up to the individual clubs as to how they collect any funds from their members. I can understand his point of view as he has to fund the upkeep of the museum. We all seem to agree that it is a good venue, as there is camping on site which is a bonus for a lot of members, and also plenty of B&B's close by.

If you have any suggestions for next year, you know my email address, I would be pleased to hear from you.

Looking forward to next year, until then, safe and happy motoring.

Malcolm.

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*Thank you Malcom, and Tony, (for many of the pictures) and my apologies to the 3 Tandy campers that were there, I do have pictures, but am out of time and space, next time I promise.*

*It is now Saturday the 11<sup>th</sup> of August and I really need to get this to the printers first thing on Monday. I am sacrificing the Jowett do at the Ferry Fair Parade at South Queensferry today, and the big show at Biggar tomorrow, though I am going to have a break from flat clearing to take in the first cinema organ concert of the new season tomorrow.*

Ed.

# Tempest news.

Every now and then things do occur at just the right time. One such occasion was in June this year, just after Brian and Pat Fereday had sent me their carefully considered decision, after talking to the relevant individuals, and visiting Dave Smith to see his Tempest.

I had included their recent correspondence in the last edition, and was about to put their contact details along with a wanted advert in the supplement, when I had an email from Val King, a long time Tempest owner, who had reluctantly decided to sell her Tempest, and it fitted the bill perfectly. I put them in touch on the 9<sup>th</sup> of June, and they did a deal that very day, after viewing the car less than a hundred miles away! Sometimes things do work out really well!

It actually gets even better, I was suggesting to Brian (***Who was asking for advice about the best place to insure the Tempest – can anyone offer advice please?***) that he might bring the Tempest to Llangollen next month, and this was his reply :-

“You will not believe this, but Pat and I booked a weekend in Llangollan before Christmas, guess when?”

Then, as I was typing this up, the following arrived from Joe :-





The Vantique has a galvanised chassis, all-alloy engine and a 4 speed synchromesh gearbox. Suspension is by coil and wishbone at the front and semi-elliptic leaves at the rear. The rack and pinion steering allows a remarkably small turning circle and the chassis design particularly lends itself to quick and easy maintenance.

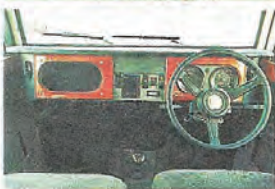
The body shell is constructed around a very tough tubular steel frame which is panelled in heavy gauge aluminium.

The Vantique is designed by Thoroughbred Projects of Burton-in-Kendal, Cumbria and marketed by

#### Tempest Cars

84 Ramsbottom Road,  
Hawthorn,  
Bury,  
Lancashire BL8 4JS  
Tel. 0204 852961

Brochure design and production:  
Image (0253) 592078



The bulkhead, wings and roof panel are high quality GRP mouldings as is the radiator shell which has a period honeycomb grill. The freight area is of approximately 75 cu ft capacity and is fully lined, with access via a lift-up rear door assisted by gas struts. A very high standard of interior trim is provided which includes mahogany door cappings and instrument panel finishers.



## Tyre safety, and old age!

Dear Brian,

19<sup>th</sup> June 2018

If I interpreted John Parker comments about the tyres on his Rebel correctly, we should advise that 30 year old tyres are not a good idea. There has been hype about tyres that called for replacement after an unnecessarily short time, however 30 years is too much.

I was in charge of testing Green Goddess fire engine tyres when there were a lot of accidents when they were brought out of storage and into use because of the firemen's strike.

They still passed the test OK, and some makes looked in perfect nick. However, when they were run and got hot, they failed because the antioxidant had been used up in storage, and they deteriorated rapidly.

Regards, Roger (Brown) No. 715 from Shropshire

*Upon receipt of that I replied as follows in defence of older tyres :-*

*If the vehicle is kept out of the sun and the car jacked up when not in use, these early Michelins were really good.*

*To which Roger replied that :-*

The Green Goddesses were jacked up out of the sun, some ageing occurs even at room temperature, and 30 years is a long time.

*All of which should have prompted me to ask Phil Hallam how old the tyres on his pre-war Riley are, but, as usual these days, I left it too late to get an answer in here!*

It does surprise me a bit that tyre age is not (yet) part of the MOT test, but I guess the controversy, and varying rates of degradation between manufacturers and storage conditions, could conspire to create a wide band of potential acceptability, and after the chaos caused by the MOT exemption situation, they are perhaps a bit hesitant to further complicate the rules, though I am surprised that the manufacturers have not lobbied for legislation to boost sales!

An extortionate fine potentially awaits those without legal tyres. It is vital that you check your tyres regularly. Driving on un-roadworthy ones can be dangerous, and can lead to a five-figure fine if they do not meet legal requirements. The penalty for having illegal tyres on a vehicle (and this includes trailers I believe) **is not something anyone can afford to ignore.**

If you drive on damaged or excessively worn tyres, you're putting everyone's safety at risk. As well as a significant, not to say crippling fine, you can also have penalty points put on your licence. The penalty for driving with tyres below the legal tread depth limit is a fine of up to £2,500 and three penalty points per tyre.

So, in total, you could face a £10,000 bill and 12 points if all four tyres are illegal. (more if you are towing something which also has faulty tyres! Not only would it be very costly financially, you could incur an automatic driving ban too.

If you're involved in an accident while driving with defective tyres, an insurance claim could also be invalidated, which means your insurer won't pay out to repair your vehicle, and future premiums will be increased too..

The law requires your vehicle to be fitted with the correct type and size of tyres. That they be free from defects, and are at the correct pressure. They must have at least 1.6mm of tread depth across the central three-quarters of the breadth of the tyre around the complete circumference.

For safety reasons, it's advisable to replace your tyres before they reach the legal limit. The RAC recommend replacing them at 3mm as a tyre's braking and wet weather performance significantly drops below this point. I have been known to push that to nearer 2mm, but never knowingly below that. If there is a cut in your tyre you should get it replaced a.s.a.p. However, the tyre is still legal if the cut is less than 25mm (an inch in real money!) or covers under 10% of the section width of the wheel.

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While I am on my soapbox, a certain Fox featured recently, did (in correctly) pass its MOT with illegal headlights fitted. This was an error by the MOT tester who interpreted the rules incorrectly.

It is not our job to police the MOT testing stations of the land, or to train their staff, but such errors not only cause confusion, (the more so with the internet being able to spread (mis)information so quickly, but would not prevent prosecution. Ignorance of the law is no excuse.

As I understand things Anthony Guest spoke to the MOT station folk on the phone about the lights when booking the test, and took the old lights along with him, with instructions for the garage to fit them, if the new lights did not comply. So I can quite understand why he feels that it is ok, **but it is most definitely not.**

I know from a close friend's bitter experience, that even though the fault may not be yours, using a vehicle on the road that is not compliant can, and will if the law becomes aware of the situation, incur both a fine, and one that is now many times more than it was just a few months ago, as well as, as many as 6 (3 for each offence) penalty points on your licence, which of course will affect your insurance premium on next renewal.

It really is shocking that people and business make claims about their products that are in fact contrary to the law of the land, and, in my view, even worse that those checking such things, in this case the MOT man, have not studied the current legislation diligently enough.

Yes you can have LED or HID headlights on your car, but only if it had them as original equipment, and even then they need to be both self levelling and have power washers, always the case with modern vehicles so equipped. You could legally fit them to your car, if you also caused it to have a self levelling capacity, and headlamp washers.

LED sidelights and indicators are fine, provided they are of the correct standard, and, another benefit of them is that you can use coloured bulbs and so help get round faded lenses!

I am now coming down from my soapbox, **you have been warned!**

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# *Liege News*

By Coin Marshall – July 2018

## *Swampy's Hebridean Adventure*

On **day one** (1<sup>st</sup> July 2018) Swampy, our 1976 Reliant Kitten based Liege sports car, took us 265 miles from Ellwood to Carlisle. Avoiding busy motorways our route - A49, A41, M53 got us to Liverpool via the Mersey Tunnel, then A59 to Preston and A6. Garden centres popping up conveniently for refreshments, and hot sun all day, the temperature hitting 28 degrees C.



**Day two** was a more relaxed drive through The Trossachs (above) and up to our hotel at Connel Bridge outside Oban. Another sunny day, but more comfortable at just 23 degrees C, got us a further 203 miles via Greenbank Gardens, Newton Mearns, on the outskirts of Glasgow, for morning coffee and Green Welly, (*our favourite break on the way to Oban or Fort William, Ed.*) Tyndrum for afternoon tea. After dinner we were able to drive onto the beach at Benderloch to watch the sunset.



### **Day three** - Connel Bridge to the Isle of Lewis.

Hot again with temperature up to 25 degrees. Our route through spectacular scenery took us 186 miles via Fort William, Invergarry, Ardelve and Gorstan to Ullapool. Our 2½ hour ferry across The Minch to Stornoway gave time for dinner on board, and we docked at 8pm with just a 5 minute drive to our hotel, booked for three nights.

After checking in and unloading our cases we headed off up the Eye Peninsula to watch the sunset.



Unfortunately, by 10.15pm the blooming thing still hadn't set! (*Aye, that's the north of Scotland in the summer for you, Ed. That said, you were blessed with wonderful weather for your trip, not something we put on for just anyone!*) and we were feeling the cooler temperatures, so we decided not to wait, but head back to Stornoway. We wanted to visit the Iolaire Monument which commemorates the loss of 205 island soldiers returning from the First World War who were shipwrecked just off the coast on New Years' Day 1919. Saw it, but couldn't get close, due to major excavation works.



**Day four** dawned bright and again temperatures hit the mid 20's.

Having read Peter Mays' The Lewis Trilogy, I was keen to visit some of the locations identified in the books, and our next four days itineraries reflected that.

First off today though was to visit the famous Callanish Standing Stones, a cross shaped formation of tall stones erected in the bronze age. Much earlier than Stonehenge apparently. Certainly, spectacular but already occupied by a group from a mini bus. We determined to visit here again early in the morning to properly explore and take 'photos.



Travelling north on the west coast of Lewis our next stop was at the Dun Carloway Broch. A huge drystone, double skinned round house built in the iron age. We were lucky to be able to explore and take photo's before the same mini bus group arrived as we were returning to the car. Chatting to the lady mini bus driver we learned that she had been hired by the group of Canadians and their guide and were on much the same itinerary as ourselves.

Continuing north again we arrived at a village of preserved Blackhouses.



These traditional stone and thatch cottages were still being lived in right up to the 1970's. They consisted of two living rooms to one side of the central doorway and a livestock/workshop room on the other, often containing a loom. Due to the high winds the thatch was held in place by a network of ropes held down by heavy stones. Heating was by peat fire and often the smoke just escaped through the thatch.

We spent the rest of the day driving up to The Butt of Lewis and Port Ness where we had afternoon tea overlooking the harbour. In the evening, after enjoying superb 10oz sirloin steaks at the Lanntair Art Centre in Stornoway, we travelled up the east coast to where the road petered out at The Bridge to Nowhere. The massive concrete structure was built to span a deep gorge in the construction of a road to Port Ness which was never completed. We did drive over the bridge on up the very rough track for half a mile or so, giving us the elevation to photograph the fabulous, almost deserted beaches and coastline.



Swampy on “The Bridge to Nowhere” and “On the beach”



**Day five**, dry and cool with sunny spells.

Our day for exploring Harris, after revisiting the Callanish Stones to get our pictures (see page 21).

Unlike Lewis, which is mainly lochs and moorland, Harris is quite mountainous. The west coast white sand beaches were expansive and sparsely occupied and the tides quite small, there being little obvious difference between low and high water.

Driving across the causeway onto Great Bernera we stopped at a cairn memorial built to commemorate the Bernera Riot of 1874 when the crofters rose up against the evictions due to the Clearances. Driving on to the very tip of the island we came across a beautifully maintained war cemetery and right down on the beach below the remains of a stone age village with one of the dwellings recreated as it was assumed to have been.

Tarbert is a pretty little port with a few shops including the inevitable Harris Tweed outlet. The recently built gin distillery produces a pricey gin infused with sugar kelp, and apparently the unique empty bottles make good money on Ebay.

Dinner at the County Hotel back in Stornoway where the chef is Indian, and so we chose from his Indian menu.

In the evening we explored Stornoway and watched the ferry coming in, then took a stroll around the magnificent Lewis Castle grounds.

**Day six**, again dry but cool with sun in the afternoon.

Today we headed back down through Harris and South Harris to board the ferry from Leverburgh to the island of Berneray. Passing Tarbert driving west over the pass a Golden Eagle flew across in front of us just as the mountains parted to reveal the vast sunlit sands of Losgaintir beach. A special moment. The ferry crossing weaves between numerous shoals and islands following a narrow channel between red and green buoys and takes an hour. A pod of dolphins swam across our path shortly after leaving Leverburgh.

Arriving on Berneray we immediately drove across the causeway to North Uist. During the afternoon we continued south, crossing causeways to the spectacular island of Benbecula (definitely my favourite) and then on down to Lochboisdale at the bottom of South Uist and our hotel at Dalabrog.

After dinner we drove down to Chaolais and over the causeway to the island of Eriskay where the SS Politician foundered in 1941, prompting the Whisky Galore story by Compton Mackenzie. We saw the beach where the haul was landed by the locals, and the Politician Pub, which still has unopened bottles of whisky on display. The Catholic church of St. Michaels (which also features in The Lewis Trilogy books) sits on high ground overlooking the village of Am Baile and the rest of the island to the south.

**Day seven** started cool, but bright and dry.

We had the day to travel up to Lochmaddy in North Uist for the 16.45 ferry to Uig on Skye.

South Uist's west side is flat machair interspersed with lochs and continuous white sand beaches, while the east side is mountainous and craggy with the highest mountain, Beinn Mhor, at over 2,000ft. We spent our time walking in an arboretum, and then a nature reserve on the east coast, and exploring tracks through the machair on the west side, before driving back up country through numerous lochs shining deep blue in the bright sunlight.

The crossing to Skye took 1¾ hours, allowing us time for dinner, and by the time we landed at Uig the cloud was low with light drizzle. We took the mountain road to Brogaig before driving down through Portree to our hotel at Sligachan. We'd stayed here before on a previous visit to Skye, and were delighted to be given a free upgrade to a luxurious modern suite with an enormous bed and a picture window with views direct onto the Cuillins.

**Day eight** was overcast and cool with drizzle for a time in the morning. Our hotel was in Fort William just 98 miles away, but our plan was to visit Neptune's Staircase on the Caledonian Canal, and the Glenfinnan Viaduct, to photograph The Jacobite steam train, which we reckoned was due about 3pm.





The “Jackobean” on the Glenfinnan Viaduct – *I’d love to know where you took that from, and or how powerful a zoom lens you used?!? Ed.*

**Day nine**, hot and sunny again and this time we were driving south into a stiff breeze. Our route took us up Glencoe where we stopped to take pictures of Black Rock Cottage.





and then through Glen Aray to Inveraray, where we stopped at the Woollen Mill for shopping and coffee. As usual when we park someone came over to ask about the car.

This time it was a piper in full Black Watch regalia who was employed by The Mill to pipe in the visiting coach tours.

He mentioned how few coaches had come this year and perhaps it was a good thing because staffing had become a real problem since the Poles had gone home.

We drove on down to Dunoon to take the Hunter's Quay to McInroy's Point ferry (*Gourock, just a few hundred yards from where my aunt and uncle spent their retirement. They were brought up in Quarriers Home just outside Bridge of Weir, but, emigrated to America where they spent their working lives before returning to the Clyde. My grandfather found them a house, 82 Cloch Road, in which we enjoyed many a weekend in the 3 or 4 years after they bought it, before they "came home". That was where I first learnt to cut tiles doing the bathroom there, there were still 4 paddle steamers operating on the Clyde then, that was not yesterday, Ed!*)



seaside town of Largs on our way back to our hotel in Carlisle.



*Just thought I'd sneak this one in here, taken at Largs in 2012, Ed! I expect those Liege are still on the road today, while my old BX (taking up the rear in the picture), now lurks, getting mouldy, in a lock-up in Renfrew with its head off following a camshaft failure on 3/9/12*

**Day Ten** was our long bash back to The Forest, on a warm but quite cloudy day with light winds. We started early and got right down to Preston on the M6 before the traffic started to build. Then it was back through the Mersey Tunnel and home – just 7 hours driving plus a half hour coffee break. Total mileage for the trip was 1,885.

Colin Marshall, No. 1042 from Ellwood

*I am deeply indebted to Colin for taking the time to write that, and share the adventure with us. Maggie, his sat nav as he calls her, is also to be commended for not just allowing him to have such fun, but for actively participating. Mr. President, I know your wife shares your motoring passion, and others reading this too, I just wish mine had been one of those individuals!*

## Epilogue

Here we are once again, ball joints all greased I hope, and still in shock at the lovely warm dry summer we have had, and continue to enjoy.

A small group of us gathered at our B&B at Llangollen on the Saturday evening for a chat over a cup of coffee, I was particularly interested to learn more about Andrew Norman's windmill and cottage renovation projects, which are both big long term jobs, that are both nearing completion, another couple of years or so, and I expect he will be living in the cottage and grinding corn. Andrew it was great to see you again and catch up. Hopefully you might come in the Radnor van at some point.

I have to say that Carl was almost speechless when John presented him with the Chairman's Choice award this year, for his tidy Tandy camper. Congratulations Carl, and thank you Mr. President.

My apologies for the absence of captions with the pictures in the Llangollen report, there simply was not the room without reducing the picture size quite a bit, and it saved me an hour or so too!

Not only is my desk groaning under the biggest load it has had to support for years, but the house is also bulging at the seams as we try to decide which treasures to keep from my mother's flat. Fortunately, my niece is taking the piano, it was my maternal grandfather's, and Moira has mentioned the D word if I bring anything else here, but we need to empty the flat soon, compromises, some of them heartbreaking, will have to be made.

Right, I do not doubt I have missed something, but I think all I need to do now is the Index, and we will be good to go to the printers with this one, just a couple of weeks later than I would have liked.

John (Pearce) tells me we will get the Christmas edition out very early in December, I will try, but no promises!

*Brian*

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