

RELIANT KITTEN
REGISTER
NEWSLETTER Number 16



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Right, now that edition 15 is finally away to the copy man, I have a few minutes to gather my thoughts before diving off to do an edition of the Thistle branch of the R.O.C.'s magazine. Just how many hats this head can hold, remains to be seen, but I must look quite a sight sometimes!

I printed off the name and address file, to check for late renewals, boy was it a good idea to put the register number on the label in small print, made checking against the database a simple half hour job, and not a frustrating nightmare. I keep the name and address file alphabetically you see, and the Register is simply a numerical list.

This check brought to my notice that there really are more of us this year. As at 21st April there were 176 names on the mailing list. 8 of those are complimentary ones, a couple of motoring magazines, our advertiser, and a couple of others. 142 people are current subscribers, and 26 have failed to renew from last year.

This excludes the enquiries we have had this year, new enquiries do not go on the mailing list, unless they actually subscribe. There have been about 20 or so of them who have not actually subscribed yet this year, and a few stragglers from last year. The record so far, from first contact, to subscribing, is over 2 years, so I am not too bothered, but I would like to find the time to write reminders to those who enquired over say a couple of months ago, and from whom I have since heard nothing, - one day!

On another front, and part of the reason that I have been so busy recently, is the fact, a happy one I think, that I have sold two Reliants, a Rebel and a Kitten, both estate cars, and the new Rebel estate car chassis.

This all happened in the space of less than a month, and, as always seems to be the case when I sell a car, was less than straightforward! However, it got done, and we managed not to break John Blagburn's old Kitten estate car in the process, instead finding a new custodian for it, even without a radiator, engine, or wheels with legal tyres!

The vast sums of money raised from the various sales, has enabled me to clear the arrears of rent on my three lock-ups, and bring my share of the rent of this shed that now just two of us share, up to date also. It did manage to pay for a big service on the Citroen, and buy it a new tyre as well. But that was it! This brought it home to me that I really cannot afford to go on carrying such a large stock of old spares. I am going to give up a lock up - I currently only have one car between the three of them, the "little red car", having put Arleen's blue Rebel saloon out to grass for a while, thank you Mike Cowie, for the space. In fact, moving the Rebel reminded me of just how much work was done on it a couple of years ago. The body was taken off, the chassis shot blasted and primed. All welding done, and my new design of outriggers fitted, as well as seam welding the whole thing. The rear cross member was replaced with a much heavier one to help locate the proposed tow bracket. It was then painted and Dinitrol injected, before the body was sat back on.

The fact that it is of an age that makes it road tax exempt, does make me wonder if I should finish it first, rather than spend time and money on the "little red car", but I suspect that the "little red car" needs a lot less time and £ spent on it than the Rebel does, what was it I was saying before about decisions? Still, there are now three less vehicles to choose from than there were a few months ago! So I think I am moving in the right direction, mind you I do now own three saloons, and two estates (not counting the modern thing of course), and I really prefer the estate cars, well, they are much more practical than the saloons. One day I will be happy (well, we have to have our dreams, don't we?)

Just what is it that I want anyway? I would like a good Kitten estate car to go with the saloon, which saloon I hear you ask, well, I am not sure, they are both so good, but I think that the white one,

Susie, has the edge on the "little red car", not by very much, but enough to make it a fairly easy decision which one to be parted from, so, see the adverts page in the next edition, (or perhaps the one after, by the time I get them both sorted out, and make up my mind!!)

Then again -- if I did the Rebel up first, by the time I got the "little red car" back on the road, it probably would be road tax exempt, the speed I seem to get things done at these days!

A plan is what is needed, but it can get depressing this plan business. Every month I produce a "May task list", or whatever the current month happens to be. The sad thing is that other things get added to the list after the month has begun, and the items which were not completed from previous months lists are carried forward - things like "fit new lights to Arleens bedroom" has been on the list since her platform bed was fitted over two years ago, and is still staring at me from the current list!

Perhaps the plan has to be a realistic one - the main reason that the bedroom light situation has not been resolved is that it involves my clambering about the attic, and to be honest I have not been aloft for many months.

What has all this nonsense got to do with Reliants, whither Rebel Kitten or anything else I can hear you thinking, well you have no idea (tragically neither do I!) just how many Reliant spares, and articles, are up in my attic, from Rebel dashboards, to a host of brand new small and seldom needed spare parts. Things like the Reliant steering wheel centre for the Rebel, somewhere I have both blue and maroon ones, well one of each at least, come on Bob Neal, when and why did the centre steering wheel on the Rebel change from blue to maroon? Was it when they went from 600cc to 700cc? Or 700cc to 750cc? Or was it just a date thing? Come to that what colour is yours, if you have a Rebel go and have a look, I'll be surprised if you can tell me from memory, go on, have a look, and let me know what colour the background is of your Rebel steering wheel centre, you know, used to be the horn button on the Regal, perhaps on the 600cc Rebel too, and drop me a line telling me the original engine size, as well as the colour.

From this interesting bit of archaeological research we will fill at least a page of a future edition, and do absolutely nothing at all to help keep these little cars on the road!

Talking of which, when last did you grease anything on the car? The weather should be better by now, so lay aside a few hours to do some preventative maintenance, ball joints and propshaft joints on your Kittens and Foxes, Steering idlers and trunnions on the Rebels, yes I know the trunnions should be oiled, but a good dose of grease is infinitely better than nothing. While we are about it, why not jack the car up corner at a time, and adjust those brakes?

I know that Susie passed her test with the handbrake the way it still is, but the effort needed to get the handbrake to hold on a steep hill is too much, something is not right in there, or perhaps, being a fairly early car, she has the shorter backplate levers? I must investigate. That's the real problem you see, it only takes you half an hour or less to read this, but it takes me a full week or more to create it, yes I realise I should work harder / type faster etc etc, but there we are. So, while you are greasing your car, and adjusting its brakes, I am writing this, and getting nothing done to the car at all. Taken together with the fact that I have more of them than most folk, cars that is, is it any wonder that mine can at times become so neglected? Still, I can sleep at night, I just blame you! Great to have other folk to blame for ones problems is it not!!

Right, it is the 21st of May just now, and I have had the cold all week. Rain stopped play at the Doune Classic Challenge last Sunday, and I have got little or nothing done all week, and just reading the last page over, perhaps it would have been better if I had had another few days off before doing this!

Still, edition 15 went in the post on Saturday, and from the 'phone calls I know that at least some of them arrived O.K.!! I am going to be away on Holiday the first two weeks in July, and would really like to have this with you, or at least in the post, before I go, to get us back in line with the bi-monthly plan. The thing is that I need to spend a bit of time planning the content of the thing, or you will end up with the sort of thing you had last time where I simply copy type letters. Now that is fine, but I still need to ensure a mix of technical and not so technical, and there is Bill's Rebel parts list to do, and all the company stuff that I really want to share with you. Time!! I need more of it!!!

Right, a cooling off period is called for, I'll go and have breakfast now, and have a look through the " for use in the mag file " back in a couple of hours - - - -

Rebel round up

Dear Brian, Jan.'97

It was great to get your letter and details of the Register and Mewsletter (!) Having read the magazine I agree that it would be a good idea to subscribe, so please find enclosed my form, and a vast quantity of first class stamps.

My main thought is that perhaps you could run a separate register for the Rebels, using the numbers that Terry Scott had allocated to us (mine was 62), and you could save space by only printing the people who have subscribed.

I did write to Terry Scott last June, and he referred me to a chap called Eric in Bookham, so I wrote to him, but got no response (Yes, I too wrote to him, even enclosed an s.a.e. - but no response, has anyone ever had communication with this chap who is supposed to be doing the Rebel Register these days? Ed)

There are a couple of Kittens local to me in Bristol, an estate in daily use by a home help, and a hatchback, which has languished on a drive for a few years. I also have a friend who runs one in the St Albans area. I also spotted a bright yellow Rebel pick-up at the Bristol Classic car show a year or so ago - it must have been a conversion, but I don't know where at lives.

Now to my car, it is no longer in standard form as I am in the process of installing a Ford escort MkII 1298cc engine and C3 automatic gearbox. After many years of toil it is well on the way, and recently moved under its own power! I am now struggling to replace a wheel bearing.

I can send on copies of my articles on "A saga of a Reliant Rebel Estate" if you do not have them from the "Rebellion".

I am pleased to see that the Rebel came out best in the comparison, though I have to say there is not a lot of room left under the bonnet of mine!

John Parker - Bristol

Perhaps not John, but a bit more than I am sure remains under the bonnet of David Millar's one in Boddam, he has a 1.9 Litre diesel Peugeot unit from a BX19 Citroen in his, yes driving the back wheels!!!

A Saga of a Reliant Rebel Estate - Episode 1

I spotted my Rebel estate advertised in the local paper in 1979, and after a short test drive agreed a price of £800. My first problem came when having paid over the money, I went to back it out of the drive and the gear lever jumped the gate in the gearbox. My first job after towing it home and fixing the gearbox - There must be a story there somewhere me-thinks, Ed - was to Waxoil the chassis so that it would not rust. 30,000 miles of largely trouble free motoring followed with no doubt typical problems on the way (the day the actuating rod fell out of the brake master cylinder; the day it boiled when my wife was using it to take aged aunt out for the day and they had to be 'recovered' back home) I fitted a 6V coil with ballast resistor which improved starting and Michelin XZX radials which greatly improved the steering. If, like me, you find that the interior door handles break rather easily, then the chrome ones from old Morris Oxford or Cowley (Series II, III or IV) will solve the problem. *Yes, I've used Morris Minor ones, very similar; anything but lubricate the mechanism so that it works freely! Ed.*

In July 1985 the knocking noise from the engine reached a point where it could not be driven. Faced with a large bill for engine (and gearbox) repairs, I postponed any decision by leaving the car in my mother's garage.

In February 1986 I bought a Ford Escort Mk 2 Estate 1300 automatic. Both my wife and I liked the automatic box, but by October 1988 it failed its MOT with terminal rust. Thus I had a Reliant with a dud engine and a Ford with a dud body. The Escort was duly parked in my mother's drive, and the idea born that perhaps the Escort's engine and gearbox might fit in the Rebel. And why not? Reliant managed to fit a 1600cc Ford engine in there, so it can be done. Do you know that I honestly believe that the reason that the Rebel 1600GT did not get beyond the prototype stage, is because it would have left the Scimitar of the day standing, and Reliant did not wish to upset their up-market customers! Ed.

In 1989, after much measuring of dimensions on both cars, I concluded that there was a good chance that it could be done.

Thank you for that episode of the Saga John, it originally appeared in Rebellion No. 8. Episode 2 will be in the next issue.

Trip South, May '97

I did make a journey of 1,600 miles the week of the general election, which was interesting, enjoyable, and did let me meet quite a number of you. It was not however made in a Reliant, though it did involve three Reliant chassis, three engines and two gearboxes, so perhaps I will relate it another time.

The trip which I will tell you about now is my journey in little Susie, to see those of you who made it to the R.O.C. National Rally at Shughborough Hall on the Sunday 25th of May. Well, O.K., to see some of you, I have since received a number of calls and letters from people who came along and did not see me at all - I was there from 11.00am till about 6.00pm, honest. I hope that you enjoyed the day and the cars, and did not get too much sun.

In an effort to make the trip reasonably relaxing, I elected to stop over both on the way down, and back. On the way down, after listening to the National Pipe Band competition in Renfrew, and watching the practice for the Italian Grand Prix, I set off by way of York, for Barlborough (junction 30 on the M1) where I was staying the night with relatives. Needless to say, having not seen them for over a year, we stayed up till the small hours, however I managed breakfast, and was on the road for 9:00am.

The weather was wonderful, and the site for the rally both excellent and well signposted, both the Hall, and the R.O.C. event, so I had no difficulty in finding my way there.

Douglas Philip. Who usually wins the distance award to this event, (and indeed did so again this year) had gone ahead on the Friday, and had managed to see over the factory at Tamworth on the Saturday, and still made it to the event before me on the Sunday! Douglas is one of those tricycle owners who aspires to Kitten ownership, and is an associate member of the Register - one day Douglas!

I am always a bit like the proverbial fish out of water at the Reliant National rally, so many faces that I recognise, but with my memory I cannot put names to them. It used to really embarrass me when folk came up and said "hello Brian", and I really hadn't a clue who they were, now it does not bother me so much, I am hopeless with names at the best of times, never mind folk I only see for a few minutes every couple of years or so!

Indeed I am so used to people knowing who I am, that I am particularly bad at introducing myself, indeed often do not do so, and I must single out Jonathan Hayes, his son and wife, yes that was me in the white Kitten saloon to whom you were chatting and looking under the bonnet, and yes a Fox replacement, with the hatch back end would do just nicely please thank you.

To those of you who I did meet, it was good to see you, and some very nice looking Kittens too. To anyone who was there and I missed, well, what can I say? My big concern was to be there, I had not given any thought to what I might do when I got there, yes we really should have got all the 4-wheelers together for a photo session, and with a bit of planning that should have been perfectly possible. But on the day, with the event running along as it was, it was difficult to see how we could have done it without disrupting proceedings. Yes of course I should have asked the organisers to make some kind of announcement, but hindsight is wonderful, and I did spend most of the day talking to people - one day we'll get it just right. We did sign up a couple of new subscribers, and gave application forms to several others, and I did meet John Piper (again), from South Wales, whom I had lost touch with a couple of years ago

I was determined to get the very best fuel consumption that I could on this trip. I have several English ventures to make this year, and a limited budget, so by keeping the speed down to the proverbial thrifty fifty, where it was safe to do so, I did manage the high 60's to the gallon. Fifteen was the target figure, miles to the litre that is, how one is supposed to be able to do such conversions in one's head I don't know, must be old age catching up, but 10 miles to the litre is 45 and a half to the gallon, so 15 must be about 67 or 68. Well, for those who like maths here are the figures: -

Date Place fuel mileage M.P.G.

19/05/97 Springburn 12.42Lt 82167	23/05/97 Renfrew 20.97Lt 82485 69.01
24/05/97 Penrith 11.00Lt 82649 67.78	25/05/97 Chesterfield 14.00Lt 82834 60.07
26/05/97 Cannock 12.92Lt 83024 66.85	26/05/97 Southwaite 12.00Lt 83214 71.98
27/05/97 Bishopbriggs 15.00Lt 83467 76.68	02/06/97 Renfrew 22.00Lt 83744 58.07

Feel free to check my calculations. For the rest of us I did manage just under 70 M.P.G., and had I not been carrying so much extra weight I could probably have done better, indeed if an accident had not closed the M6 on my way home on the Monday, and so forced me, and a lot of other motorists into first and second gear for 5 miles or so, and then sent us off up the A34 with its mass of roundabouts, all by this time with long queues of traffic, I am reasonably sure that I could have broken the 70 barrier by a handsome margin.

I did think as I passed the M.I.R.A. establishment on the A5, that I should drop in and ask if I could drive round their test track for a few hours to see just how far a Kitten will go on a gallon / litre or whatever, with no traffic to hold it back. I suspect however that they are not open to the public, and I did have 300 miles or so to go to get home! Besides, the plan was to use as little fuel as possible, not burn gallons of the stuff just to see how far it would go on one.

There was a brief shower of rain on the journey home, so the weather was not all ideal, and I had made sure that the tyres were at the top of the manufacturers recommended range to help reduce rolling resistance. All in all, I don't suppose you are ever going to find the perfect conditions for using minimal fuel, unless you are on a test track, but the 70 or so that the Kitten did to the gallon on that trip must be just about as good as you are ever going to get - mind you - I did not have the ceramic magnet on, must transfer it from the little red car!

My thanks to Tom Wardley for putting me up for the night, and for depressing me the following morning, by talking me into a compression test on what I had thought to be a perfectly good engine, still, for the benefit of all those folk out there who thought that good, and matching compressions was the be all and end all of a healthy engine, bet yours does not do 70 to the gallon!! (Worrying none the less that numbers 1 and 4 were only in the 130 to 140 range, while 2 and 3 were 170!!)

On the heated inlet manifold matter, I was asked on the Sunday why I had mine still connected, many owners seem to have the manifold by-passed completely. Tom had the ideal compromise, his Kitten has a heater control valve in the system, so that he can control from inside the car whether or not any water flows through the inlet water jacket - a clever trick that Tom.

Foxes Den

See, I told you I'd try and get like things together one day! My thanks to our man in Norwich for his correspondence over the years, including this bit -:

Dear Brian, Jan.'97

As always the arrival of the last Mewsletter brought all life to a standstill until it had been read and digested, such is the power of your literary input on the mind of a RELIANT fan! Seriously I don't much mind what it's called as long as it keeps on coming (at the risk of sounding like something from the mouth of an actress - oh dear, do I really mean that too?) To move on....

I think that while the mag is its current size there's no harm in mixing all topics together, as I bet everyone likes to at least skim through all of it. The only thing I've realised is the importance of dating every article or contribution, because different people often contribute information that supersedes another item in the course of the mag's production. Anyway, I have no complaints so far - keep up the good work.

I was interested in Dave Richmond's comments about the Fox; I've also owned mine for almost 13 years, since new, and it's also a bit knackered engine wise, at around 70,000 miles, with traditionally poor oil consumption (300 to 400 miles to the pint, from new). A tendency to lose it from the gearbox, and I have little good to say about the leaky ineffective, pull-to-the-one-side, or-the-other, unbleedable brakes, except that the handbrake is excellent compared to that on the Scimmy. Unlike Dave's the paintwork has suffered from osmosis from day one, and when I dropped in at the factory a year or two back one of the men commented that '83 - '84 was a " bad undercoat" period (?) *Sounds like a bad engine period to me as well, Ed.* On the other hand it's been a remarkably good investment over the years.

When I bought it was, at £3,600, about 30% dearer than the roughly equivalent Mini pick-up would have been, although the latter didn't have a removable rear panel allowing use as an estate or van. I think after 13 years I have had the value of that price difference back more than once. The local Social Services fleet of Metro vans has cost dear in maintenance and repairs, especially needing welding, some since their first M.O.T., but due to the wonders of G.R.P. I still have a totally solid vehicle that will hopefully go on for another 13 years. It has at the moment, a temporary engine fitted, while the original awaits an overhaul / upgrade, (yes John Box, 1997 is going to be the year of the posh cylinder head and camshaft, just as soon as I can find what the moths have left of my chequebook - because, truth to tell, the performance is a bit minimal, and I never get more than about 35 mpg unless I keep the speed well down).

Has anyone discovered an alternative rear axle with a higher ratio, which doesn't require a degree in engineering to fit?

Perhaps up to 60,000 miles, little needed replacing except brake cylinders shoes and 2 clutches. I also replaced the exhaust with a Kitten stainless one. The original hood wore out, and I made a tonneau cover. A necessary mod was the recommended thick spacer to the inlet manifold to reduce (not solve) the fuel vapourisation / hot restart problems. Worth noting is that every two or three years a poor idling / starting problem arises which is due to pin hole perishing of the rubber pipes between the rocker cover and carb, and fuel overflow, and it always takes me a while to recognise (and don't cover the tiny air hole on the inlet tube to the overflow by pushing the new pipe too far on!)

Since 60,000, another new clutch, a starter, a fuel pump, front wheel bearings, a thermostat housing (actually the third, due to not using a new Reliant thick gasket, so the lugs are not supported, and then break away from the cover when tightening. #Front dampers, Monroe from local stockist £ 55. Two door hinges (badly finished, why couldn't they have used re-bushable Minivan ones off the shelf instead of paying someone to carve specials out of a lump of already rusting iron?)? I also found a solid rubber replacement for the rotten metal window slider channel from Woolies. A propshaft UJ and a pinion oil seal needed doing, and the MOT shows a frayed handbrake cable, and the need, as ever, to try and balance the front brakes one way or the other for the day of the test. All the steering and suspension joints are original (but every year the MOT tester forgets the play allowed in the bottom joints and has 'failed' them accordingly - he will win one day I dare say) I always grease them twice, weight on wheels, and wheels off ground.

I look forward to a more frequent (weekly?) mag. if you can do it, so will sign off now and let you get on! Duncan Bradford (No. 6!)

Readers Letters

Just to show you that it is not all good news, and because I know that you are a tough lot, and can take the bad with the good, I decided to include this sad letter in the mag before filing it.

Dear Brian, May '97

It is with much regret that we have to inform you of the sad demise of our Reliant Kitten, reg. No. UMA 919V.

We sold the car last week as we needed something that our 20-year-old son could drive (and still maintain his street cred!). A delighted gentleman bought the car and drove off like a dog with two tails! He telephoned us later that day to say that about an hour after purchasing the car, it went up in a ball of flames. The fire brigade were called, and said it was an electrical fault. The odds against such bad luck

must be millions to one. We were both very upset for the gentleman, and for the car which had given us such good service.

Thank you for such informative and amusing Mewsletters, which were always a delight to read, keep up the good work!

Jean & Brian Kyte - Birmingham

Jean, what can I say - thanks for letting me know, and of course you will continue to get the Mewsletter as you have paid this years subscription, you will just have to suffer 3 more!

Dear Brian, Jan.'97

Happy New Year! Hope this finds you well.

I look forward to receiving more editions of the Mewsletter. It is interesting reading of other people's experiences with their cars!

Dave Richmond's letter complaining of trouble with Fox wheel cylinders interested me I have also had to replace any number of these units. I put it down to the amount of dust that my Fox has to contend with in the summer months on the Forestry tracks at work - but now I wonder - perhaps they are all prone to a short life.

Next job to be done is a complete brake overhaul, as the drums are very worn, and scored and need replacing. Also the edges of the rear back plates are rusting away.

Has anyone done a mod to fit discs on the front of a Kitten or Fox? If so I would be interested in details. Whilst thinking about brakes are the front adjusters replaceable? Or do you have to replace the complete backplate? I have replaces both the rear adjusters, but have one front one that is completely rounded. I think I remember somebody wrote in saying they were drilling and tapping a bolt in to cure the problem - I wonder if this was a success? *Here we go again, the need for an index rears its head - I could delegate here you know, any volunteers? If 16 people did one magazine each with a list of topics and page numbers, (and column and line) it really would not be a huge task, and I could collate the whole thing, and try to remember to update it in future. I think the way to go is in sections like the factory workshop manual, Ed.*

I had Don Pither's book "The Scimitar and its Forbears" for Christmas - very interesting. I hope that Reliant manages to stage something of a comeback in the next few years now that they have a new manager and owners. It would be great if they could complete the small sports car that was being developed.

Anyway Brian, hope you have a good year, and keep up the good work with the Register and magazine - it is appreciated.

John S. Whitfield - Newcastle Emlyn

Thank you John, yes Don Pither's book is very interesting, I've said it before and I'll say it again, if you don't have a copy, either get one, or borrow it from your local library.

On the sports car front, sadly I suspect that they have something bigger in mind, but the man himself did speak of a Fox based 4 wheeler with the current three wheeler hatch back rear end when I pressed him at Shughborough last weekend, so there is hope!

Dear Brian, Early 1997

Many apologies for being late with our renewal, you have been pinned to the notice board in the kitchen in a prominent position for weeks! Ouch! Life has been incredibly hectic for some time. Needless to say the cars have contributed to the general chaos.

The Kitten Saloon has been off the road since last summer - nothing terminal, simply raided for bits for the estate. Leading up to Christmas I finally persuaded Mark to replace the Scimitar engine with the one he had been rebuilding in our lounge for almost a year. Within a week of removing the old engine, the engine bay of the Kitten went up in flames. The result was no transport for 8 weeks and nearly divorce!

Since then the house and garden have taken priority, but we're now working our way round to repairing both the Kittens, and possibly (Geoff Eldridge, just miss out the next three words! Ed.) Selling the Scimitar.

Must go now - all the best Sally.

Thank you Sally, for your renewal, the update, but most of all the interesting view from your kitchen wall!! Good luck with your plans.

Dear Brian, Jan.'97

Please find enclosed my renewal for '97. Personally I like the title "Mewsletter" - the fact that you cater for Foxes Rebels and specials is a bonus.

I still haven't read all the back numbers you sent me as so many other things vie for attention.

Articles that I have read with regard to water loss, leave me with no choice but to fit an overflow bottle. At the moment my hater is rarely hot enough to warm the car. If I blank off the rad too much I risk overheating it. I cannot get the balance right. I need to top the rad up every day, yet I cannot see any visible sign of water loss. I appreciate that I may have a leaky head gasket, but whilst the car is my sole source of transport I am reluctant to change it till the warmer weather arrives. I would appreciate any advice, of course. I shall remove the 4-bladed fan and fit the electrical one, which I have in my garage from a Princess 2200. I've to match them up of course, but when time and circumstances permit I'll get a lot of these jobs done.

Before I do anything to make the car go faster I want to make it stop much quicker! There is a friend who is something of a design engineer for brakes living not too far away. What I need is a complete set of uptight and wishbone assembly to give him for his appraisal. Is there anyone in my area who may be able to help? Now if I can get disc brakes fitted I would be much happier!

George Sampford (and Tiddley) - Dunchurch

Thanks George, both for that letter, which I have taken 6 months to print, and for your work and suggestions regarding a venue for a get-together. On the brake front there are a number of things I would say. Firstly - is all as it should be? I ask this because when Motor road tested the Kitten, one of the things that impressed them most, next to the turning circle and the most fully wiped windscreen of any car they had tested, was the brakes, better than 1g deceleration, and something of a record in its time, and so they should be when you consider that they are Mini based, and a Kitten weighs about half of what a Mini does, so I ought to stop very well indeed.

On the disc situation, yes, by using Mini 12" wheels, and a consider number of other bits and pieces, that can be achieved, but, as you will read elsewhere in this edition, some Fox owners are looking at this too. John Box - are you listening, am I right in thinking that I saw a pair of Disc front brakes in your workshop? and were they for the Fox? Are they available, or was it just a prototype? Would they for the Kitten too? So many questions. Perhaps Jim Spence would like to write the article for us about just how he fitted the discs to the 1600cc Fiat engined beast, that way Jim, you would not have to repeat the story so often, like every time someone asks!!

Thank you. Ed

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Tel: 01786 824740

Cars and things for Sale or Wanted

Reliant Rebel estate, yellow, off the road, garaged, for 4 years, looking for a good home.

Jim Smith needs a dual circuit master cylinder for his Kitten.

1978 S reg Yellow Kitten estate, year's M.O.T., new exhaust, bucket seats fitted, good body.

1977 DL Estate, fair condition. (Too good to scrap) Laid up for 8 months. reasonable offers considered.

Wanted: Kitten metal top drivers door trim. This is the type which has the door pull shut handle attached (no pockets you see, like most of us have) Complete with handle please.

Wanted: Fox rear axle, or complete Fox, contact John Whitfied

Wendy from Wales has a Kitten saloon for sale, complete with radio cassette. M.O.T. till May, £300

Webasto sliding roof, fitted to the roof of a Kitten saloon. Also an aluminium tailgate for a saloon, professionally built. Buyer collects from Harry Darby

Bill Rouiller has a Saloon and an estate car for sale. The Estate is M.O.T.'d till July.

£250 for the pair

2 Kittens: - R reg estate, yellow, 68,000 genuine miles, M.O.T. just expired, taxed till September.

Yellow saloon, major rebuild 4 years ago, garaged every winter, bucket Cobra seats, no back seat, all new carpets, M.O.T., no tax.

The above for £500 each.

Jim no 40, crash bar, olive drab, aluminium truck top, wide wheels, work lights and beacon on roof, M.O.T. and taxed £950.

Loads of spares for all three

Fox Pick up / hardtop 1983 50,000miles from new, fully overhauled doorframes. Factory rear seat conversion. With infill panel. Full brake overhaul. Excellent condition throughout.

Full M.O.T. 2 new spare front seats £875

For Sale Kitten Van with side windows and rear seat, mot till Jan '98 taxed till June '97. New tyres, new brake shoes, and many other new parts. Offers near £ 300

Alan has a saloon rear hatch glass, black plastic headlamp surround, rubber bumpers and a Robin steering box.

Alan also has copies of the book "750 Racer" by Herber & Harvey, The what happens and how to do it book on 750 racing, includes lots of tips on tuning the Reliant engine. £19.00 incl p&p.

Rear end accident damaged Kitten saloon, M.O.T. till August. Running engine, new front shocks and exhaust, serious offers to Derrick Nicholson

1978 S reg Yellow Kitten estate, year's M.O.T., new exhaust, bucket seats fitted, good body.

Dave Smith has for sale the following vehicles: -

P registered Kitten estate in white. M.O.T. till December good condition £375 o.n.o.

V registered Kitten saloon, just repainted in original red. Very clean and tidy, 11 months M.O.T. £575 o.n.o.

Breaking Kitten saloon and estate car for spares. Plus loads of other spares, including a good Rolling chassis, sensible offers for anything.

1977 DL Estate, fair condition. (Too good to scrap) Laid up for 8 months. Reasonable offers considered.

Charlie Cross has a Fox for sale - £800

A set of cords piston rings, believed to be for an early Reliant engine

Wanted: Tow bar for Reliant Kitten, also Jimp handbook, parts list, drivers handbook or any other technical information, also source of spares such as windscreen rubber surrounds and windscreen wiper arms and blades

Wanted Fox or Kitten chassis.

Getting more Technical

Dear Brian, May '97

Many thanks for your continuing good work. Two technical tips if you wish to call them that.

1. Having had to replace my Kitten gearbox I thought I'd put a pre-engaged starter on at the same time, so took the engine and gearbox unit out complete, which I think is quicker and easier than the other way, by the way.

It was no problem to put a new starter gear ring on back to front to allow for the different engagement, it was no problem to source a Mini starter (*What was wrong with a Reliant one Guy, have they not been using pre-engaged starters since about 1991? Ed.*) Or one from a Talbot Sunbeam 930 (*Thought you'd catch me out there by calling it a Sunbeam Talbot Guy, well, I was paying attention, and truth to be told I was furious when they tried to encourage us to 'put a Talbot Sunbeam in our lives' because I just knew it would cause confusion in years, well all right, decades, to come - mind you Triumph did that with the Dolomite I believe, no matter, onward) or a late Fox. The dimensions are the same. Some have ballast resistor connections on the starter motor, some are longer and so on, it was no problem to ease the bell housing to bolt it all up - by easing the bell housing, I assume you mean attack it gently with a file? Ed. -*

But it was dodgy putting the unit back in the car until I had cut the floor out of the Kitten to allow the piggyback solenoid to fit in. This requires forfeiting the footrest to the left of the clutch pedal and putting a piece of alloy sheet or whatever over the hole you will have had to cut to clear the solenoid.

Having done it I naturally tell everyone that it was well worth it, and don't expect my clutch, with modified release bearing (described in previous article) or my starter motor, to wear out for a very long time!

2. When the spouse complains that the heater could be more efficient, one takes time off immediately to address the problem, it seemed to me that everything was getting hot enough, but one required more air. I had already fitted an electric fan to the radiator, which had improved engine

temperature in heavy traffic, where the original mechanical type can be too efficient - Yes, another man fitting an electric fan to get the engine hot! - The heater motor fan is a single speed model with an axial flow fan attached & can be swapped for a Metro 2 speed one with a larger fan body.

However it goes in reverse rotation to the Kitten one, so the snail shaped body has to be reversed with inlet and outlet changed over, and a jubilee clip employed to keep the fan motor in place using the three legs which formerly held the old motor, this means some jiggling to put it lightly, but the volume of air brought into the car is dramatically improved, and I am temporarily a good boy.

Guy Stanley - Gt. Abington

Thank you Guy, and good luck with the bike's M.O.T.

NOTES

Perhaps I should rename this Jensen corner, or something - thank you Bill Dick for the 'phone call, those who are interested in such matters will be pleased to know that Jensen 541R chassis number 10 is alive and well, and, by the time you read this, M.O.T.'d and on the road. It does indeed still live in the same garage as the prototype, though it has a rusty rear chassis cross member, and needs a little work before being ready for use.

Fox owners, and in particular Duncan Bradford, can you give me any more information on the Woolies part number for the rubber channel you used for the door sliding window section please. What I think I want is an appropriate stainless channel, we have a chap in the Shetlands (lots of salt spray from the sea) who services several Foxes, and they all need new door window frames. He can weld stainless and has offered to make some up if I can supply the channel - but the rubber solution (no pun intended) might be better / cheaper / easier - I don't know, talk to me - Brian.

Jim Smith, who was advertising for a Kitten dual circuit master cylinder, was asking me how you remove the second piston from the main casing, and I have no idea, can anyone help? He has a repair kit he would like to use, but can't get the second piston out.

Fox tyre pressures:

Normal load Front & Rear 19 p.s.i.

Heavy load 19 front and 25 p.s.i. rear.

TTP



Thornleigh Stables
Thornleigh Drive
Burton in Kendal
Carnforth
Lancashire LA6 1NQ

Tel: (01524) 781841

We now have a batch of Kitten / Fox handbrake cables in stock at £ 14.00 each including VAT.

24854, Lower Steering Column now in stock, a limited number only at £42.00 -better put one into your own stock now while stocks last - the next batch will be much more expensive.

Two 750cc cylinder heads, one brand new, now available, ring for details. One rebuilt

gearbox available, at £195.00 including VAT.

Save your expensive ball joints with new rubber gaiters available at £3.00 plus VAT a pair complete with spring clips.

Reconditioned Steering racks available at £65.00 exchange ± VAT.

91186 Ignition switch (the one that fits the steering lock) £11.00 including VAT.

NEW :- Brass sump plug with deep head and washer £2.25 including VAT.

Comprehensive price list available on request.