

RELIANT KITTEN REGISTER

NEWSLETTER – SEVENTEEN

JULY / AUGUST 1997



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

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

% 0141 886 6117 Fax 0141 561 5430

Ah, that's better. After getting edition 16 away to the printers on Friday, I managed to go to Sheriffmuir to collect some Jowett stuff for the Javelin's 50th birthday bash at Bradford, and got home in time to make it to the Kelvingrove Museum to listen to Nigel Ogden playing their wonderfully restored organ – what do you mean who is Nigel Ogden, don't you listen to Radio 2? You know, the Organist entertains? Oh alright, I give up! But it was a wonderful hours entertainment.

One of my New Year resolutions was to spend more time doing things I really wanted to do, not things I felt I should be doing, and that is the third time this year that I have managed to hear the Kelvingrove Organ.

Fabulous music played on a beautifully restored instrument by a variety of talented musicians from far and wide, and it's all free!

All this all has nothing to do with Reliants however, so I shall stop digressing and get on with the task on hand.

Mind you I did enjoy hearing the old, again restored, Compton at the Summerlee Industrial Museum the other weekend, whilst attending a Reliant Owner's Club event at Coatbridge.

Let's start at the beginning, the front cover, small world, it seems only the other day that we saw the yellow pick-up on the cover, and I was telling you that it belonged to Norman Wiseman, who does not even subscribe to this organisation – well, I decided to give him a ring, and what do you know, he has sold the car!

However, quite by chance, a week or two later, its new owner, who just happens to be the chap who originally did the conversion, had just had his pride and joy fail its MOT for want of a steering rack, and in spite of two separate companies assuring him they could recondition it no bother at all, they both returned it saying only that it couldn't be done, and so he got in touch. He tells me that the pick-up is none other than "Petunia the plastic puddle jumper" (Well, we should have guessed that shouldn't we?) So now that we have been formally introduced I won't be so shy about keeping you informed in future. The man is Steve Macdonald – and I shall refrain from any witticism that regular watchers of Coronation Street might feel appropriate.

Just which picture will grace the cover of this edition? Well, I thought I was getting better, but I did not introduce you to the Asquith van of Mr. Jacob, which of course adorned the front cover of edition 16. (Well I thought I actually had mentioned it, but a number of you thought differently!) Yes the Asquith Company still exists, but, as I understand it, only to service and repair the vehicles that they built, that on the cover last time being a Fox in disguise – good disguise, eh?

This time we will see one of my Rebels, well Arleen's one to tell the truth, OYS 855F, it is currently undergoing a major rebuild – well I started it three years ago, and ran out of steam two years ago.

I did get involved with the Scimitar people to do a bit of marshalling at Pitlochry last month, and it was particularly good to meet Wieland Fiege, and his wife over from Germany, not in their Kitten, but in a Scimitar Sabre – I must have the only Kitten in the land with a "Reliant Sabre and Scimitar Owners Club Germany" sticker in the window, thank you Wieland.

On another front completely, Janet Manning of London wrote to me in January – yes this year! Thanking me for my letter of July '96. Janet, it will be over a year by the time you read this, I am going to take the great management step and delegate, or at least try to. The thing is that Janet is looking for a hub cap or four, for her Kitten, the ones that used to be found on some Minis, they cover the whole wheel, not just the centre bit. Yes I do realise that even with that description there at least two types, but if you have a full set it won't really matter which style. Spoil her for choice why don't you. Seriously, if you can help, even with one, please give me a ring and I will put you in touch.

My comments about the fitting of disc front brakes to the Kitten being a needless exercise has prompted a couple of very interesting responses. Thank you John Box and Guy Stanley, who both have valuable input, see the technical section on page 7. By the way John, you must tell us more about project Reynard.

One last word, I forgot to congratulate Fred Heath on the excellent job he is doing of looking after his red Rebel saloon – keep up the good work Fred, the car is a credit to you and it was great to see it at the R.O.C. National Rally

Just kidding, did you really think that you were going to get away with just the one page of my rantings? You ought have known better.

Right, to potentially important matters :-

Questions

1. Why, when we now have regular “Rebel Round up” and “Foxes Den” pages, do we not have other sections devoted to the other minority vehicles?
2. What am I to do with all the letters, many perfectly suitable for inclusion in these pages, which seem to get buried deeper in my “for use in the mag” file every month?
3. What are we going to do about the lack of a stand, or other official presence, at any event we might try to attend in future?
4. When am I ever going to get the time to do something about the Alternative Parts list?

Answers

Well, thoughts at least!

1. That’s easy whenever any of the owners of such vehicles send me something – wait for it, I will now get a cheeky note from someone pointing out that there has been such a letter, lying buried deep in my “for use in the mag” file for many months, well, I keep telling you I have a bad memory, remember? So feel free to remind me.
2. Yes, I know, if I said less there would be more room – OK I might try that in the next edition to eat into the backlog a bit – deep down I am probably frightened that you might stop writing, and just like to keep something in reserve!
3. Ah, well, do we finally need a committee, or at least a working party? I honestly am not able to get involved in the construction or moving and assembling or storage of much at all
4. Never, at this rate of progress, there simply isn’t time, I really must do something with some of the vehicles this summer, before the nights get any shorter, perhaps in the winter – I just don’t know!

Moving on as they say, I must tell you that I don’t actually spend much time looking at the Register itself. I seem to spend so much time on the magazine, and writing to folk, that I do not analyse the actual Register. What I did notice when up-dating the file that you sometimes get to see, was that subscriber number 409, and subscriber number 411’s kittens rolled off the line one after the other, well, in reverse order. Makes you think, one a P registered vehicle, the other an R – Oh alright, I’ll dig out the forms and see when they were actually registered – No. 409 was first registered 17.12.75 – chassis no. 5L2/14101475, and No, 411 was registered 01/08.76! chassis No. 5L2/14101474 – so there!

Yes you are quite correct, they were both built in December 1975, and were B... well one is Brown and the other Blue, do either of you guys know if the colour has been changed?

You will all remember that the 5L2 part tells us the build year – the 5 relating to the year i.e. 1975, the L being December – remember A = January, B = February and so on till L = December, then the colour – well OK if neither of these guys will admit to a colour change we might have a situation to resolve here (I gave up having problems when I retired) Or have I just got mixed up!?!)

Yes, I probably should look and see if there are any more like that – one day, but not today. Feel free to look yourself, and let me know. What I think I'll do at some time in the future is publish the Register in its entirety, it is currently 9 pages long, and at the rate it has been growing it will soon be 10. So to include it in an edition of the magazine would not leave a lot of room for anything else! Besides, you've seen most of it already – yes some late subscribers have enabled me to fill up the odd gap from the past, and perhaps I should publish their details for all to see. More work, as I seem to be saying a lot these days – one day – perhaps.

Yes I do have the engine numbers on file too, and yes, most of them still have Kitten engines fitted, though quite how many people copied the engine number from the registration document rather than getting dirty and reading it from the crankcase, I have no way of knowing! Perhaps a further modification to the application form is required! To give credit where it is due I seem to remember cursing Terry Scott, because his Rebel Register application form asked for three engine numbers for each car! That on the registration document, that on the chassis plate, and that on the crankcase, and I had 8 Rebels then!!!

Rebel Round Up

A tale of anything but woe from
John Blagburn & 'GUS'.

On Sunday the 8th of June 1997, GUS and I decided to exhibit ourselves at the first annual show to be staged by the Sunderland and District Classic Vehicle Club.

Car and self left the village at 8:30am, and headed for New York (No Brian, not that New York,) but the district of South Shields where my mate Tony lives, and Sue, his wife, had said that he's allowed out to play, provided he promises not to buy any boats or old motorcycles while we're out!) Tony has never been to an old car bash, and seems nervous, but I tell him that there will be motorbikes at the show, and all of a sudden the idea appeals to him.

We leave New York about 9:45 and arrive at Seadown recreation ground roughly half an hour later having enjoyed hearing GUS' large bore stainless exhaust resounding off the walls of a virtually empty Tyne Tunnel.

The S.& D.C.V.C. brigade are well pleased to see the Rebel, one of their number remembering fondly his Rebel – the one with no gearbox, and yet another victim of the Brian Marshall "Let's have all the remaining Rebels for Scotland" campaign. - *Now just a minute Mr. Blagburn, I'll have you know that I have actually s o l d, yes that's right, parted with for money, two and a half Rebels this year, all of them estate cars, and all of them exported south of the border – So there!* Anyway, the person whose job it is to assign the spaces to the cars had the right idea of putting wee GUS in amongst the R.S.S.O.C. cars, but their chap requests that we leave a gap "for another Scimitar we are expecting". We duly oblige, and before too long the wisdom of this becomes apparent as the paying public are all but ignoring the fine display of SS1 Se5 Se6b Sabre etc., All the visitors wanted is to come and see this odd little red car with the Mickey Mouse wing mirrors. All day long they keep swarming around the Rebel, or rather they do till lunchtime when the space beside GUS is filled – by a 1953 sidevalve engined aluminium bodied convertible Regal! (is the owner of that Scimitar really choking on

his caviar?) This Regal, so the owner tells me, is thought to be one of only 5 roadworthy examples, darned common these Rebels! (*Yes indeed, there are probably almost at least 100 of them on the road today. Ed!*)

The Regal attracts its fair share of attention but still the punters are stopping to view GUS.

So, after a fine day and a fine show, the woman from the S.&D.C.V.C. is going round matching rosettes to entry numbers. She stops and asks if the Rebel is mine; "Guilty as charged Madam" say I. "Oh well then, please accept this nifty rosette" says she. "Rosette? There's surely some mistake" say I, quoting Sean Connery. "No mistake". She says. "This is just to say well done for attracting so many visitors to your car". Well, by this time GUS is so embarrassed that his paintwork has gone from red to maroon! Then, as I start the engine to leave, GUS demonstrates his "cloud of black smoke" trick (Oops, too much choke!) Still, I 'm sure that soot can be washed off that Se4, especially as the paint is so shiny – sorry guys!

GUS and I are going to Rothbury next weekend (15/6/97) to visit the, wait for it – Coquetdale Agricultural Machinery Preservation Society (C.A.M.P.S.) Show, another big one, so who knows? Perhaps the prize for "most uncommon species of insect found in the glove box" or "silliest choke knob", "Reddest paint" "least lawful reversing light"....

Bye for now – John Blagburn

P.S. – Lest the anti-Rebel lobby get the wrong idea, C.A.M.P.S., although mainly into ventilation equipment, (extractor fans!) do have cars and bikes at their show.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Thank you for that thorny tale John, oh sorry, it was a Rosette, not a Rose, perhaps there were no thorns! For the benefit of the rest of us I really must try and include some pictures, the reversing light on John's Rebel is in fact a headlamp set into the back door. The choke knob I have no idea where it came from, it, like the reversing lamp, were fitted when I acquired the car a couple of years ago, but it is more like a bomb release knob than a choke – you wrap your hole hand round it, not just the tips of a couple of fingers! It is however truly rewarding to have sold a vehicle, which had been in my keeping for a couple of years, and to see it back on the road and giving enjoyment and good service – keep up the good work John – I must sell some more of the fleet soon!! See the adverts on page 10.

J.S.B. DISAGREASE WITH BRIAN

Or, a few words from he who knows about such things.

Being even older than the Stanpart patent 3 start threaded swivel, I must tell you that as the filler plug (note : NOT grease nipple) is at the top, if you grease it, you will end up with the lower half lubricated with compressed air! If this is not trouble enough, EP versions of SAE90 gear oil contain additives that do not make good bedfellows with phosphor bronze, which is worth a thought as you top up your gearbox. (*Could this be taken as an advert for synthetic gear oil, to go with the Mobil 1 that I use in my engine? Ed.! Or perhaps we should not do as a number of Reliant dealers do, namely use rear axle oil in the gearbox, which, if memory serves me correctly should use SAE80, the 90 being for the back axle, yes it is a while since I bought such things, and what is currently available may not match the manufacturers specification).*)

The disc brake / wishbone assembly which you mentioned, was designed for the Bean's MKII Fox (project Renard) using Sabre components with Metro 13" wheels giving a track increase of about 2". The matching rear axle never got made, so their use now would mean having two different pairs

of wheels on the car. In general discs are too good for a Kitten, and are likely to cause you to pierce this land's verdant scenery on full lock with non-rotating front wheels.

Guy Stanley has an ingenious conversion to Fiesta discs on his Tempest 95. (*See separate article by Guy later in this edition. Ed.*)

The Fox has smaller front wheel cylinders than the Kitten. I don't know why, but it may be to do with the laden balance between the front and rear. Fitting Kitten brake cylinders makes the Fox brakes feel better, even if they don't actually work any better.

Following this pompous nonsense I will get down from my black chair, and switch on the lights.

This may be taken as proof that your advertiser reads his complimentary Mewsletter, and that your fax works again.

Kind regards - John Box

Thank you John, just a point or two for us humble, less than first class would be engineers. I don't understand, unless it hardens with age, why using grease can cause the airlock problems you suggest – I know we had comment some issues ago from Adrian Hanwell on the marine waterproof grease that he has used for over a decade to great effect. I know that the hole is at the top (of the trunnion at any rate, half way up the vertical link) but it goes straight into a vertical drilling which takes whatever you inject into it straight to the bottom, and then up your 3 start spiral thread groves and out at the rubber dust cover, thus preventing the ingress of water, and in the process lubricating the thing – or so I see it. All you Kitten and Fox folk can ignore this it only applies to Rebels, and Triumphs and Morris' and Austins and Lotuses, or should that be Loutii...

My point is that surely grease is better than nothing, and while I know they should be oiled, why? And while I am on the subject of questions, why can't we organise some kind of chassis lubrication system to look after this for us automatically?

Ed.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

EVENTS !

I know this is not the page for telling you about events, but we don't have an events page, and I have this bit of space.

Selkirk is the place, John Blagburn the man to talk to about it 01665 575334, 21st of September is the date of the event where the Register will be represented by at least a couple of cars. Do give John a ring if you are interested in going along, or want to know more about this event run by the Selkirk Vintage Veteran and Classic Vehicle Society.

Still on the events theme, our man in Totnes, Douglas Smith, is waving the flag at a Reliant day in September, presumably in the Devon / Cornwall area, sorry Douglas, but it is currently 03:15hrs on the 14th of August, so I am sure that you will appreciate me not telephoning you to check about the details of place and date, which I have forgotten! And as it is so late in the month I really have to get this away to the printer first thing today, as we are off to York for a few days tomorrow. I seem to remember that it was an event sponsored by a local Reliant dealer, but I may have got that wrong – Doug is the man to talk to about it.

FOXES DEN

Just a quickie, before I forget. Sometime in June this year Eric Catt, our man in Innsworth, gave me a ring, to be honest, true to form, I have long since forgotten what he rang about, sorry Eric, feel free to remind me. What I did make a note of on the proverbial bit of paper (normally a bad idea in my house, they tend to get lost!) was the fact that, according to Eric, the Fox uses a Hillman Imp windscreen. Now I did not know that, and just thought I'd mention it in here, both to record it, and to invite comment from anyone who has any other ideas or opinions.

Still on the subject of Foxes, oddly enough, Duncan Bradford has been both organised enough to be able to shed some light on the door window channel situation, and good enough to share the following with us :-

Dear Brian,

June '97

First of all to your particular query on the Woollies rubber window channel; it's only a replacement for the "W" – shaped felt-covered strip, not the whole channel. However I've found the old receipt from 1990 (in an anorak pocket) and I ordered 6 of "Double U.C.R. Window channel" Then catalogue number 336. I enclose a bit I kept in another anorak pocket just in case anyone ever stopped me and asked where to find a replacement for ... It should be a simple matter to get replacement metal retaining channel made up, though it's quite likely the sort of thing that Reliant still have in stock. If the guy in Shetland will make some in stainless, I will have a pair. N.B. you'll find that the Woollies "W" channel a slack fit in the original "U" channel – may be room for adjustment.

Duncan Bradford - Norwich

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Thank you Duncan, if only I could be so organised (or is it in fact untidy, to keep things in jacket pockets for years and years?) No matter, it had the desired effect this time.

Thomas Touw, our man in Holland, has just had a pair of stainless window channels made up for his Fox, and can't get the "W" channel, so I have suggested to him that if he likes – strength of the pound being what it is – we could do a deal on some "w" channel in exchange for some stainless frames – watch this space, and also the following topical letter from Guernsey.

Dear Brian,

July '97

I have given up using the Fox since the clutch went, especially as the cause was a loss of torque at low revs, needing a lot of clutch slipping. The Kitten is back on the road and going well.

On the subject of Fox door glass tracks :

16th rubber packing

Woollies part No.

Alloy channel 335

Rubber twin channel 336

2" by 16th rubber 88 (used to take up the slack that Duncan referred to!)

Woollies 'phone number is 01778 347347

Keith Dumont - Guernsey

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Right guys, that about wraps it up for this edition, though I have to say that Thomas has not yet taken me up on the stainless channel suggestion, just the channel would do, our man in the Shetlands will weld it up.

By the way Thomas, did you get the "w" channel from Woollies OK before your trip to Ireland?

No you are not actually restricted to a single page for your Fox tales (or should that be brushes?) and I do know that John Whitfield, from north Wales, is in need of a Fox back axle, and, given the £ 500 that Reliant are asking to recondition his, he might consider a whole Fox, but is more than a little reluctant to break one that is in working order. If you can help, the number to call is 01559 370743.

READERS LETTERS

Dear Brian,

June '97

Many thanks for the large, interesting parcel. It's now over 5 hours since the postman arrived, and I have done nothing but read! *Honestly, it would make you weep, 5 years of my life, and it only takes him 5 hours – tell me you did not read the lot in 1 sitting – please!!*

Yes, I am impressed with the Top Secret document. Initial thoughts were that it might turn out to be the most useful of the three – *This reader had chosen to buy the workshop manual and parts book, as well as the 'Top Secret' information, as advertised in sheet form in an earlier edition. I eventually had them bound for convenience – Ed.* The glass sealing information looks good, don't believe anything you may have heard about Cornish weather. It rains down here, and then it rains some more!

Thanks for the axle / wheel information. I want the 12" wheels with "full sized" tyres, to get improved ground clearance. Your comments about 100mm PCD Mini wheels are interesting as I measured my father's 1990 car, and they are definitely 4", I will investigate further.

To be honest I find the research and so on to be part of the fun, but then again if you are broken down at night in the rain, and the car has to get you home, it all becomes a different story.

Thanks again for your prompt reply.

Best wishes – Peter Faxon – Illogan, Cornwall

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Thanks Peter, this 10mm / 4" thing might be a Metro / Mini thing, I honestly can't remember, and the man I know who had all the problems trying to get his snow tyres fitted to his Metro Turbo (and that is the slowest of his 3 Minis!) does not subscribe to this magazine, though he does run a Jowett Javelin amongst other things, so he can't be all bad! – I must remember to ask Duncan Laing for the facts.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Dear Brian,

July '97

Thought you would like a progress report on the Reliant Rebel Estate after you so kindly delivered the 'new' chassis back in April.

The brake pipes were renewed, new rubbers put in the cylinders, wheels sandblasted and painted, chrome cleaned and polished – came up like new. Two ball joints for the steering, and a new universal joint for the propshaft. The engine went back in as it was, and it would have started first time if Den hadn't slipped up with the wiring. New rubbers were fitted round the doors – one brand new, the other from a scrap yard in Glossop.

Putting the body back on the chassis was a bit hair-raising with just the two of us, but a third pair of masculine hands at the finish was a great help. A minor crack on the rear wheel arches inside, was the only damage, but it took us all one afternoon to steadily lower the body down onto the chassis, checking all the bits and pieces that mustn't get trapped.

It passed the MOT first time, one new tyre was required.

A rough estimate of our expenses is £ 500.

So far it has started first time every time, once or twice a week – better than the Ford Orion, and the steering is much lighter than the power steering of the Orion, in fact It felt quite strange first time out, but it soon felt familiar.

Our photos of your visit turned out very well, thanks for all the encouragement and enthusiasm you gave us – I think of you every time I take the Rebel out – Thank you.

Edna Houchin - Suffolk

By the way Brian, I see from the last Magazine that you were asking about the colour of the centre disc in the Rebel steering wheel, well ours is maroon, it is a 700cc Rebel estate, original chassis number 150368. *Edna, what can I say. I am very impressed, I really thought it would be well into the winter, if not next year before your pride and joy was back on the road again – well done Den. (If you have a spare week or three there is this Rebel saloon....)*

Obviously I know that it can be done, but it is not that common to meet someone who has what it takes to do a body off rebuild, replacing the complete chassis, in 6 months –retired or not! Yes I am just jealous, wish I had half your energy, but there we are, if I did I probably would not have the time to do this, so it's not all bad.

Brian

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Dear Brian,

August 1997

I thought I should write to put you out of your misery – *yes please, Ed!* – as you were somewhat perplexed as to where my application to join the Register had sprung from as you had no record of me on your database, no letter, in fact absolutely nothing! I can happily confirm that you are not suffering from pre-senile dementia. The explanation is simple, my husband Raymond and I have friends in Bristol, we are none other than “the friends with the Kitten in the St.Albans area” mentioned in John Parker's letter which you re-printed in the No. 16 Mewsletter – it's a small world! Knowing that I had a Kitten for a very long time, John thought I would be interested in becoming registered and receiving the Mewsletter *If I ever get my act together you might even get certified as well Tricia! I am aware that everyone was promised a registration certificate, I think that*

*“eventually” was the adjective that I used to describe the timescale involved! I have the paper, indeed have had it for quite a long time now, but I have still the artwork to settle on must get an official logo organised, sorry Tricia, you were saying - I have to say that my own mechanical knowledge could easily be written on the back of a postage stamp, but Raymond takes great care of “Prudence” for me. He is very keen on cars, and we also have, as well as a fairly ancient Volvo, a Marcos Mantila which he built from a factory kit. I’m not sure whether it’s good form to mention other cars, - *I’m not sure either Tricia, but I wouldn’t worry about it, I do it as well, Ed. –but the Marcos is at least fibreglass bodied!* By the way, the Kitten is used every day to take me to work. however don’t do a great mileage as my office is only approximately 3 miles from home.*

The livery on Raymond's Marcos is, in our opinion anyway, rather smart, being dark red (a sort of plum colour) with a Kashmir (gold) band running from the bonnet over the roof of the car. The plan is (just for a bit of fun, and when we get the time) to paint the Kitten in similar colours. Such niceties won't happen for some time yet as I have his services engaged otherwise on redecorating. **-!!+~`<>'”! Get off me woman! Sorry about that, Moira, my beloved, was just trying to prevent me from making some suitably critical comment about priorities – I suspect that our partially completed bathroom may be at the back of her mind, but the Kitten had a mis-fire, and a broken back spring, and.... – Ed.*

I think the Mewsletter is brilliant and even though my mechanical knowledge is slim, found them interesting. My better half will find membership useful, especially when he is wanting to repair or replace bits on Prudence.

I look forward to receiving the next Mewsletter.

Kind regards - Tricia Nash – St.Albans

Tricia, what can I say, I’ll need to widen the office door if my head is to get through! As you will read on the notes page towards the end of this edition, I do get side-tracked onto other cars sometimes. Indeed only today my Jowetteer (the monthly magazine of the Jowett Car Club) arrived in the same post as my copy of the Javelin’s 50th birthday video, and not only do I appear on the video on 4 separate occasions, but that is me peering out of the window of the Javelin spread over the back cover! – All dash round to your nearest Jowett car club member for a look, then again, don’t bother, it’s a good picture of the car, but not of me! – (so that’s one of the reasons that this edition is a week or two later than I had intended – too many other interests!)

Oh, by the way, this should be on the notes page, but I have no space left there, Phil’s 1934 Riley 9 Monaco, is registration number AV 7144, if that helps identify its past owners at all, Mike Varley, are you listening? Talk to me!

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

I seem to have more odd corners than usual this time! I will include the latest page of the Register in the next edition, just to prove that it is still growing, and yes, Simon Chisholm, I will include your Rebel and Fox, as well as your Kitten in future – Registrar gets (w)rists slapped again!

I had an unexpected visit from our man in Holland the other day, well, one of them at any rate, on Wednesday evening Thomas Touw and the lovely Linda arrived on their way to Ireland – I suspect they must have got lost somewhere along the way! Thomas had managed to sort out the door window situation on his Fox rather neatly using the Woollies “W” channel recommended elsewhere in this edition. Sadly his man is not keen on producing more stainless section frames for us at the moment. What he would like for his Fox, is one of the removable canvas tops, to replace, or at least have as an alternative to the hard top which it enjoys at the moment. If you can help, please give me a ring, Brian 0141 8866117

Getting more Technical

Dear Brian,

June '97

In response to one or two remarks about disc brakes on Kittens, I will tell you that I fitted discs on my Tempest – *For the benefit of those readers who are not familiar with the Tempest, it is a hillclimb special, built by Thoroughbred Projects on the Fox chassis, it looks like a pre-war open two seater with running boards, a bit like a Morgan to look at, aluminium bodied with either a Reliant 850cc engine, or the 950cc Talbot Sunbeam one, ex Coventry Climax (Hillman Imp), now that Alan has a decent scanner I might even try and include a picture or two! Then again the front cover of edition 12 did show Guy's Tempest and Kitten.*

The disc set up you saw with John Box, is, from memory a Scimitar set up which was being evaluated to fit on a Kitten / Fox, John will tell you more (*Indeed, he has done so, thanks – see earlier article in this edition*).

When I built my Tempest, I intended to trial it, and determined to put discs on the front. I originally had 12" wheels from an Imp on the car, and therefore looked around for 12" wheeled vehicles in scrap yards with discs. 2 problems arise, firstly the disc offset on the wheel of a modern car is much greater, to allow clearance for the caliper. A double piston caliper is out of the question, not nearly enough room, and the only single caliper I found to fit was a MK I Fiesta. This is a single piston sliding caliper with the mounting holes on the caliper threaded, rather than the strut, so you only require to weld a suitable piece of metal to the bare strut to locate the caliper. Originally I used Kitten hubs, which had to be modified, but subsequently found some hubs from a trailer manufacturer which were readily available, and much stronger.

So far so good, I won't bore you (*Bet we get asked, Ed.*) with the where and how, welding / mounting / plumbing was done, but move on to say that the caliper piston area is such that you need a servo, or go down to a ½" master cylinder, which I sourced as a Morris Ital clutch master cylinder, before you can exert enough pressure to make them work.

Now you have brakes that work, but you are still not home and dry because all that happens is that in an emergency the front locks up too readily, so you need to up-rate the back brakes, or put a pressure balancer in to reduce the front brakes to the efficiency of the original drum set up.

By this time I had trialled the car, and needed lower gearing and more ground clearance, so I fitted a Morris 1000 rear axle, with 4.5 to 1 ratio, and 14" wheels., this may sound high geared, but my Tempest is one of two fitted with the Talbot Sunbeam nee Imp engine installed, to which I have fitted a sports head and so am producing around 50 BHP with lots of torque, and the gearbox has a low first gear. Like Brian I have digressed, but the point is that I was then able to fit Morris Ital 8" rear drums and shoes with minor modifications to the Morris 1000 axle, which at last gave me increased braking efficiency at the rear, and reasonably balanced fore and aft.

Was it worth it? In as much that I prefer motorcycle competition, I probably needn't have bothered, but the Tempest is a lovely car with a good engine and good brakes, it does about 7,000 miles a year, equalling the Kitten's mileage, and we shall never part with it. I advise you all to keep your Kittens and Foxes and make Tempests out of them, having spoken nicely to John Box.

On my Kitten I have looked carefully at the brakes, especially the rear when the MOT is due, and no amount of adjusting or fiddling can do much about it, however I collected up all the drums I had and fitted the best pair which improved matters dramatically. So I suspect that bearing in mind the age and mileage of the average Kitten these days, the drums are probably worn well past tolerance, and new drums would be the best solution fore and aft.

Bets wishes – Guy Stanley

Many thanks Guy, I know that everyone will realise what a tolerant chap I am, when I didn't even edit out the sacrilegious suggestion about making Tempests out of all our Kittens and Foxes!! As seemingly modest claims of 50 BHP, or did I mis-read your writing, was it 80? I only ask because I know of several Reliant powered Kittens which produce better than 50 BHP, indeed the yellow peril had 54 at the back wheels. Then again you did mention lots of torque, and perhaps for your purposes torque is more important than BHP. Ed.

NOTES

Bill Dick, again! I took a picture of a Maserati at the RSSOC do at Pitlochry 29/06/97, Never did ask the Scimitar guys whose it was, but I think it was the same model that you have in the garage in Dunblane, this one was red, registration number 139 BAM – got the Jensen on the road yet Bill?

Oh, by the way, while on the subject of Jensens, another Rebel owner has come out, and confessed all – our man in Bristol, whose articles on converting a Rebel to Ford power, complete with automatic gearbox, tells me that his next project is his Jensen 541R!

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Still on other unusual cars owned by us Rebel, or in this case Kitten folk. Tom Wardley, you remember Tom, he was the guy who convinced me to do a compression test on Susie, Moira's white Kitten saloon - well, he has, lurking in a barn, a Peerless, and what do I discover when having breakfast in Banavie (sounds like a good title for a book that does!) the other day – yes you are not safe just because you get to bed without me arriving on your doorstep, I rang Peter and Jennifer Linfield at 7:40am the other morning from Fort William, just to see if they were at home, before inviting myself to have breakfast with them! And what came up in our conversation, but that they have a Peerless lying in a shed – so, come on all you Peerless people – confess – tell all to uncle Brian, your secret is safe with us!

Just so as to keep like things together, and because of my ignorance and general lack of education as regards such matters. Andrew Norman has a unique EB lying in his garden, now to my, as I said uneducated eye, it looked very much like a Peerless, and then again there was the Tornado Talisman I think it was, that Bill Dick was good enough to make me aware of from the 60's, anyone got either of them lying about?

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

I must apologise to Thomas Touw for failing to reply in time to his request for information. It was the 22nd of February that Thomas faxed me details of his under 1 litre 4 wheeled Reliants, including the two Ciphers.

Thomas had plans to write a book about Reliant, with the emphasis on the small cars, and did ask me for some names and addresses of owners of Jimps, the Bobcat, the car on the front cover of the Summer 1996 edition (and I too will have to look and see what it was!) Tempests etc. He is looking for photographs and information. Thomas, if I have not written to you by the time you read his, do remind me please.

As to the format of the scanned pictures Thomas, the GIF and TIFF types mean nothing to me – Brian prepare to be inundated with calls from experts who feel that I should know all about such things! The computer that I use is an IBM compatible 386 with a 1.2 gigabyte hard drive, and just the 4 meg. of RAM. It is somewhat unique as I built it for Arleen's 8th birthday 4 years ago – the hard drive was then just 120 meg, . but we ran out of space, so I fitted a bigger one last year.

Just one other thing. John Stork, our man in Glenelg, was asking me if I could find him a copy of a Kitten owner's handbook, indeed Joe Howells was asking the same thing – and do you know, I couldn't even tell them if such a thing existed or not! Can you help please?

Rebel colours, John Parker was asking what they were – I know we did some work on this for Martin Blunn, but can't remember what we said – must read through the back numbers, but meantime HELP!

One Scottish Rebel owner, arguably the most Scottish Rebel owner – having the Registration number S191 on his white Rebel estate, was telling me the other day that the Rebel back brake dust covers for the handbrake lever, and the brake cylinder retaining clips are available as a Rover part,. The dust cover for the handbrake levers being part number 24H8047, and the retaining clips being 37H6132 and 12038 respectively. Any Rover dealer should be able to help you out, but his local garage in Prestwick – that's right, where the airport is – certainly can, their number is 01292 477415.

While on the subject of Rebel brakes, John Blagburn tells me that the master cylinder is the same as that used on early Marinas, the ones with drum brakes all round, and Marina vans too. Apparently there is still the odd batch produced, though they come in at a shade over £ 60 including the dreaded vat., but are available. The big difference between them and the series III Landrover clutch one, apart from it being half the price, is /16th of an inch in bore diameter, which makes the pedal feel a bit dead if you use the Landrover one.

Wait a minute, John has found a cheaper source, they can be had from :-

Speedy Spares Services Ltd.,
13 – 25 Old Shoreham Road
Porlade by Sea
East Sussex BN41 1SP
Tel 01273 417889

The part number for the master cylinder is 6406-8994, for £ 28.50 plus £ 3.50 p&p and the vat on that lot is £ 5.60, total £ 37.60, and they do repair kits, part no. SP2411. We can't quote a price on that because John got his free, the master cylinder being faulty!

On a completely different subject, and actually involving Kittens – remember them? – well, actually just the lower ball joints, it turns out that the Kitten and the Fox are not the only vehicle to use these lower ball joints! Don't get too excited now, I have had correspondence from one John Osborne of Winchester, and he and his associates are desperately looking for supplies of Kitten lower ball joints to replace the worn ones on their Trikings!

Back to the subject of life's little co-incidences – Phil Hallam, you remember Phil, he is the guy who did the body off rebuild on a Kitten saloon a couple of years ago, and spent much time and effort making sure that it did not look like a Kitten at the end of the day. Well last year I collected a Rebel saloon from Englandshire, somewhere near Leeds as I recall. The car had been off the road for a number of years, and Phil had it back on the road in a few months, just a lot of cleaning, and new brake cylinders and tyres really as I recall – well perhaps a new generator and a starter motor as well, but nothing too major, yes alright a stainless exhaust too, but nothing really major – anyway, to the tale. I received a 'phone call the other day from Mike Varley from Leeds, who was the original owner of the Rebel. He had ordered it at the 1967 Motor Show, and had to wait three months for delivery – some things never change! Well, his friend, from whom I had collected the car, thought that I had bought it, well, he probably knew that was not the case, but had my number. And so we had a chat, and wait for it, you may remember that Phil has a 1934 Riley 9 Monaco, well, so did Mike Varley, so the Rebel must be feeling really at home, once again sharing a garage with a Riley 9! Yes, I know, wouldn't it be the icing on the cake if it were the same Riley 9., well, Phil's one did live in the Bradford area, before going to

Thurso in the 50's, we will investigate further, but not to the exclusion of mentioning the odd Kitten in here in future!!!

Simon Chisholm was good enough to send me an article on his Rebel experiences, which, had I not said so much myself in this edition, you would at least have seen part of, thank you Simon, next time, honest. Also the disc details which were kindly sent by Alan Osborn.

It is now the 8th of August, the front covers have just arrived, and I have not finished yet – must ring round the advertisers and make sure that they are still relevant – Oh, by the way :-

SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENT

Just to show that I don't entirely live in the past, those who are into such things might like to take a look at :-

<http://www.uk-classic-cars.com.kitten.htm>

If you do, please let me know what you think, not actually being on the net myself, I have never seen it, and don't know if they only used the text I gave them, or if they included the pictures as well. If you think that any of what is there wants changing or, heaven forbid, correcting, please let me know.

That's about it for this edition, - sigh of relief can no doubt be heard throughout the land – nay all over Europe! Talk to you again in the autumn, I really must get some work done on the car this year!

Brian