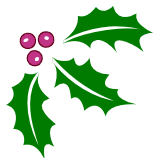


Reliant Kitten Register



NEWSLETTER – NINETEEN

November/December 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.....

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Readers should note that any ideas, innovations or technical suggestions or recommendations found within these pages are as supplied by subscribers, and do not necessarily reflect the views of, or carry the approval of the Reliant Kitten Register.

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This edition's front cover is graced by Vantique No. 2, one of 10 such vehicles built by John Box between 1989 & 1992. Though he still has the last one under construction. The cover car was originally purchased by Image Publicity Ltd. of Blackpool. It has I understand, recently come on the market in the south of England having covered 60,000 hard miles. It was first registered in 1990

Welcome once again, what am I to do? It is now the 9th of September, edition 18 was all but complete last month, though it won't be going to the printer for a few weeks yet, and I have a host of things to say and point to make, and you won't read this till about Christmas!

Right, on with my list of my "thinking out loud" / Questions from owners, etc.

- 1) Kitten brake master cylinders – can we get them still, where and how much? Where can we get overhaul kits for them? Well, I can tell you that they are still listed in Reliant's current price list. Part No. 24924, for £ 69 plus v.a.t. and carriage. That was correct at 9/9/97. As far as I am aware Reliant have never listed a repair kit for them, but various motor factors have done them in the past. Brown Brothers for example, can, they tell me, do a repair kit for the early single circuit system for £7.77, part No. SSB959, and the late, dual circuit master cylinder repair kit is available for £14.89, part No. SSB1210. In both cases I am told that the cylinders themselves are discontinued. So, does anyone know where they can be had, or is there a suitable alternative?
- 2) The picture on the front cover, I am frequently criticised for failing to make appropriate reference on the mag. as to the relevance/ nature of the cover picture. Tell you what, I'll do an index of them in this edition on another page, and try to be better organised from now on. In fact the new format will take care of it for us, in future it will say inside the cover, what the picture is.
- 3) John Pearce's Kitten, as featured on the front cover last time, while it's V5 tells the world, was first registered in 1979, was of course built in November 1976, as we can see from it's chassis number 6L8/14701484. Could be useful that when applying for a change to its taxation class to 25 year exempt in a few years time!
- 4) As I often keep having to remind myself, there is a wealth of information out there, indeed even within a few feet of this keyboard, and I don't like to assume either that you know all that there is to know, nor indeed that you know nothing at all about such things! Let me clear this up, when talking about "the Others" in the last edition, I failed to include some perhaps interesting information as follows :-
- 5) Asquith had approximately 40 Fox chassis, and quite a number were supplied to private buyers. Kitten chassis were supplied in quite large numbers for the assembly of the Jimp (and I thought they used the Fox chassis – wrong again Marshall! – but were they galvanized by then anyway?) at Sandbach. As I said they went into receivership, and the stock was last known of in a Manchester warehouse in about 1989.

Another useless piece of information which might help you to sleep better tonight, is that one of the Vantiques was built on what was believed to be the last Fox chassis – 170199LA000616 . If you look now at the page near the end of this edition, which at this time I expect to have all the Rebels and Foxes listed in chassis number order – whose getting his act together now!?, you will be able to judge for yourself if that is borne out by our findings!

Thanks to John Box, I do have a list of all the Vantique and Tempest chassis numbers, for the ones which were sold as complete cars, obviously he does not know the chassis numbers of those which were sold as kits, to be built by the owners on a Kitten or Fox chassis of their own.

On a personal note, the guys locally are trying to convince me that I neither need, want, nor can afford to keep 5 Reliants, and the truth is that they are right. Phil, as you probably know, is looking for some Rebels (5 now I think!) so I guess one of mine at least will be going to Ayrshire. I really did not intend to sell that saloon, little OYS 855F, featured on the cover of edition 17.

Depending to whom you listen, I am to be allowed one or two, probably a Kitten saloon, and a Rebel estate, so I really will have to sell one of the pair of rebuilt Kitten saloons that we have at present – so I guess the little Red car is looking for a new home right enough. To be honest, it has a better paint job, but has less new parts than Susie. Then I suspect that we will break the Rebel saloon with the galvanised chassis for spares – anyone want a Rebel saloon body with no trim or glass?

Rebel Round Up

Phil Hallam seems to have been successful where I failed ten years ago, in that he has a queue of customers, well, that's not true, he has a queue of people wanting to buy Rebels.

Ever since he put his saloon on the road at the end of last year, it has been attracting attention, and the cheap insurance, and running costs generally, have caused a number of folk to sit up and take interest locally.

He first rang me up in July to say he had a friend who wanted one, and would I sell another of mine (remember I exported two estate cars this year – well sold them to English subscribers to this organisation at any rate), and while I do still have the one estate car, and two saloons left (well, the blue one that you saw on the cover of edition 17 actually belongs to my daughter Arleen). But, though I should sell them, well some of them, well one of them, I really could not bring myself to, well not at the price – given that the one I would sell has a brand new galvanised chassis – I suspect that it will end up being broken for spares as it has a good engine, and a gearbox which may be about to wend its way to South Africa! I digress.

I was able to put Phil in touch with the current family who owned the white saloon that Michael Bentley put me on to a few years ago, and Arleen and I had collected from England. In my desperation to own less vehicles a year or so ago, I parted with it for £50 to what turned out to be the wrong type of individual – must remember never to sell them so cheaply again! However it was tracked down, and now runs again in Ayrshire – which reminds me, the new owner, though he was in this very room in September, has yet to sign up – must chase him!

Phil had by the following week tracked down the Devils car, as Derek Sloan nicknamed the green estate car, little OAG, as I used to call him, when I owned him about 10 years ago. This is one of the few Rebels which uses a Kitten/Robin gearbox, but has yet to graduate to the neat short gearlever!

So, when he rang me last week, I thought he was going to say “Its alright Brian, I have the two Rebels I wanted, no need to keep looking”, but no, the conversation went something like “Brian, you remember I was looking for two Rebels, and found two? Well I need three more now! Can you help?” Well, we tried to talk Alistair Fiddes into parting with his one – which would have suited me really well as I have been storing it for him for 5 years now, and really don't have the room, sell it, so the search continues. Unlike me a decade ago, Phil is not keen on importing them, saying that I had brought enough North in the eighties to keep him going, if he can find folk willing to sell them!

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To other Rebel matters, someone was asking about original colours, and I mentioned this to Bob Neal, who very kindly sent me a set of colour cards marked “REGAL SUPERVAN REBEL”. This consists of 10 colour cards with a cover, they are small plastic strips measuring an inch and a half by three and a half inches, held together by a plastic rivet which acts as a hinge, and the ten of them are different colours on front, and white behind, with the following legend :-

Havana Brown
Sahara Red
Turquoise
Arctic White
Citrus Green
Pacific Blue
April Yellow
Mediterranean green
Wessex Green
Highland Purple
Capricorn Blue

The Highland Purple looks black to me, and my Rebel Estate car is obviously Citrus Green, mind you the chances are it will be a Volvo metallic dark green when the rebuild gets completed, as Phil has sold the Volvo now, and has a few litres of paint left, please can we paint the trailer to match Phil? (my small trailer is the back half of a Rebel estate, cut down to the bottom of the side windows). Thank you Bob for letting me have a set.

On the Brian Rebel front, Arleen's saloon OYS 855F has now been sold to one of Phil's friends, and the estate car chassis, thanks again Adrian Hanwell, has now had the three outriggers that were rusty, replaced, and has been blasted and painted, so there is movement, I hesitate to use the word progress, but it may be just that !

FOXES DEN

Our man in London, well one of them, has been but he good enough to send in the following comment, and while I do not necessarily agree entirely with everything he says – well, never let it be said that I totally censor everything you send to me!

Dear Brian,

Oct. '97

It's great to see what retirement can achieve. The Mewsletter looks better all the time. The sections, Rebel / Fox look O.K. I was interesting to read Reg. No. 6 Duncan Bradford's experiences. Like him, I have owned my Fox from new in Nov. '85, cost £4,200. My oil consumption was as his at 400 miles per half litre since new. Recently, at 50,000 miles, and broken rings all replaced, I now get 1200 miles. With petrol he should get 11 mpl instead of 7.7 this gallon thing makes me sick, you can't buy a gallon, so why bother to convert mpl into mpg when it is not necessary (*Editor duly has knuckles rapped*)

To date my only clutch replacement was at 37 k, I'm on my third set of rear dampers. The first went soft, then Mini Monroes were fitted and replaced because they were too short. The theory being that they could have pulled the welding off the chassis. Now there are strong German spccs fitted. It was interesting to see that Duncan has front Monroes. I would go for gas adjustables if I had to change my fronts. All Reliants get that front end dip in time because the quality of springs is not good enough. *See Notes Page, Ed.*

If Duncan wants a higher axle ratio, say for higher cruising, then why not 13" wheels? 10" are out, replaced by 12". I'm sure the Kitten 10" were only put on for cheapness. 12" would look better.

My stainless exhaust system has saved me 3 new systems probably so far. The best Fox buy is Mongoose high backed bucket seat with a recliner passenger.

Duncan's osmosis, moisture within the GRP, was caused at the time the bodies were being numbered, and for some reason, like mine they spent a few years standing in the open before the factory decided to bring it in and fit an engine. This can be proved by the very good explanation of Mr. Cruickshank in an early Mewsletter, which one can compare with others on the Register. For instance, my Fox has an '85 engine, its body however was made in 1983!

The now famous BBC Reliant piece – *Now Bob, there have been a number of them, I take it you are referring to "Trouble at the Top" Ed.* – does not want to mentioned recon engines, was this how the 10.1 comp engines came about?

Comments about disc brakes on a Reliant should be balanced by the very lightweight of the vehicle, and its normal speeds. Lots of rubber left on the road is not an efficient way to lose speed. An F1 car is said to equal the weight of a three wheeler – 500 kg. – *Wait a second here Bob, you were just trying to argue against discs, F1 cars use nothing else, well, O.K., perhaps they do go slightly faster! Ed.*

The idea, Brian, that Rebels, and Kittens when they become road tax exempt, should not be sold for less than £500 is very good. Reliant owners have a car that knocks spots off a 3 litre Bentley, better acceleration, better brakes, better fuel consumption – we should not be snobbish about our Reliants, but I do wish that owners would show them off more, by getting them on the roads so that people could see them.

Fox rear lights are common in caravan shops, get your spares now before they disappear – *yes, good point, that used to be true of Kitten / Robin ones, but they are not common now* – Front door hinges are early Mini, new hinge pins are £1.00 each, punch out from the bottom and replace. It's the bottom ones that wear first. No need to take the door off, just lift the tension up.

Fox door window felt sliders are Mini. Sold in 8' lengths. Fox windscreens, I was told, were Fiat 127, the probability that they are Imp sounds more reasonable. Fox 12" wheels appear to be too large for the front-end design. They can rub at certain steering angles. Answer... scribe out half an inch all round the mudguard edge, cut carefully with a coping saw, and sand the edge off to a neat finish. The underlip at the bottom of the body collects too much muck. Consider 2" off, this will enable you to see the bottom roll bar condition, almost the only point to see any corrosion.

The Fox cannot be towed without damaging the whole front of the body, it is possible with 2" cut away to expose the front of the chassis – *Just like the Kitten! Ed.*

Bob Hunt, Register No 041 – London

READERS LETTERS

Dear Brian,

7th November '97

Thank you for the return of the photos and the loan of yours. We have made a start to the 'Phoenix', most of the chassis has been cleaned back and painted black. A complete set of wheel cylinders and a master cylinder are to hand, and I am well under way making up the copper brake pipes and fitting them.

A thought about the Register. I have made the same suggestion in the past to the R.O.C., how about, with the members consent of course, the Register showing not only the car and owner, but address or telephone number as well. We can then contact each other without the problem of having to contact you to see if member X would mind if you passed on his 'phone number and address.

Problem! What problem? I am almost always at the end of the 'phone, and there is always the machine to talk to if I am out, but yes I do understand the situation, which is why we did put out the postcoded version of the Register some while back, and there was not one single request for further details, so I guess it is not a great problem. We do have the Data Protection Act to contend with, and several subscribers have specifically asked me not to publish their details, so I am afraid that what you have now is likely to be about as good as it gets, pending any further developments. Having said that, if you would like a list of Rebel owners with phone numbers or addresses, I will see what we can do.

With Reliant dealers being so far apart, and some of our older cars spares being hard to come across, some kind of self help service between interested members could be a very practical support to any unfortunate member passing through their area in the event of a breakdown, if a list of 'phone numbers were readily available. A hose, set of points or similar would often solve someone's problem, and lets face it, we all need help at some time or other. Thank you once again for your help, at this end we will keep on with the Rebel till winter puts a stop to our efforts.

A very happy Christmas to you and yours,

Reg Johnson – Northampton

O.K. Reg, the breakdown scheme is a good idea, but it will mean changes to the form and I will need to move fast if it is to be incorporated in the renewals, due in January, and with Phil Hallam's mutual aid spares scheme coming on line at the moment, I might not make it in with this edition, if not I'll try for next one.

Brian.

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Ken and Val, No. 262, agree with Moira's comment about my getting too serious, and recommend a "happy page", not only that, but were good enough to enclose some material for it. I mention this here because this old stick-in-the mud that you are stuck with, has not the time or space to do anything about it at the moment, but does appreciate the effort, and wanted to thank them officially – who knows, I might have a space sometime, thanks for the thought Ken and Val.

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The following extract comes from a recent epistle from Dick Goodall, who has been good enough to keep writing to me even though I have failed to use his original story, yet – thanks Dick, some of what is contained in his recent letter will go out of date, excuse the heavy hand of the Editorial pen Dick, and thanks for your continued support.

Dear Brian,

Nov. '97

First, thanks for issue 18 of the Mewsletter. A great deal of good stuff in it to make a good read, as usual, and interesting letters from members, who could ask for anything more – *South Pacific 1950 something ? Ed. ?? – Oh dear, there he goes again with his musical streak, it's okay really, I've had the flu recently, seems to have affected the brain as well, sorry.....*

For what its worth, here are a few comments on some of the points raised.

The book, "Cars that Time Forgot" by Giles Chapman ISBN 0-75252-083-0 has a page on the Rebel (also one on the Anadol). Both are of particular interest because, firstly the Rebel is shown in two good sized pictures, one Estate, one Saloon, but the saloon must surely be unique, or perhaps one of two or three, it has a 4 slated grill, now the prototype had a 6, or was it 7 slated grill, and all the 700 and 750's had 3 slats, and, as far as I know, did most of the 600's. As to the page on the Anadol (it was really one of life's little coincidences), Dick wrote to me about this book early in November, and Douglas Philip kindly gave me a copy all of my own on the 30th of November! But the page on the Anadol su of them were built, now I always thought it was over 100,000, Bob Neal, or anyone else who has the facts, can you help me here please?

On the subject of correcting errors, my daughter came home from the library the other week with some A4 pages of text all about motor cars and their development and how they work, this from Encarta – and it's wrong – rubbish, and yet it's out there for all to see in this supposedly well researched electronic encyclopaedia which millions of our children will no doubt be using to learn. Now don't get me wrong, I make mistakes too, and the man who never made a mistake never made anything, and all that, but really, did you know that the water pump on your car's engine is driven by a geared shaft from the crankshaft (or perhaps it said camshaft) but really, even some of my older and wiser friends with extensive knowledge of pre-war cars were hard pressed to think of one that did it that way. Now I know that stockings are perhaps not as common as they once were, but in the absence of them, most of us do it with a belt, a fan belt even, yes daft I know, since few modern vehicles have a belt driven fan, but they do have a belt driven water pump, doesn't have the same ring to it, does it – a water pump belt – no, I guess we will continue to drive our water pumps with fan belts for a long time to come, and, as in the case of the book, how do we get it corrected? Thank goodness that it is only a few hundred wonderful devoted and faithful individuals who are ever going to be misled by anything that I put in print that is wrong, but for a CD in modern computers to have such a fundamental mistake, it makes me think that I should read the whole thing, and then write to the manufacturers, but I don't have the time! Besides, I don't know everything anyway! Perhaps I should offer them Reliant as an example of a currently produced vehicle which actually uses a fan belt to drive a fan – do you know that I discovered (well, truth to tell, I think that I knew before, but forgot) that Moira's white Kitten, little Susie, actually has a fan – must get that off right away! Still the Wee Red car passed its M.O.T. the other day, and may be back in service by the time you read this, and its fan was removed a long time ago – and not a gear off the crankshaft did I remove to do it!

Right, that's more than enough of this distraction from Dick's letters.

Dick was good enough to have me sent a copy of Vehicle Wiring Products mail order catalogue, they sell a good range of electrical goodies, but they are not cheap. They are at 9 Buxton Court, Manners Ind. Est., Ilkeston, Derbys. DE7 8EF, and ggests that 10,000 can be telephoned on 0115 9305454, so if you are having difficulty finding that cable tie, or solenoid, or even just a bit of wire, feel free to try them, and yes they do accept plastic.

Dick also gave me a note of Woolies address, and I may well have published it before, here it is again anyway for that elusive bit of rubber sealing strip or whatever:-

Woolies (I & C Woolstenholmes Ltd.)
Off Blenheim Way,
Northfields Ind. Est.,
Market Deeping,
Peterborough,
PE6 8LD

Tel:- 01778 347347

Fax:- 01778 341847

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Once again I've allowed myself to get sidetracked, and failed to include as many of your letters as I ought. In particular, I had a note to check for Hugh Reddington's articles, and that was dated 22/09/97! Sorry Hugh, I'll leave the note on file for next time.

Another correspondent, and the first new subscriber to the Register this month (December '97), is Darrow Towle of Scunthorpe. Darrow is about to commence a rolling restoration on his recent acquisition 'Kitty', which he tells me was first sold by McIntyre's garage in Bolton for the sum of £3,268 including V.A.T. on the 9th of August 1980. Darrow bought the Kitten recently for about £3,000 less than its original sale price, so I guess it won't lose as much in depreciation in the next 17 years as it has in the last! Mind you, is £177 a year really a lot to lose in depreciation on a car? Statistics are wonderful, aren't they?

THE FRONT COVER STORY

In the beginning, there were Editions 1, 2 & 3. The Register was still in its infancy, and I did not let the lack of a cover picture prevent me from getting going, as a result, there were no pictures at all on any of the first three editions, sad but true.

Edition 4 – That was then Alan Marshall's Kitten estate "The Yellow Peril". Now owned by Mike Cowie of Killlearn. For ten years previously the property of Dick Watson of Forres, who used to race it at Silverstone.

Edition 5 – 6 Kittens and a Rebel at Doune in 1992 or 3 !

Edition 6 – "Little TOE" was Moira's (the Registrar's wife) daily transport from 1993 till 1995.

Edition 7 – A Jimp. This one once belonged to Barbra Neal from Essex, but has since moved on.

Edition 8 – The rare Cipher. One of 4 built by Tony Steven, another two were built in the Reliant factory, and 1, possibly two others assembled from parts. This one, along with one of the Reliant built ones, lives in Holland now, property of Thomas Touw.

Edition 9 – One of a number of home done Kitten conversions.

Edition 10 – An example of the Tandy Fox caravanette, this one belongs to John Whitter on the Isle of Wight.

Edition 11 – This Kitten based special was designed by Peter Townsend, and had only 4 miles on the clock in 1995! This car was for sale earlier this year I believe.

Edition 12 – Part of Guy Stanley's fleet, this Tempest is in fact just about unique, being one of only two built with the Coventry Climax, nee Imp engine, all the others being powered by Reliant's 848cc unit. There were just the ten Tempests built by John Box and Ian Foster between 1988 and 1990 with another 9 conversion kits sold. This one, Guy Stanley's is in fact one of the conversion kits.

Edition 13 – NHP was briefly mine in 1996, you see it here on its way to Scotland from Coventry. It now lives in Glenelg, opposite the Isle of Skye. Property of John Stork, sadly it had an argument with a deer, and has been off the road for some months.

Edition 14 – “Petunia the plastic puddle jumper” from Elgin in Scotland – for sale! This Kitten had a new chassis made in 1996, well, I believe that it was made before then, but was fitted in 1996.

Edition 15 – A clean example of the Tandy Fox Caravanette, at that time for sale in Stockport, it has now moved on.

Edition 16 – Jacob’s Asquith van (Fox chassis and running gear). This is effectively for sale too, but Jacob’s, perhaps wisely, doubt that it will fetch the £10,000 plus that Asquith advise them it is worth!

Edition 17 – Arleen’s Rebel saloon, recently sold as part of the “let’s reduce Brian’s fleet” campaign being run by certain individuals, and they seem to be winning, as I have sold three and only bought two this year.

Well we are getting it right now, aren’t we? It actually tells you inside the cover something about the car on the other side of the sheet. I do not know how many Kittens were sold in Northern Ireland, but we do have a number of subscribers there, and there is at least one other N.I. registered estate car that I know of in England. Does anyone out there know the facts?

Thomas Touw was good enough to send me details of all the currently known Kittens in Holland, and I have to say that only about half of them are on the Register. Any chance of the chassis numbers to go with the other details Thomas?

A WHITE KITTEN TALE

Once upon a time, there was a little white Kitten saloon – or so the story goes.....

Susie came to live with us earlier this year, but I will let her tell her own story, after all you hear quite enough from me elsewhere within these pages, don’t you?

I used to live a quiet life in Galston in Ayrshire. When I first arrived there in 1992, my then new owner was always talking about the future, and his wish to see me as a trusting and reliable member of the family. Imagine my shock then, when he took my body off, and had my, by then stripped naked chassis shot blasted by a man called Sam, who was a complete and total stranger to me!

Talk about indignity! Still, from then on things did get better. He gradually put me back together again with lots of new parts, including a very neat cloth headlining which, he assured me, was a perfect match for the one he was doing on his Scimitar. Quite what a sword needs with a headlining I really don’t know!

After that his wife used me as her daily transport for a couple of years, but by then he had taken the body off another Kitten saloon, and then bought an estate car body which he proceeded to fit to the saloon chassis, after that man Sam had had his wicked blasting way with it! (I’ll bet that confuses that Brian chap who thinks he knows all about these things!!) After that however, I was not used as much, in fact, after he took me to Doune in 1995, I was not used at all, the estate car doing all the work while I lay in a cold, dark garage, at the bottom of the garden.

Then a chap called David came to have a look at me. (Hey, would you like to give me a home please mister?!?) (*Moirra tells me that I should explain my warped sense of humour more often, lest you miss the point, it was David Heywood, - Hey would? – who considered this car in January 1997, Ed.*) but my clutch had seized onto my flywheel by then, and so I could not be shown to best

advantage. He went away, promising to let us know, but rang the following day to say no thanks. I felt really down then, because he had seemed like a real enthusiast, and if he didn't want me, who would. But of course, that Brian chap, who had brought the one called David down to see me, rang back a few weeks later, to ask my master if he would be prepared to free off my clutch, and get me M.O.T.d, and if so, he would pay the asking price – but this was all a secret, as he too wanted me for his wife, *(is not the English language absolutely wonderful, wanted me for his wife indeed!!)* and I was to be a surprise.

Well, I duly had my engine removed, clutch freed off, M.O.T., test passed, after some adjustments, and my new mistress arrived on the 1st of March and her husband, this Brian chap, drove me the 35 miles to my new home in Renfrew.

He was not nearly as clever as my old master however, I was struggling to breath properly, and he was complaining about my performance. The problem was a mixture of things, fuel and air mainly. I had had to be weakened to pass the emission test, and he had overdone it, and not only that, but he forgot to re-set me afterwards, and this new numpty did not twig what the problem was for a couple of weeks. By then my valves were not at their best, and still this Brian chap was complaining about my performance. To give him some credit, he did kit me out with a nice wee electronic ignition kit, fitted a ceramic magnet to my fuel pipe, and fitted an electric fuel pump, and all new fuel pipes and filters. He even fitted an expansion overflow tank to my cooling system.

Then, unfortunately, my interior rear view mirror came loose, and instead of tightening it up right away, he left it till it fell off, and he had a terrible job getting it back in place again. My up-market headlining had somehow made things difficult, it took him, and his brother, who I am told is great with Kittens, almost two hours just to secure the mirror again.

I had broken my exhaust mounting a couple of times in an effort to explain to him that I had a failed engine mounting, but, as I said, he is a bit slow sometimes, and it was not until the third time he was replacing that bracket, that he noticed the broken mounting. Well, that seemed to upset him, because around that time I also broke a leaf on a rear spring, and he was muttering about not being able to keep up with my failures. (He does not keep too well sometimes, so I suppose we have to make allowances).

He again enlisted the help of a friend, a chap called Ralph this time, who also has a few Kittens, to help change my engine mounting, it was the one at the alternator side, and so they had to remove my alternator, he does get full marks for not only spotting the cracked fan belt, but actually having a new one in the back! which they duly fitted – so, for once, he was getting ahead!!

My heater has never been too good, and he did spend some time trying to improve things by fitting an expansion tank to my cooling system, and when that did not work, he fitted a plumbers bleed valve to the top of my heater hose, but he is still not happy – like I said, a bit thick this one, all that is wrong is that my heater core is needing cleaned out properly, but he is too lazy to take it out and do the job.

He did take me on a run to England back in May, I suspect he told you all about my almost 70 miles to the gallon on that trip, but he was still running me a bit weak you see – not good for my valves.

Then a weakness in my distributor baseplate fooled him into wrongly diagnosing what was in fact a carburation problem, and he started fiddling about with my ignition timing when all he had to do was change my carburettor. He even had his brother, the one called Alan, fit new points, condenser, spark plugs, and things like that to me at Culzean. That failure on his part spoiled most of July and

all of August for us. At Doune, he let some of his friends have a look at me, and they soon realised that the problem was a badly worn carburettor, even knowing that, it took him a week, and then he had to get help, just to fit another carb, not even a new one! It was not till some Austin 7 chap put on a rubber glove, and did my timing with the engine running that things got better. (I think his name was Rory, but those Scots can have an odd way of spelling it sometimes!)

So here we are into September, and when he sees what I am now doing to the gallon, he will realise that all is not yet as it should be! He tries to blame the fact that I have the wrong crankshaft pulley fitted, and so the timing marks are not in the right place, as an excuse for making a meal of a simple task – but any mechanic worth his salt would take out my number one spark plug and work it out for himself – wouldn't he?

He is never happy with my performance, well O.K. he is satisfied with the fuel consumption (well he was back in the early summer) but he has always felt that my acceleration and top speed leave much to be desired. Honestly, I start first time, have averaged 54 M.P.G. since he got me, in spite of fuel leaks and other problems, cruise happily at 65 M.P.H. and can be coaxed up to the mid 70's, in fact at the risk of getting him into trouble, I managed the mid eighties for a mile or so downhill on the way back from Selkirk the other week.

Enough, Enough! – *I have heard quite enough of this nonsense. Many an owner would not tolerate all these problems in just 6 months of ownership I can assure you. What about the new fuel tank sender unit to make your fuel gauge work (which I understand it had not done for many years). The new exterior door rear view mirrors. The new black paint to tidy up your sills and valences, and the new number plates to smarten your appearance up, not to mention the new rear spring I fitted (finally) last month. You sound like an ungrateful child to me, anyone would think we were asking a lot to expect you to do just 1,200 a month, so come on, pull your weight, get your act together, I have this tow bracket which I want to get fitted soon, and you will have to work harder then. I want no more of this moaning and shirking responsibility, you are here to serve a purpose other than just give enjoyment, so toe the line, and buck up your ideas or it will be the adverts page for you rather than the little Red car, and no mistake about it. And while we are on the subject, any self respecting Kitten, especially one with an engine rebuilt with new pistons and liners just 28,000 miles ago, should be good for at least the mid 80's, if not well into the 90's and I'm not talking downhill with a following wind here! So don't talk to me about my expectations till your performance comes a bit nearer the mark!!*

Well, you have to keep them in line, and a firm hand is sometimes what is needed!!

On the fuel consumption front, she is not too bad mind you, here is a follow on to the figures quoted earlier this year :-

22.00 Lt at 83744 17.45 Lt at 85604
22.26 Lt at 83964 25.84 Lt at 85849
15.89 Lt at 84150 18.87 Lt at 85849
22.26 Lt at 84418 21.77 Lt at 86282
24.27 Lt at 84763 23.23 Lt at 86555
23.11 Lt at 85008 21.46 Lt at 86867
25.41 Lt at 85359 21.77 Lt at 87114

I make that to be in the mid-fifties, (O.K. Bob, 12 or 13 MPL) let's see how she does in the winter.

Ed.

Cars and things for Sale or Wanted

Wanted:- Oct.'97

Kitten driver's seat, excellent condition if now new. Must be black. Contact Sheila Eeles

Wanted:- Nov. '97

Reliant Fox rear axle, worn or in good condition, anything considered. Contact Dave Smith

For Sale:- Nov. '97

Dave Smith has most Kitten parts (second-hand) available at reasonable prices.

For Sale:- Nov. '97

Kitten saloon, brown, first registered 1978. M.O.T. till May '98, good condition - £550.

For Sale:- Nov. '97

Kitten estate – turquoise – P registered – 3 previous owners – radio/tape – Ford Escort front seats – 4.5"J wheels/165 tyres. Very clean and tidy. 5 months M.O.T. - £450 o.n.o.

Also saloon rear hatch glass – working heater! Passenger door – orange.

Alan also has lots of modest road car tuning experience, which he might one day get round to putting on paper for us, in the meantime you can telephone him with your car problem or questions on how to make it go a bit quicker while using a bit less fuel.

Book, 750 Racer, Herbert/Harvey, copies are again available from AI for £18.00

Also ENGINE SPARES Some rationalisation had been going on and some good seconds, including carbs and camshafts are available, please ask.

For sale:- 1977 Kitten estate DL with rear/wash wipe etc. fire damaged recently, after 13 years of ownership, good mechanics, contact Mr. Osborne

For Sale:- Nov. '97

Kitten Estate 1976 'R' registered Yellow. 22,000 miles on recon engine. Spare new steering rack. Tested until Aug.'98. No Tax - £300 o.n.o.

For Sale:- Nov. '97

Reliant Rebel Estate car E94/1621, off the road for a year now, but in good mechanical condition, paintwork tired.

GETTING TECHNICAL

Inexpensive Oil Cooler

As an alternative to a conventional radiator type oil cooler, some cars are fitted with, and you might like to consider, a water cooled heat exchanger which is usually connected into the heater circuit. It has the equivalent cooling capacity to a 10 row oil coo blockages.

Because it is water cooled, this unit will also warm up the oil better when the vehicle is used on short journeys helping to reduce fuel consumption.

The MG unit is a direct fit on the Reliant engine with a hollow fixing bolt and sealing ring. However, on the Reliant engine the cooler would be mounted vertically with the inlet and outlet pipes at about 11 o'clock so that the pipeline passes to the rear of the distributor.

I have recently removed one of these units from a Citroen BX in a local scrap yard for £5.00. However, the fixing bolt is unsuitable and must be replaced with MG part No. CAM 6383 - £5.25 from your local Rover dealer. The inlet and outlet pipes are unfortunately 5/8" diameter and need to be reduced to 1/2" in order for us to plumb the unit into the Reliant heater hoses. Your local plumbers merchant should be able to help here.

An oil filter is 3 5/8" diameter. The Citroen unit is 3 7/8" diameter by 2 1/4" deep, which when fitted to the Reliant engine just overlaps the rear mounting lug of the fuel pump (*on yours perhaps Simon, but remember that some of us have graduated to electric fuel pumps, and with the least bit of luck, the blanking plate that I made up for the crankcase will clear it O.K.! Ed.*) Which prevents removal of the fuel pump without first removing the cooler – unless however a small amount of material (between 1/16th to 1/8th of an inch) is removed from the mounting lug of the fuel pump. This can be done without weakening it significantly – no problem. I would imagine that the MG unit would be the same, but have not tried it, there being not a single MG 1300 Metro in my local scrap yard.

Simon Chisholm – Gilmerton

Thank you Simon for sharing that with us.

Simon also tells me that the December edition of Kitcars International has a five page article on the supercharged Liege, so, if you want to learn more about them ahead of my article next year, here is your opportunity to do so.

NOTES

Missing from the last edition was the manufacturer and part number for the superior Kitten front wheel bearing kit, (felt pad bonded in place for you). The manufacturer was Quinton Hazel, and the part number is QWB161C.

Also I am advised by our man in Boddam, that the Lockheed part number for the rear brake wheel cylinder repair kit is LK11522, thank you Brian Millar.

Now I could certainly take issue with you here Bob Hunt (See Foxes Den), all Reliants have poor dampers? I have never yet had to replace a Rebel rear damper, and they are all over 23 years old now and mostly well over 100,000 miles, and the only problem I have ever had with a Rebel front was leakage of the fluid – the Kitten/Fox arrangement I will grant you is weaker, but please let us give credit where it is due. I always maintained in my original sheet of blurb about the Rebel, that I really did not know whether it was over engineered or just well made, and I am still not sure of the answer to that one after almost 20 years of running them! Any comments you high mileage owners? Adrian, what is your experience of Rebel dampers?

Yes, I take the point that there is not a lot of technical stuff in this edition, we will make amends next time.

Right, I had been considering inviting donations, say somewhere between £2.00 and a fiver, to a

(the!) spares fund, to save me having to use my own money every time I get a batch of springs, or stainless exhausts made for stock, but I have decided to try and get the First Aid scheme up and running, along with, though quite separate from, Phil Hallam's very useful Mutual Aid Spares Scheme. (Confused? – well why should be any different from me?) So, there will be a few things to pay attention to that are not actually contained in the magazine, in the envelope this comes to you in, and I will have to postpone my spares fund donation plans till a future edition. Bits of paper to watch for are:-

- 1. The Renewal Notice, use it now please, if you want to enjoy another year's magazines.*
- 2. The first aid scheme, which is really an emergency service which we might try to set up, depending on your response, and I will try to have details of that printed on the back of the renewal notice, please fill it in if you are prepared to help out a small 4 wheeled Reliant driver in distress. The plan is to publish a list of subscribers who are able and willing to help with either spare parts, assistance with repairs, or even overnight accommodation, and I will try to make the form both as simple and comprehensive as possible.*
- 3. Phil's Mutual Aid Spares scheme. This could be of great help if it motivates even a few of us into listing this old spare parts which so many of us have lying about in attics or garages, or even garden sheds. The form is self explanatory, but it does take a bit of time to do the necessary research. Even if you just put a few things on it just now, we can provide additional forms, indeed you could copy it, and send in more information next month. The two main benefits of this scheme are 1) that I am not involved, and so you will not need to wait for a magazine to come out as it will operate quite independently, and 2) anything that helps motivate us into actually listing, even some, of these piles of interesting and useful bits and pieces (that is not what Moira calls them I might tell you!) that many of us possess, has to be a good thing. Yes Bill Dick, I will send Phil a copy of your list once I have edited it, and I promise to do that soon. (It is almost a year now since Bill was good enough to send me a ten page list of his Rebel spare parts, but the advert was only to contain those parts of which he had more than two Rebels worth, which will greatly reduce the number of items on the final advertised list,) but I simply have not made the time to go through it – soon, honest.*

Well, the end of the page, like the end of the year approacheth at an alarming rate of knots, (is my typing really getting faster?) so I will just sign off, wishing you and yours seasons greetings, and all the very best for '98 and to once again offer my thanks to all of you who have helped to make this publication the interesting, friendly, and I hope, informative, Magazine that it is. May 1998 be kind to both us and our cars.

BRIAN