

Reliant Kitten Register

MEWSLETTER – TWENTY-TWO

May / June 1998



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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The musical connection with this one must surely be "Sheep may safely graze" My thanks to Bob Hunt of London for this picture of his Fox being totally ignored by a flock of these normally timid creatures, certainly where Foxes are concerned! I guess the sheep can't read! This particular Fox was probably the first in the land to be converted to use unleaded fuel, which has caused no problems to date as far as I know.

Hello again and welcome to edition number 22 of your favourite bedtime reading. Sorry for the long gap between this edition and the last, this thing called life keeps getting in the way of what I want to be doing! (Well of what you want me to be doing!)

One omission (of the many!) from the last edition was that I completely forgot to give credit where it is due to Brian Millar for his work on the database for me. Brian has highlighted a number of duplicates and other anomalies which it has been my task to resolve over the past few months. Thank you Brian (his wife Polly got mentioned a lot in the last edition so it seemed only fair to balance things up a bit.)

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I did get a defence of the Imperial system sent to me in response to Bob Hunt's article (probably three editions ago now) and Dick's letter should be in here this time.

On my "to do" list were three items which I shall cover in one small paragraph in here and save myself a lot of time searching to see who it was that was wanting:

Stainless steel exhausts, Alloy rocker covers and rear springs. The latter two are now in stock and I am about to get a batch of exhausts done. Please get in touch if it was you that was wanting one!

Ah, that was easy, my apologies to those concerned but this way saves me a lot of time, which is presently at a premium.

For once I am not going to be too clever and try to make each page on the index correspond exactly to the page in the magazine, it is just too difficult, well, more time consuming so bear with me please.

I was, as you will remember, planning to participate in the Reliant Owners' Club's 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary run from Lands End to John O' Groats in May and indeed I was not the only member of this organisation to be doing so! In the event there were three Rebels, two of which belong to subscribers of this organisation and four Foxes. I must admit to failing to check here, three of them I know are subscribers, but I honestly am not sure about the other one – not much of a salesman am I? Thomas Touw was over from Holland with the lovely Linda in his CIPHER, indeed one of the Foxes was his too, driven by Linda's brother Paul.

To have a quarter of the entrants being subscribers to this organisation did give me a certain warm feeling of belonging and though, through my own way of doing things, (staying with friends at night, rather than camping with everyone else) I did not get a lot of time to talk to these people, it was great to know that they were there.

In the event the little red car was the only Kitten on the run and I was the only entrant living north of the border! I covered 3024 miles in 11 days door to door, averaged only 59mpg, sorry Bob, just under a litre of oil – once the leak was fixed. There, that condenses the book nicely! Once I get around to writing it, "the book" will no doubt be serialised within these pages, but meantime I would just like to say a big THANK YOU to all of you who helped to make it possible either by way of sponsorship, or by providing accommodation for me during the run. It was great to see so many of you and wonderful to finally be able to put faces to some of the names we all read about from time to time. If any of the other participants, ah now, what adjective might there be to describe a group such as ours? LeJoggers perhaps? As I was saying, if any one else would like to give me a few words from their point of view about the run, I am sure our readers would appreciate a non-Brian slant on things for a change.

Right, I remain determined to publish as many of your letters as possible and can indeed get away with the 8 A4 sheets in the envelope that we enjoyed last time for a 20p stamp. The problem is that I can't get away with anything more than that and often I want to be including another sheet or two so its back to normal this time.

On the unleaded front, I was involved in removing the manifolds from what was reputed to be the first reconditioned engine supplied by Reliant designed to run on unleaded fuel, engine number OK/95/B0000/1R. I should tell you that it was not at all as it should have been. Yes I know that I can't just leave it at that, but

until the head comes off and further investigation takes place that is really all I can say. The engine has only done just over 20,000 miles or so, cost £724.50 and has two of the inlet holes looking more like exhaust holes! That is to say, black rather than silver and yes the valve clearances have been checked frequently, because the engine had never run properly since it was fitted in January 1991. Yes I do realise that valve seat erosion is supposed to affect exhaust valves more than inlet ones (because they get hotter I expect) and this engine seems to have a problem sealing a couple of inlet valves so you could argue that the problem is nothing to do with unleaded fuel and you may well be correct, it might not.

Tom, have you got any further with the engine since I was down?

Update on that – Tom must be psychic because within a couple of hours of my typing the above paragraph he was on the telephone and has indeed attempted to remove the suspect cylinder head. Three of the studs were so tight that they sheared when he tried to extract them – keep at it Tom.

I have to say that the unleaded engine in the Moira's Kitten, the wee red car, is doing fine. The one problem I have had with well balanced engines is the self control to change up at sensible revs! They spin so freely that you begin to imagine that it is a turbine and who needs to change up before 10,000 revs anyway? I do remember extreme crankcase ventilation when a con-rod decided it would like to see daylight once or twice and am certain that excessive revs was the reason in each case (not my engines, cars or driving you understand!) but it does spin so well. Must fit a rev counter and an electronic rev limiting device – oh dream on Marshall, just keep it below 6,000 revs and it will be fine. Truth to be told, it won't pull more than 5,000 in top without a tailwind or downhill – must check the timing!!

Here I am again, up against a deadline, how dare Alan decide to go on holiday? And I have had, for the third time this year, used extreme measures to clear my desk – swept everything into a large cardboard box – and can't quickly find Dick Goodall's witty letter in defence of the imperial system which is really interesting because I have a space right here, but there you are. By the way, Dick, thanks for the stuff you sent recently, I'll try and file it somewhere safe!

Oh well, on with the show.....

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Ah, that's what went wrong, I had failed to reduce the line spacing from the index page, and seemed to have 12 pages of text at the normal font size, but only 5,000 words – you should get off so lightly!!! Sort the line spacing and suddenly there are only 9 pages! Stick in the April story and still the odd space...

Dick Myers was just on the 'phone and we were talking about Rebel gearboxes amongst other things and it dawned on me that a solution to the "three A5 Rebels" situation might be to organise a team to invade the place one weekend, sort the repairable one (or two) and break up the saloon, salvaging as many parts as possible and so draw a line under the situation, whilst ensuring that they all don't get scrapped. So, talk to me, who has a free weekend? An interest in Rebels? And lives less than a hundred miles or so (just an arbitrary figure) from Staffordshire? Let's do it!! (please don't let Moira read this!!)

But seriously why not? Surely it is not beyond us to mount a salvage operation. A bit of planning, I can easily co-ordinate the thing from here – all it would take is a few 'phone calls, a list of objectives, some tools and a trailer or towing dolly or two and the telephone number of a nearby MOT testing station, a spare battery, a petrol can, a few Mars bars and some cans of Coke, a foot pump and we're off! Talk to me guys.....

Life seems a bit dull now that I've done the Lands End to John O' Groats thing, plus two magazines in as many weeks, I need something to occupy my mind – yes – I'll get on with "The Book". BUT, I need a break from all this typing! A new challenge even.....

Brian

REBEL ROUND UP

Well, that was a surprise, 4 Rebels at Lands End, only three of which were actually doing the run, but 4 Rebels! Then we had 5 of them at the R.O.C. National Rally two weeks later and two of them used to belong to me! All this and three for sale as a job lot just a few miles away on the A5, two estates and a saloon. I must remember the NO word. Sadly, in this instance, it is a case of the owner having died and his widow needing to clear her drive. But, missing keys, seized brakes and a fuel tank needing to be fitted (and no obvious signs of a sender unit). The saloon is really only fit for breaking for spares, having been bought without an engine and used as a garden shed for many years. Both the estate cars could be salvaged. She did promise to send me details so watch the adverts page. These are the very vehicles that Bruce saw on his way home to Leigh-on-Sea last year in the "Moss Encrusted Hut" – which was one of the five Rebels at Shrugborough Hall. He has now washed it, cleaned off the moss and stripped the paint of the very reasonable chrome bumpers so we need a new name for it right enough!

The following letter arrived last week:-

Dear Brian 03/06/98

I obtained your name and address from Joy Chappell whilst enquiring about membership of the Reliant Owners' Club. I also asked her if she knew of a World expert on Rebels. She suggested you.

I am having trouble with my Rebel gearbox and need advice on a solution. Perhaps first you might like to hear of my experiences with the car.

About three years ago I acquired a rather sad vermilion 1967 Rebel saloon. This had been maintained at one stage by someone who had a novel approach to the mysteries of mechanics, i.e. – Question – What do you do when you lose the nut from a bolt? – Answer – You find a smaller brass bolt and bend the end over so it can't come out!

Another previous owner had replaced the bumpers with large chrome ones from a Triumph 1500. These look quite nice so I have kept them. (*The originals of course are from the BMC 1100 / 1300 vehicles – Ed*).

Eventually after many weeks of toil, I got it on the road. Adding "luxuries" like brakes, closing doors, a seat cover that was fixed to name but a few items that were required for an MOT, plus a number of non-essentials such as a working clutch pedal, ignition system etc. Surprisingly the local dealer was not interested in the car. Initially he denied that Reliant ever made a four wheeler!

Having got the car into a reasonable state, I used it as my main transport for about 18 months. Then there appeared a number of niggling problems with the car.... The fuel pump died – to be replaced by a newer model. The ignition went silly – points would last up to a mile before melting. I never solved that. I tried a new coil, condenser, voltage regulator, reversing the coil polarity (wrong when I bought the car), New LT and HT wiring, new plugs, new ignition switch (following an under dashboard fire), new earth leads everywhere, even a new LT lead from the points to the edge of the distributor – *Where do you get these new?? – Ed*. Eventually the problem just went away!

There were also a number of incidental problems with the bodywork and suspension. Door hinges died, the steering box cover loosened itself, the idler bearing went oval *Just showing off that my usually useless memory does sometimes retain some things, the needle roller bearing of the idler is a Torrington 1314 (the year of the battle of Bannockburn!) and is available from any reputable bearing factor for about a fiver and yes we do have one in stock! – Ed*. A rear strut support broke – a local garage mig welded it back on WITHOUT removing the petrol tank! The fibreglass gel coat is crazing and bubbling – any ideas?

The latest major problem is the gearbox – it started jumping out of gear. I stripped it but couldn't find anything obviously amiss. I put it back together, replacing all the bearings. Unfortunately it still slips out of gear, making the car effectively unusable. A number of questions have occurred to me: 1. Ask an expert-Do you know how I can cure the problem? Do I buy a new "gizmo", read a part of the gearbox you think might need replacing? 2. Perhaps the easiest solution – Do you know where I can acquire another Rebel gearbox? I am

loath to buy one of the estates I occasionally see for sale and scrap it for the gearbox. 3. I recently acquired an even sadder Robin Super but do not know how to fit either the engine or the gearbox into my Rebel. Any ideas Brian?

Sorry to go on a bit but I'm rather fond of this car and am very keen to get it back into good condition. Any advice you can give me to help get my favourite car back on the road would be appreciated.

Yours sincerely – Mike Hine

Well. As you might imagine, having just sold a virtually new Rebel gearbox and the brand new lay gear cluster from last month, I am running a bit short of Rebel gearboxes at the moment – does that saloon on the A5 have a gearbox I wonder? Mind you the owner has not been in touch and I didn't think to get her name and address. As you can imagine, my reply to Mike was something of an epistle. I will need to produce a definitive "Brian's letter to the Rebels with gearbox problems" book one day. There are a couple of problems with that – firstly I don't know enough, and secondly the number of good engineers out there who really understand the intricacies of why a gearbox slips, or in my experience jumps out of gear, given that there is nothing obvious, are few and far between. The three guys who I know have these skills are too busy running their own businesses!

No matter Mike, I hope my answers were of some help. I did see a Rebel door hinge, brand new, in one of those boxes that Bruce Morris was trying to turn in to money at the factory the other week, so it might be worth giving Reliant Partsworld a ring if you need parts (did I mention that Lightweight Powertrains now run Reliant Partsworld?)

Right, I have cheated, used a readers' letter in the Rebel page – well it seemed appropriate, thank goodness I hadn't taken a chance on the index and asked John to print it on the back of the cover, must go and alter it now before I forget!

John Blagburn is currently fitting a new clutch to Gus and I really ought to do something about the Kitten's gearbox oil leak, but haven't the energy to take the gearbox out. Some well I can't call him a nice man, the inattentive driver who ran in to the back of the wee red car yesterday, has given me more work to do, even if he does pay for the damage as he said he would. It will take time and effort, and I have to go to the WRA agm on Saturday in Aysgarth, when am I going to get time to do all these things? Yes I know, if I stopped LeJogging round the country I might have more time, speaking of which, it is now the 8th of June and I want to see how our boy D.C. does in his Maclaren Mercedes, so you need to excuse me for a couple of hours...

FOXES' DEN

Once again, what can I say? All those Foxes on the Lands End to John O' Groats run. I was quite overwhelmed.

Oddly enough, I did spend a night on our journey from John O' Groats to the National Rally at Shugborough Hall in Simmondley near Glossop in Derbyshire, and the problem here is that either the street name was wrong or we should re-register our Kittens as Foxes, why? Well the following morning there were 5 Kittens in the street (only one of them mine, oops sorry dear Moira's), belonging to four different people and what do you suppose the street was called? – Foxlea – see what I mean!

Never having owned a Fox (yet!) I have always assumed that, being perhaps more workhorse than the Kitten, and indeed with different gearing, I had thought that they would be somewhat slower. Having followed Thomas and Paul for a few miles down the A1 at the legal speed limit, I was quite impressed with the way the Fox kept up with the Cipher and Kitten on the uphill stretches. Then again, perhaps the gearing helped in such a situation. Faster next time Thomas? (AND he wonders why the wee red car only managed 59mpg???)

THREE DAYS IN BRIAN'S APRIL

After our annual family holiday in Gleneig at Easter, I had the idea that I could tie a number of tasks together, while at the same time enjoying myself – well it seemed like a good idea at the time!

The Wensleydale Railway Association, with which you will remember I am involved, had their monthly meeting in Aysgarth on the Monday evening, the Wensleydale branch of the association had their AGM in Leyburn on the Tuesday evening. I had the keys of Holly Cottage to return to their owners in Hessay just outside York and I had some bits to collect from Rossfield, the Reliant dealer in Bradford and a new batch of alloy rocker covers to collect from Doncaster. Also, it was my mother's cousin (who's house we had enjoyed the use of for our holiday) and mother had not seen her for some years so I thought, with accommodation kindly provided by Michael & Janet (who also happen to be in the WRA!) this could all fit together pretty well and at the same time give the Kitten a decent trial run before the planned big trip. (the car having been "resting" for the past 15 months or so). A test drive seemed like a good idea to me – I can justify most things if I try hard enough!!

Small questions lurked at the back of my mind – could I stand 3 days of mum's company? Could she stand 3 days of my driving? Etc. etc. But still, not one to easily give up on the chance of a wee drive, I made a few 'phone calls and lo and behold off we went. First stop was the Johnstone Bridge services at Annandale Water, you know, the relatively new Blue Boar one about 60 miles south of Glasgow, well, no, most of you probably don't, but never mind! It holds a special place in my memory because I was there on the day of its official opening – in a Scimitar!

Anyway I digress, we then motored on to the village of Kirkby Stephen, where I just happened to know it was market day (thank you Michael) and we spent an enjoyable hour or so wandering through an antique shop and the market stalls. I then deliberately sought out some really steep hills to give the car a proper work out. Unfortunately the temperature gauge proved faulty, it was reading low as steam began pouring out of the bonnet when it had only reached the middle! Oh bother! And I had even managed to leave the spare water bottle at home! We coasted down to a stream, poured the spare gallon of petrol into the tank and used the petrol can as a water bottle. Quite what the passers by thought of this lunatic pouring petrol into his radiator I know not! I'll bet it'll give them something to talk about for the rest of the day....

We arrived at Michael & Janet's on time and left mum and Janet while Michael and I were chauffeured to the meeting by a friend.

Michael & Janet had just that day received delivery of the then current edition of Relay, the WRA's magazine and they had to address 1000 or so envelopes, put the magazines in them, together with the agm notice, so that kept mum and Janet busy while we were out. In the event, the meeting ran on a bit and it was almost 10:30 by the time we got back.

I normally wake fairly early and feeling that I could be of some help, decided to get on with the label business. I started at the back of six and by the time Janet came down at eight there were only a couple of hundred left to do. Mind you we still had to put the flyers in the magazines, and put the lot in the envelopes and seal them.

On the Tuesday, mum and I were going to Bradford, Doncaster, Selby and Hessey before returning to Preston Under Scar, where we had promised to bring in fish suppers (that's fish & chips to you!). Michael had spent the day putting magazines and flyers into envelopes and we managed, just, to get the job finished in time to take them with us to the Wensleydale branches agm where the next group of volunteers would do the mailsort. They were well impressed to have the job so well ahead. I did get invited to be a member of the Wensleydale branch that night, but managed to avoid any committee responsibilities!

Mum was enjoying herself and was only too happy to accept the invitation to stay for a third night, thus my three days became four.

The Kittens exhaust had been becoming noisy and since the overheating, she had a coolant consumption situation which I suspected might be a head gasket on the way out, so I had some work to do before the big trip if I was to be able to expect the sort of reliability I was going to need.

We called in to see John & Jackie Box on the way home, going by way of the famous Ribbleshead viaduct on the Carlisle-Settle railway line, and I was explaining to John the work I was going to have to do on the car before the run, when he further confused the situation by offering me the loan of virtually new, balanced and ported engine, complete with unleaded head. I really could not make up my mind so I took the engine with me, so that I could decide what to do later. I knew that once fitted, it was most unlikely that I would want to part with it, but also that I probably can't afford to buy it!!!

The fact is that while I might still be able to change a head gasket, I certainly can't change an engine without a lot of help these days. In the event, Phil Hallam, Sandy Riddoch with Kenneth helping and John Johnstone all came to Phil's the Saturday before the run and did the business – thanks guys.

This was when my troubles began, as the Kitten failed to make it home without the aid of a tow rope and you would not believe how many garages these days do not sell tow ropes!! But that is the beginning of another story. My thanks to Sandy, Alan and John Fyfe for the lift / tow / fault diagnosis and the understanding womenfolk concerned. Coming home to a warm house / bath and meal was a very welcome end to a somewhat tiring day.

Things got so bad with the car over the following 48 hours that I actually organised the loan of another Kitten to do the run in. Thank you Mike Cowie, and I even went as far as booking it in for an MOT, it having been off the road for six months, in a fit of frustration and having had the RAC out to fail to fix the car!! Ralph Erwin sorted the timing for me and, in spite of bad flooding at the float chamber, (you can't buy a new needle valve for an SU carb over the counter these days you know!) (I didn't). I changed the float chamber lid twice and still fuel was pouring everywhere – oh – I give up, 'til it was suggested that a run might settle it down. In desperation I tried a couple of miles, armed with the big fire extinguisher and do you know it hasn't leaked since!!

Brian

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### **MUTUAL AID SPARES SCHEME**

I hope that those of you who have made use of this service have found it satisfactory – remember, the more you use it the better it is and at least all of your cars are in Europe. *Wait a minute Phil, what about the South African one? – Ed.* At the moment I am getting parts for my other car from New Zealand and Australia!!

We have lots of Kitten parts available including a chassis with documents and we presently need a set of Kitten alloy wheels, Rebel quarter light frames and a Fox rear axle.

Remember if you have surplus gear or want parts please let me know using the form which Brian will enclose with this mag – won't you Brian?

*Right, right, yes, yes, don't nag, I'll get there eventually – I think! One thing I do know is that a number of people have said to me how well the scheme has worked and I would like to thank Phil for giving up his time to run it for us. If it was left to me I would sink under all that paper. As it is I'm struggling to get the first aider scheme up and running and my thanks to those who have been so good as to return that form. About a third of you did so and I have yet to complete the list – OK, tell you what, I'll stay at home most of July and August just a couple of weekends away during the school holidays, hones and I'll get the work done and the desk tidied once and for all – And if you believe that you'll believe anything, but I will try!*



Dear Brian

21 March 1998

Once again I appear to have defaulted in sending my subscription late. Sorry! I know that in your letter to me of last year (24 Apr '97) you stated that if I chose to renew in March instead of January then that would be OK, however that is not my intention. It is just that I am lazy about writing as can be seen by one attempt on the cheque date compared with this letter!! (*barely a week between them – Ed.*) I have been prompted into action by the renewal of subscriptions to the Ford Mark II owners Club and the battery vehicle society, both of which fall due at the end of March.

The Kitten has been in service now for a year, covering 8-10,000 miles. The piston rings had to be done as did the clutch and apart from the fact that the front shock absorbers need renewing it is going jolly well. It is certainly a lot cheaper to run than my series III Land Rover which has been adapted for carrying disabled people off road on a voluntary basis. I can buy almost 5 tyres for the Kitten to 1 for the Land Rover!

It looks as though I now may not convert the Kitten to electric drive as originally planned. Down here in this part of Devon there are considerably more and steeper hills than where I used to live in Essex. I have been doing calculations from a computer programme I wrote. I managed to get the Kitten engine torque curves and as such can compare what the vehicle requires with that available from the standard petrol engine. I have measured many of the inclines around here with a spirit level, so am not just guessing at inclines. These figures prove that a battery drive would be unacceptably slow on many hills. There is a member of our battery vehicle society fairly nearby in Totnes who has converted a Fiat Panda which I have been in for a drive. However when he realised that in this village there are 2 hills each about a mile long, the first a constant 1:18 and the second varying from say 1:20 (not measured) to 1:8.7 (measured) he had a fit! As a bit of a laugh we are thinking about towing his Fiat up here for a trial run – watch this space!

So the next daft idea is to convert the Kitten to diesel, married to a 5 speed Bedford Rascal gearbox. Only an idea I hasten to add, but one which I would dearly love to do, expense permitting! So far all I have done is get technical data on 3 diesel engines manufacturers:

- (i) Perkins 100 series 103-10 954cc 3 cyl
- (ii) Yanmar TNE series 3TNE74 1006cc 3 cyl
- (iii) Kubota E series D1005-E 1001cc 3 cyl

At the moment I rather fancy the Yanmar.....

I hope that you are keeping well, and thank you for all the time and effort you put into the Register and Review..

Kind Regards – Hugh Rolfe – Barnstaple

*Thank you Hugh, my agreeing to a March renewal must have been a moment of weakness, though I suspect that was just the month in which you happened to subscribe originally. The diesel engine scenario is one which a number of folk have considered, turbo even, but some of the units, such as the Daihatsu for example, are actually quite large lumps of metal in spite of their modest capacity and number of cylinders. But yes, the potential economy must be fantastic. We reckon that over 100mpg oops sorry Bob make that 22mpg would be possible. The biggest problem would be top speed unless your 5 speed box has a better than 1:1 ratio in top. Having said that, few Kittens actually pull more than 5000 revs in top anyway and it's easy to fit 12" wheels at the back.*

*Why do we spend so much time and effort trying to change things? For fun of course, and to try to improve them...*

*Hang on a minute, I have just returned from my epic trip and they have at the factory, yes Reliant, a 3 cyl Kubota powered Robin, they also have an electric one – silent but deadly! And I believe, back to the diesel one, that Greig Ford knows the UK distributor for the engine which of course I can not remember at the moment – HELP! Thanks Greig, the Scottish distributor for those engines is Gem engines of Polmont, whom I do know of, I will make enquiries...*

Dear Brian

23<sup>rd</sup> March 1998

Thank you for your letter and enclosures. I return the registration form duly completed. I think we should register the car even at this stage. At least if we don't sell it right away you will know exactly where it is.

I must say that after Kathleen spoke to you on the 'phone we both started thinking whether we did indeed want to get rid of the Kitten. Having driven it for 20 years it would be a bit of a wrench to part with it. Even our son (who is 21 this year) before he passed his driving test considered the Kitten a "sad" car. However since he passed his test \9when he was 17) he has driven around in it quite happily and is now even wondering why we should want to get rid of it at all. – *(Ah there is hope for these people, you will note that, even after 2 decades, they still refer to the car as "it" – Ed)*. As Kathleen mentioned to you, we also had a Dutton Sierra kit car for the past 16 years. We actually scrapped the Dutton on Sunday last and you would have thought we were both at a funeral! Now I think you can perhaps imagine how we feel about the Kitten!

We still want to advertise it in the Mewsletter just to see what kind of response we would get. Noted below is the advert. If you feel it is too much, or not enough, just let us know.

Yours sincerely, Duncan McArthur – Dumbarton

*Update on the situation, this arrived while we were on holiday at Easter....*

Dear Brian

3<sup>rd</sup> April 1998

Just a brief note to let you know that Mike Cowie got in touch with us, came and saw the Kitten, test drove it and lo and behold bought it. He will be picking it up tonight. Both Kathleen and I (and even young Duncan) are delighted that the car is going to a good home. At least it's someone who knows these wee cars.

Thanks again for your help.

Yours sincerely, Duncan McArthur

*What can I say Duncan? Glad to be of service. It does seem that about half of the cars that are sold as a result of people contacting me, are sold over the telephone even before the magazine advert comes out. Provided that my memory is up to the job of remembering who wants what I am quite happy to be of assistance in that way – I fully realise that that is not a reliable way to do things. As I've said before, my memory is not good and there is a lot of information to be stored. The best thing therefore is to place an advert in the Mewsletter and if I get the business done by 'phone before the mag comes out that is a bonus.*

*Just to prove that I am, sometimes, less than prompt at answering things, here is a letter which I presume I have had lying on my desk for months! I did find and reply to it on the 22/04/98 – oops!*

Dear Brian

29<sup>th</sup> December 1997

Wading through Christmas wrapping paper and old cards I came upon the letter (29/09/97) which Pat Allatson (Sywell) used to introduce me to your "Mewsletter" and the suggestion that you might like to hear from me, as a Kitten owner. My particular model is now 21 years old and as I am sure you will have heard from other people, "Our Kitten is a much loved member of the family". I regret not having heard of your work on behalf of Reliant owners before now, but using the well known phrase "better late than never" can I say please let me have details of the subscription fee together with any other requirements?

So looking forward to hearing from you when time permits. Wishing you seasons greetings.

Alex McGeechaen – Corby

*Well, just imagine how I felt on returning from the S.W.T.V.C's monthly get-in-together when I decided I just had to clear the desk – again! I found this letter buried, no trace of a response on file, no record of anything in the outgoing mail book – and over 3 months had passed – cringe! And this after me boasting in the last edition how quickly I usually respond. Well, it is true and it brings it home to me that such things are better dealt with on the day they arrive, or the danger is that they get buried. I did of course send a grovelling letter of apology and hope I will be forgiven – watch this space. TRP 341R is the one we are looking for. Sorry once again Alex!*

*On a lighter note (though it may not seem so at first glance) I had a telephone call from one Tom Sheppard of Swaythling down Southampton way, (he found me on the interne, so it does pay to keep up to date with all this modern technology!) who is looking for a hand to remove a Kitten estate body from its chassis, though I suspect that he will have done it by the time you read this. If not, you can have the body in return for giving him a hand. Tom can be contacted on 01703 366949. Anyway, the day after our chat, the following arrived:*

Dear Brian

01/05/98

It is perfectly clear from our telephone conversation that you are a dangerous maniac, best kept north of our Sassenach border! To this end I am sending you a cheque for twenty pounds, half of which you may use to help you and your feline friend to go home from Lands End to John O' Groats. Please use the rest to enrol me in the Register. I have made the cheque out to you as the website did not make it clear to whom it should be made payable. I hope this is OK.

Kind regards and safe journeys...

Tom Sheppard

*OK, OK I can take a hint! The wee red car and I did return home, and so, thanks to Tom's generosity, you are, for the moment, safe from any chance of me turning up on your doorstep.*

*Now I know that John Blagburn has a complete set of glass available, and a passenger's door plus various other bits so I asked him to let Phil know about them on one of the mutual aid spares forms, which I will try to remember to have enclosed for everyone with this edition. Such parts are the very sort of thing that the Mutual Aid Spares Scheme, which Phil is good enough to run for us, can cope with very well indeed – if only we all use it. And no, I haven't given him a note of any of my excess stock parts yet, so I am as much if not more to blame than anyone else – sorry Phil, I will try harder!*

*Always these odd corners... and you can be sure that as soon as I get the magazine back from Alan, I will have found that vital article that should have been in there. Still, you should be used to my ways by now!*

*I did get a telephone call from Alan Critoph the other evening. You may recall that he was the chap whose Christmas edition was returned by the Post Office, in spite of a redirection notice. I now have a new address and telephone number, so will draw a line under that situation, I hope. Good to hear from you again Alan!*

*I will offer a word of apology for the haste with which this edition has been put together, but life is like that sometimes and the only alternative, which may have produced a better result, would not have been with you before the middle of July. I have already had one 'phone call asking when this edition will be out.*

*I did take a couple of hours off to watch the Canadian Grand Prix on Sunday and do you know I had five telephone calls in the first 40 minutes, three of them from subscribers to this organisation!!!*

## SALES & WANTS

May 1998: Graham Knott has for sale a Rebel Estate car with 9 months MOT & 4 months tax, complete with spare engine and gearbox. In good running order, yours for just £500.

February 1998 Dave Smith still lives in Bedfordshire and is, as usual, able to offer a wide variety of parts ranging from complete cars down

1977 DL Estate, fair condition (too good to scrap!) laid up 8 months, reasonable offers considered

For sale: Kitten Saloon and Estate - £200 the pair, contact Bill Rouillier 01202 697618 – Dorset.

08/05/98 John Lyon is looking for a good set of alloy wheels for his Kitten.

19/01/98 For sale: "P" reg Kitten Estate, white with a black roof, excellent runner, new clutch just fitted and loads of spares. MOT March 1998 £375

March 1998 Rebel Estate car E150113, very interesting history and full Scimitar-type interior. Fitted with 850cc engine (from new!)

April 1998 Wanted, Kitten Estate, preferably a good one –

June '98 1976 Kitten Saloon, MOT January '99. Purple (but in need of respray). Taxed August

Kitten complete with a new galvanised chassis, built up except for fitting a new rear brake adjuster and fuel filler £??? No MOT

June 1998 1977 Kitten Saloon, body off rebuild 5 years ago, too many new parts to list, including a full reconditioned engine that was just 40,000 miles ago. Cloth headlining, liberal use of stainless steel throughout. Ring Brian on 0141 886 6117 for details.

June 1998 For Sale: Fox H/T MOT April '99 Tax November £350.

July 1998 Rebel saloon chassis – galvanised – never been on the road. Available with running gear if required Contact Brian on 0141 886 6117

## NOTES

Keith Bannister was on the 'phone the other week (late April as I recall) regarding headlights and he was good enough to pass on the following:-

The Ring Lamp Co in Leeds do a suitable unit for the Kitten, that is to say, the right size and shape, complete with a pilot bulb for the sidelight. This unit used to be the R7505/7511 but is now superseded by the R7505 to which you can fit either the R410 conventional bulb or the brighter & better quartz halogen R412. If I remember and can make the time I will get their 'phone number and check the Rebel situation.

Another matter which really wants addressing, and I am asking for help here, is insurance. Yes I know we covered that pretty well last time, indeed I have just insured Moira's Kitten with them, but they don't insure drivers under the age of 25. So the question is this, does anyone out there know of an insurance company or broker that can quote a reasonable premium for under 25's? and yes I am talking down to 18 or even 17! Please give me a ring if you have any useful information on this one as we have at least one young Kitten owner who is off the road for want of a reasonable quote.

Thank you Adrian Hanwell for the invitation to your Great Eastern Weekend. It takes place on Sunday 26<sup>th</sup> July at Ingatestone Hall in station lane Ingatestone, Essex, just a couple of miles from the M25/A12 junction.

Whilst talking to Adrian the other day, he asked if anyone knew if a Robin crown wheel and pinion can be fitted to a Rebel back axle – if you know the answer to that one please give him a ring.

Regarding our privileged discount from Reliant Parts World, I understand that some people have contacted them to be told that the factory knew nothing of the arrangement. Would you please make sure that I am made aware of any such situations as and when they occur please? I am right now in the process of negotiating with the new management and you may need to wait for the next edition of the magazine to find out exactly what the current situation is, then again, hopefully the advert on the back page will tell you what you need to know.

Update on this: I have just spoken with several people at the factory. Bruce Morris is the man you need to talk to if he is available. He was not aware of our arrangement and as Parts Manager he is the one person who needed to know!! He does now, well I have told him, but I guess he will need confirmation from the powers that be, but as they have already confirmed the arrangement then this should not be a problem.

There does still exist problems with their pricing generally and I will be working with them on this.

UNLEADED HEADS:- can be obtained with new valves, hardened seats, springs and stem seals in a surfaced and cleaned head on an exchange basis for just £125 plus vat from John at Rossfield Motors in Bradford on 01274 542826. They even come shrink wrapped in polythene!! This really looks to me like an excellent deal, the saving in fuel costs is over 10% at the moment which means it could pay for itself in a couple of years, depending on how much you use your car!

Now don't get me wrong, there is nothing wrong with running your Kitten, Rebel or Fox on unleaded fuel right now, the worst that can happen is that you will burn out the valves and / or damage the seats, but depending on the condition of your head at the moment, and the sort of driving you do, such damage could take months or years to develop in to a problem. Then you can fit an unleaded head – if they are still available at a decent price by then!

RELIANT PARTSWORLD  
WATLING STREET  
TWO GATES  
TAMWORTH  
B77 1NH

Tel:- 01827 286898

Fax 01827 286899

As you may be aware, the team who ran Lightweight Power Trains have now merged with the factory and they have today, 8/6/98 confirmed the entitlement of subscribers to the Kitten Register to a 15% discount on parts bought from PartsWorld for our Rebels, Kittens and Foxes

*I would like on behalf of the Kitten Register, to take this opportunity to wish Stewart Halstead and his team every success in their endeavours.*

**Brian W. Marshall**